

# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S NOVELS

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## ABSTRACT

Bhagat is seen more as a youth icon than just an author. Chetan also writes opened columns for leading newspapers, mirroring on youth and national growth. His characters are social rebels and his womanly protagonists remind us of the female characters of Shaw for their vivacity viz. natural female instinct. The place of action of his novels is set in the confusion of Metropolitan Indian cities. With the growing urbanization and globalization, a number of chances have opened up all around. Men and women are no more seen in the course of the old vision which marksmen as superior and women as inferior. In this global environment, so far degrade women are given their due place and respect.

**KEY WORDS:** Social rebel, metropolitan ,urbanization, globalization, respect.

Chetan Bhagat has shown his characters with their own intellect and abilities, they are seen to be working shoulder to shoulder with men. As one notice in *One Night @ the Call Center*, the number of men and women working in call centers is equal and women choosing to work in night shifts are common. They earn their own living and make career choices. For instance, Esha, in the same novel, exists in Delhi leaving her home in order to make her modeling dream come true. Thus, in this new era, all men and women are equal. Even in case of marriages, now girls declare their own opinions and choices. In the former era, a marriageable boy-girl was bound to marry the match of their parents' choice and that was regarded as their spiritual duty to repay the debt of parenthood. The best reference will be Priyanka, again in this novel, who makes her own choice in case of marriage quite contrary to her parents' expectations. Also Ananya in *2 States* tries to convince her parents till the end in order to wed her lover Krish.

Therefore, Bhagat's writing is more feminine than masculine. He gives voice and shows his concerns more to his ladies than to his heroes. Like Shakespeare, he too deserves to be criticized for creating better heroines than heroes. Bhagat's added recording of his concern for women characters tells us the fact that steps towards women empowerment can be seen to be speeding up. Bhagat claims women empowerment as one of the confident effects of globalization; at the same time, it is incontrovertible that his novels definitely give us cultural shocks which are an expected shock of globalization, modernization, and commercial exploitation. These changes represent the pathetic cry of a majority of orthodox Hindu women in Indian society, thus, it is understood that being under the guise of liberation, there is a definite degeneration in the status of women as voiced forth in the novels of Chetan. The solitary aim of the paper is to bring out catalogue the sufferings of modern women who have not totally become modern. Though girls are stylish and outwardly modern but they still live in the past, intimate. As Mishra observes in his lines,

...times may have changed, our attitudes have remained rooted!  
With all this 'growth', we haven't been able to outgrow our old mindset.<sup>1</sup>  
(Mishra Ravikumar, 2013).

Fickle-minded Youth and Love, the very spirit of our livelihood, is known for its omnipresence and omnipotence. Yet now, we appreciate the memories of the immortal lovers like Ambikavathy-Amaravathy, Romeo- Juliet, et cetera. In Bhagat's fiction the attitude of youths towards love, marriage, and sex is not at all touching; in contrast it is quite casual. Love, as it is an instinctual feeling the young generation feels the vibrations of it every now and then, but the way they propose it and the carrying out love have absolutely changed. As we see in his fictions, there are love proposals and refusals of but everything is taken quite healthily or say in a matter- of fact way. Vroom in *ON@CC* loved Esha, and proposed to her three to four times, and she kept declining him all these times. Even

though it is so, they work together and maintain quite a hearty friendship. Shyam and Priyanka had been in relation ever since their college time. When they thought that they should break up, they properly come together and put a break to their relationship. Finally, after all said and done, they come together and decide to marry, but the things that happen meanwhile show us the changed relation equations of our time. Shyam as he says, wanted to move on a new terminology in the subject Love, develops a casual love relationship with another girl at the call centre. A marriage proposal of an NRI working with Microsoft, entertains Priyanka's fancy for the time being but when she learns about the hairlessness of the guy, her affection turns once again towards Shyam. Krish and Ananya in *2 States* fall in love with each other in a strange way. At IIM Ahmadabad, they started studying together in Ananya's room. Krish could not contemplate on his studies, as he is abstracted by Ananya's looks. One day just like that, he tells her so and their love-life gets started quite astonishingly. His treatment of love distinguishes Bhagat from others. His men do not chase women. The women are the follower and the men are the chased in his novels. Vidya chases Govind. He reacts to Omi thus, 'I didn't hit on her. She hit upon me'. Vidya has hunted him and he is the hunted. Bhagat's women take enterprise in the courtship. They steer forth the courtship until it converts into the commitment of living togetherness. The men make all attempts to avoid the spy of the women's charms. When they fail to escape the vigor of the counterparts, they become inactive in the game. They neither expel nor receive the stimulus. Things happen to them quite naturally. Govind is a passive participant in the romantic pursuit. While portraying this acceptable reality, Bhagat also shows us the senseless attitude of fickle-minded youth. People are so much imaginary by the word love, that sometimes love relations get started even between the people calling and receiving wrong numbers. Marital unfaithfulness – just a matter of Casualty Marital Fidelity is one of the most famed and posh Indian values. The husband and wife relationship in a Hindu family is more or less one-sided, for it is the man who dominates the family scene and his wife will be influential in keeping the family harmonious and united disrespecting how valueless and cruel he may be. But as a matter of fact, even in such a partial also known as patriarchal set up, women had an essential role to play in the Indian household and was worshipped for her sacrificing nature. This sensitive value of wedded loyalty has taken a degree turn now. I promise this by guessing many such cases in our trend reflector's almost every novel. To quote first instance, refer to Govind Patel's father who left his mom ten years and then to a great shock, he was found to have a second wife. Vroom's dad was a business man who parted his wife in the name of duty for 2 years, favored to live with his secretary and so Vroom and his mother lived in the agony without him. In the very novel, we see another reference of marital unfaithfulness among one of the protagonists of those six characters, Radhika. She is a married woman in her mid 20s. Even her marriage takes place after a shortlived courtship in college. She now lives in a joint family with Anuj's ultratraditional parents as her husband works somewhere else in a diverse city. It was tough for daddy's only girl, but it is amazing what women do for love. She has joined Connation Call center in order to earn more and more a wants to give more financial help to her husband. Radhika proves to be the best instance of a good housewife and skillful customer care representative. She is an expert in handling kitchen and managing office promptly. She looks after her old mother-in-law. She loves her husband very much and trusts him blindly. When she comes to know that her husband loves some other woman of Delhi, immediately breaks her relation with him and goes to Chandigarh with Esha forever. Unfaithfulness, hence, has resulted in separation of relationship and women are the worst sufferers of its consequences. Celebration of Pre Merital Sex in India, where marriage is a self-punishment, a man and a woman living together without getting married is a sin. But the majority of Bhagat's protagonists enjoy *PMS*. No other writer of the past, but Bhagat sacred sex in his works. They watched the unwillingness of the woman in it, whereas Bhagat has installed it in the willingness of the woman. Perfect instances for this stance will be the sexual relationship between Hari and Neha in *Five Point Someone*, Shyam and Priyanka in *One Night @ Call Center*, Govind and Vidya in *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, Krish and Ananya in *2 States*, Gopal and Aarti in *Revolution 2020*.

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. When Hari says in an understatement,

That was quite... amazing<sup>2</sup> (Bhagat: 2004, 169)

Neha says, Thanks. The word 'thanks' is very important here, which suggests how sincerely she might have joined for it after getting which she thanks her lover so deeply. It is just like thanking of a eager traveler who is in search of water and after a long search when somebody satisfies his thirst he thanks the person heartily. In *ON@CC*, Bhagat

rejoices the premarital sex of Priyanka and Shyam. In this scene also Bhagat gives the command in his lady's hands. She is a common modern girl and doesn't feel shy like the older generation girls. She asks Shyam,

By the way, do you have a condom? <sup>3</sup> (Bhagat: 2005, 104)

In *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, his heroine Vidya is so worried to lose her virginity that she chooses to do it right on her birthday. Moreover, she chooses 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 rational man he understands that it is wrong, but Vidya doesn't let him think anything at all. She is a nice-looking little seductress. Govind regrets his deeds after finishing the course, but Vidya is happy afar expectations to the opposite. She thanks God for making her adult and feels happy after losing her virginity. She speaks;

Wow, I am an adult now and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God<sup>4</sup> (Bhagat: 2008, 20)

Where is the survival of the values here? When a girl says this to a boy about her virginity, it is confusing and frightening to think about the young girls today who do not be uncertain to lose their virginity, which is the most invaluable prize that they could ever present to their life partner in their matrimonial life. It is clear that the attitude of this generation towards sex is not laden with guilt. Premarital sex for them is nothing of that feeling of regret or so. Even Krish and Ananya of *2 States* are not exceptions to the above said. The convenience of being together facilitates them to sleep together for two years without disturbing about the consequences. Luckily Bhagat ends the story with a marriage of the couple. There are so many Krishs and Ananyas in the world indulging in the risky practices and get into the predicament of having spoilt their life. The absence of native cultural values and accepting of foreign culture has resulted in such needless actions. Both Krish and Ananya come from a traditional family setup. It is shocking to see that they are not culturally tied with standards. For the current generation lovers, sex is a way of expressing their love for their partner and they do it before the necessary

social rituals. They look at sex as an expected thing in love. That is why; they indulge in sex every now and then. At last, they either get married or committed to live together. By this portion, Bhagat has invited a big signal of examination on the chastity and faithfulness of the girls in the new era.

Hence, Chetan Bhagat has skillfully portrayed the element of vitality in his women central characters. His woman characters believe in an absolute, a perfect, a pure and a noble freedom. They always take inventiveness in the courtship. Thus, they break the social etiquette – man ever chases woman. They are the chasers and the men are the chased. Bhagat is the first novelist amongst his contemporaries who has delineated woman as the hunter and the man as the excavation under her blind passion to suit his purpose. His women use all diplomacy to serve the female instinct.

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