

## Concubine system prevailing in contemporary modern age in Chetan Bhagat's '*One Indian Girl*'

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### Abstract

Chetan Bhagat, a contemporary Indian novelist is popular among youths for representing various modern issues through his writing. He has written his novel *One Indian Girl* from feminist point of view making exploration of feminine psyche. Through this novel he has presented the acrid reality of gender discrimination rooted in the minds of Indian parents and supremacy of male gender. The purpose of present research paper is to portrait the concubine system prevailing in modern society. Chetan Bhagat represents in this novel modern Indian woman adjustment with new circumstances by facing boldly traditional ideology. In contemporary age women are striving to make them free from established customs and tradition. Bhagat has been called by *India Today* as a symbol of new India for presenting modern societies issues in his writings. Through this novel he has also presented a modern issue of concubine system taking place in modern age. The story of this novel is about Radhika Mehta a female protagonist and his journey from India to U.K. She starts to indulge in sexual relationship after reaching on foreign land being careless about her own culture and values. Although she is yield before parental pressure for committing arrange marriage but denies at the last moment demanding freedom. Radhika struggles for freedom, self-respect and equality in male dominant society. Though she is excited for married life and would-be husband's thinking but she doesn't want to live in boundation. She is an open-minded modern girl who wished to gain equal rights to male. We see this story represents hypocrisy of modern society and attitude of people towards sex and culture.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Concubine, sexuality, modernism, freedom.

### Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is a well-known Indian novelist and considered youth's author. He is popular among youth for expressing various social issues through his novel writing. He has written many fictional and non-fictional works which have been bestseller. Through his columns writing in *Danik Bhaskar* in Hindi and *Times of India* in English he has raised the issue of youth's career and different current problems. All the issues presented in his works are very close to modern society. He was born in a middle-class Punjabi family on 22 April 1974 in Delhi to a government employee parents. His earlier education was from Army school later cracked IIT exam by securing good marks and IIM Ahemdabad

by working hard. There had been many writers representing current issues through their writing but no one is renowned like Bhagat. In India after post-independence era everything is getting change from thinking to culture of people. In modern age no one is satisfied in spite of having all material comforts. People are losing their inner peace continuously. In modern society people can stoop to any level in order to satisfy their sexual hunger without caring their culture and tradition. They don't think about their life partner and the person with whom they are going to share their bed for satisfying their physical thirst, has been revealed through this story in a realistic way.

The story of *One Indian Girl* is about a female protagonist Radhika Mehta a super successful girl who makes a lot of money, has a high-flying career, develops relationship and indulges in regular sex all by at the early age of 25 years. Bhagat's this novel portrays the reality of Indian women what happens when Indian girl is educated and settled in foreign country and earns money like anything. An Indian girl who is good at study, Radhika pursued best marks and always topped in her class. She also gets job in New York, where gets promotion rapidly this is the result of her hard work. In spite of great money, she is frustrated in her own life having everything has nothing in life. The reality of modern society has been portrayed through this novel. The target crowds of this book are modern working Indian women who have to face folk from the society for every step they take, when they are extreme ambitious, they are considered sluts, denied their right to have a family. These problems are being faced by many Indian girls nowadays. Radhika Mehta, a young girl from Delhi, cracks the CAT, enters IIM Ahmedabad, land her dream job at Goldman Sachs in New York. In India education of children delivers them financial independence, dignity and self-respect but women are not free to work on their choice place. An educated lady is free to handle all situations. In some families if girl denies to get marry, they are scold by their parents by giving the example of their elder ones who have got married after simple graduation without making any protest. In the same way Radhika is scolded by her mother and her Kamla bua taunts, this happen when you educate the girls too much. Radhika is a simple girl who is average looking, not fair, ambitious, well-educated and very successful in her career and she is just opposite to conservative thinking of Indian society about girls and women. She is open mind girl and quite feministic. She works according to her interest without caring her family. She starts to work in Goldman Sach on high salary before her marriage, hearing this achievement her father's reactions are;

“You are twenty-four years old. My little girl has become such a big shot; I found it difficult to hold back fears. ‘I am still your little daughter, dad. The one who held your finger on the way to the school bus stop; you are my sweetest little one, he said remember you used to tell me to stand on my own feet? To not worry about anything else, to just do the best I can? That is all I did dad.’ I heard him sob. My father cries more than all women in the house.” (Bhagat, P-81,82)

These things make it clear that Radhika's father loves her very much the tears of happiness can be seen in his father's eyes at the time when Radhika informed him about her salary and placement. He says that little daughter who used to walk picking his finger now starts earning seventy lakhs. Radhika's mother is more tensioned about her marriage, she always taunts her and give the example of her elder sister who married in time and now living a happy life with her husband. Radhika and her sister have good tuning. Aditi is franker and more fashionable besides it she is more beautiful than Radhika enjoys the life best.

Bhagat has enumerated a great struggle in Radhika life, how many women make it to IIM Ahmedabad and Bangalore every year and end up with a supremely high paying job at one of the top investment banks in the world? Radhika is stuck in man's job where she has to be cold hearted and calculative, helping Goldman close down on impossible deals, apart from investment banking. There are many such professions where women are finally making mark. She landed a job from a small city came to understand what is economic liberation, and then went through the entire ordeal of patriarchal bullshit most working women have to go through in India, where we are still seen as women who should sit at home after marriage. She is an open-minded modern girl who doesn't believe in age old traditions that a girl should not do this and that. She thinks that girl should be treated like a boy in society without making any distinction on the basis of gender because they are not second to none. Radhika truly embarks upon the 'road less travelled by' and finally discovers-"that has made all the difference." (Frost)

Radhika is surprised for the mentality of Indian who considers boys superior to girls, though she earns more than a boy. Her salary is more than one crore that is just double to her would be fiancé in spite of it people makes difference between girl and boys. She was born in a family which wanted a boy not a girl. Through this story author has represented the mentality of human being who makes difference between their own children. They think boys are better than a girl and impose their own wishes on girls. Radhika Mehta is a modern self-dependent girl who earns a lot of money, her extra modernism and professional success is a hindrance in the way of marital bliss. She is a laborious girl who has no contempt for others. Through the story we see in modern age the chief attention of the youth is to satisfy physical desire, it doesn't matter for them to what level they may stoop. Modern youth have no shame and clear thinking to make sure who is going to be their partner and who will be sharing bed with them. We also see males feel inferiority complex if they find their girlfriend is earning more than them, they feel how a woman can surpass them in earning money, besides it when a girl is more educated and earns more money, she and her parents have to suffered a lot to get her married.

In Modern age we see thinking of modern youth is getting change with time. They are following concubine system being shameless and without caring their culture. We see Radhika starts work at distressed debt group of Goldman Sachs an investment bank. She earns money on a high package, but after reaching in foreign she indulges in relationships with Brijesh Gulati her boyfriend and starts drinking. She is getting promotion after promotion but not satisfied with it. Through this novel Bhagat has portrayed the reality of modern society how girls after getting higher education and earning money on foreign land forgets their moral values. Radhika becomes concubine of Debu forgetting it that he is not her husband and without caring prestige of her parents. She is indulging in such dirty game after reaching on foreign land. We see modern youth's purpose is only to satisfy physical desire. They celebrate their happiness by kissing each other. Radhika is in relationship with a Bengali boy Debu who works in an advertisement company. Radhika and Debu lives freely in relationship enjoying sex without getting married. On the other hand, we see in spite of being in relationship with Radhika, he is in relationship with a white girl. Radhika ask him to get married but Debu denies marry with Radhika for another girl. He is not in relationship with one but with many girls at the same time. Radhika is very upset after seeing this she tries to prepare him for marriage but Debu does not like her for her higher salary. Her superiority in salary and practical knowledge is unbearable for Debu He says;

“I am being calm, okay? But those 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 spoke. My fork almost fell out of my hands. It’s what I have seen growing up. I go to work, make money. Wife takes care of the home. Simple needs happy family. I still admire you. I respect all women who achieve big things. I think it is great... But you can’t be with them? I don’t know. May be 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.” (Bhagat, P-99)

Debu needs a housewife who may care his kids at home so he leaves her saying this. We see after this incident there is break up between Radhika and Debu. Radhika gets more upset and can’t concentrate on her work and want to resign but Radhika’s boss makes her transfer to another country in Hong Kong, where she meets Neel Gupta who is her new boss. Neel is impressed with Radhika seeing her sincerity and devotion for work. They both start working on a project so they meet daily for business purpose. Neel who is just double to her age, have wife and two children. Their business meeting changes into love meeting. It becomes impossible for them to keep their love as a secret. Radhika indulges in relationship with Neel also who is just like her father age. Thus, we see Indian Girl crosses all limit and have relationship with a person like her father age. On the other hand, Neel deceives his wife kusum and two kids by sleeping with Radhika. They both start having sex frequently. Neel doesn’t think about his wife and kids he becomes ready to leave them for Radhika. Thus, we see how in modern age concubine system is flourishing. Age difference doesn’t matter for them only they want physical satisfaction. Radhika wants to marry with Neel Gupta and pressurizes him to leave his wife and children conversation between them reveals;

“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. Dint 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 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 get married soon? Eventually I do want to Neel. How could you think I won’t? I want marriage, Kids, family.” (Bhagat, P-206-207)

Radhika insist Neel to marry with her in spite of knowing that he is already married. She is in relationship with him but Neel rejects her proposal of marriage by saying that she is not to be a house wife but suitable to handle big projects. We see after this Radhika is again upset, she no longer wants to meet Neel and decides to resign from her job. Neel tries to make her understand that resignation is not a solution if she does this it will be a great loss for company, so she should get her transferred to London. Radhika is much disturbed and want to leave this place so she is transferred to London. On the other side we see her mother is continuously persuading her to get married, poor mother is unaware towards her daughter how she has become the victimize of concubine system. Radhika moves to London where she comes in touch of Brijesh. She feels somewhat relax in his company day by day Radhika and Brijesh comes closer to each other. Radhika wants to overcome on her past memories of relationship with Debu and Neel, also from her mother’s continuous taunt for marriage, so she gets ready to marry

with her new boyfriend Birjesh Gulati. There is the preparation of marriage in both families all guest comes for marriage. She drinks and smoke with Birjesh at night on a beach before marriage without caring anyone. On the other hand, we see Neel has no good tuning with his wife so he realizes his mistake and divorced his wife Kusum on some terms and condition for children. Debu also realize his mistake for not understanding Radhika so he also made up his mind to return to Radhika and marry with her. Though Radhika is going to getting married with Brijesh Gulati but Neel and Debu reach there, and she meets to both of them telling lies with her parents. She makes fool to both lovers and would-be husband; at the same time, she is in touch with all of them. She meets turn by turn to Debu, Neel and Birjesh before marriage, without revealing the reality to no one. Her both previous lovers with whom she has been concubine and the third one Birjesh are before her with marriage proposal. Debu claims her first lover and Neel claim he has divorced his wife and left children for her, Birjesh claims his love and prestige among guest but we see even without caring her parent's prestige she denies to get marry with Brijesh and insults both the families. All guests and family members remain stunned hearing her words. Birjesh's mother speak ill to her;

“What kind of a girl's is this?” Brijesh's mother said. ‘I told you. I have a defective piece. My other daughter is golden. Such a nice, good bahu she is’, my mother said. ‘Enough, Aparna aunty’, Brijesh said. Everyone in the room looked at him, surprised. ‘She may regret her decision to marry me. It doesn't make her defective’. Through my tears I looked at Brijesh. Despite what I had done to him, Mr IT guy could still actually stand up for me. It only made me feel worse”. (Bhagat P 265-266)

Birjesh is a very nice and good-hearted person in spite of his insults he saves Radhika from everybody's taunts. He supports Radhika and face the protest of his family members and guests. He also did his best to make Radhika understand that he has to do nothing with her past he is ready to accept her as she is, so she should not break this marriage but Radhika is not ready to marry with him after this and says;

“Thanks for supporting me in front of the elders yesterday,’ I said. We walked on the Marriott beach one final time. I don't like raised voices, or insulting people, especially in public’, Brijesh said ‘you had every right to insult me too. You can now. We are not even in public. He looked at me for a second. He shook his head and gave a sad smile. ‘I guess I never understood women anyway. I thought I did, a little bit. Clearly, I still have a long way to go’, he said. ‘You understand people and you understand kindness. You are a good guy, Brijesh. I am the one who is messed up. I need clarity’. ‘Hope you find it. What do you plan to do, anyway?’ ‘For now, I will go back to work. Maybe apply for some visas. Then take a long vacation. May be one of those round the world tickets, the one that let you fly in one direction. Just keep going’. ‘Well, the world is round. So, you can't keep going. You will eventually have to come back home. Come back to reality” (Bhagat P, 266-267)

We see after a long period of passing many months Radhika text a message to Birjesh Gulati and request him to meet her when she was on a world tour to overcome on her past memories, where on the way she meets with Birjesh. She feels sorry for his insult made by her in past and again wants to live in his company. These things prove concubine system is liked by youth in modern age. They want to enjoy only sex without getting married. Thus, they deceive to their parents and near ones. Radhika wants to lead her life like a modern independent girl. She does not want to be in pressure of anyone but want to live freely. She seeks a husband who may give her love and respect but there are only people



who want to make her concubine not their wife. Only Birjesh is good person who gets ready to marry with her but he is rejected by her, this is the result of changing mentality of youth. In modern age parents don't interfere in their children's personal life. In the same way Radhika's parents also don't impose on her their own wishes from career to marriage.

## Conclusion

Though we see all human beings have their own physical desire to satisfy but every desire has a legal way to satisfy. The heroine of this novel is Radhika who is the chief protagonist of this novel is very intelligent and hardworking girl in comparison of her elder sister Aditi but she becomes victimize of concubine system which is prevailing in our modern society. Aditi on the other hand is a fashionable girl who is average at study and leading a happy life with her husband and children. Though Radhika is pressurizing by her mother and relatives to get settled by being married and given the example of her elder sister Aditi. Parents love to their both daughter but somewhere there is a pain in the heart of Radhika's parent for a male child. Radhika reveals that her parents wished a male child. It was their desire that their first child should be a boy but they become sad when a girl child Aditi takes birth. Her mother has abort twice before Radhika's birth because that was a girl child. Though Radhika earns more than a son and topped every exam but the mentality of her mother is quite traditional she doesn't want to take money from Radhika because she is daughter not a son. We see all wrong works are done by children either in frustration, stress or when they are ignored. In the case of Radhika, we see she finds herself alone on foreign land there is no one with whom she can share her feelings. This is why she comes in touch of various persons who exploits her. She is daily pressurized by her mother to search a boy and get married. There is no one to understand her moreover instead of supporting her daughter mother only gives stress to Radhika about marriage. Radhika faces many problems on foreign land work load, loneliness and culture differences create hurdles in running her life smoothly there. She adapts herself in that environment where she came to know that physical beauty matters more than mental beauty in these countries. She goes to beauty parlor to look attractive where she gets waxed on her body and many other beauty looking tips. She comes in touch of Debu a Bengali boy who becomes her boyfriend and starts to live with him in concubine system without caring her parents. One day when she returns from her job at late night, she finds Debu sleeping with another white girl this thing makes her quite upset. We see one side her mother is pressurizing constantly for seeking a life partner to getting married and other side Debu with whom she is living in relationship for a long time is enjoying sexual relationship with another white girl in the same period. Radhika propose Debu to make their relationship legal by getting married. Debu denies for getting married with Radhika by saying this that she is perfect for job but being a career minded not good to be a housewife. He thinks that they can live in this relationship no need for getting married. Radhika gets upset hearing this and made up her mind to move to Hong Kong so that she may overcome on her distress. In Hong Kong we see she comes in touch of Neel Gupta her new boss who is twenty year older than her and like her father age. They both come in contact to each other and after sometime their office visitation changes into love and physical desire. Radhika with Neel again starts living in concubine system forgetting everything. Though Neel is already married and has children but Radhika lives with him becoming his concubine. She insists him for getting married with her but Neel denies to married with her. Radhika again gets disturbed and in frustration wants to resign but she is suggested by Neel to get her job transferred to London. We see reaching in Lodon she finds herself completely broken where one day she on shadi.com search Birjesh

Gulati. She comes in her touch and decides to marry with him but on the marriage day Neel and Debu both her previous lover reach to meet her in Goa on her wedding place. Radhika again meets them and denies to marry with Birjesh. Thus, she insults both families but Birjesh was a very nice and honest man who never pressurizes Radhika for marriage after happening it all. He supports her in her decision though everybody criticizes her. Radhika again comes in Birjesh contact and joins a concert with him. Radhika is in search of an honest man who can give her respect and love. She is exploited by various persons but later she realizes that Birjesh is that true man who is being searched by her. Thus, we see in modern age concubine system is prevailing in society. Our youths are sleeping and making physical relationship without getting married. It makes no difference for them whether they are married or bachelor. This is proved by Radhika and her relationship with Debu, Neel and Birjesh Gulati she is living with them becoming their concubine without getting married with them. Moreover, we see she is changing her boyfriend one after another without caring her culture. On foreign land she forgets everything and becomes the part of prevailing concubine system.

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