

Reciprocation of modernity as explicated in Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl*

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Abstract

Women have gained more independence in modern India, but an ideal woman is one whose life and decisions are still firmly tied to her home and family. Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, screen writer and motivational speaker, known for his English novels about young urban middle-class Indians. This paper attempts to find out the consequences faced by the young girls who have got enough freedom to decide their own life.

Keywords: Attitude, Education, Freedom, Modern society.

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There was a time when women were just kitchen keepers in the Indian society. Their main works were rearing children, cooking meals for the large joint family, doing some tailoring or knitting, but all within the four walls of the house. This was considered to be their only way of life. Eventually women began to get educated, even highly educated, and a stage came when some of them came out on the social and political fields to rub shoulder with the men folk in these fields. In the freedom struggle of India, there are notable names of women who took an active part in the different movements and even reached the top. This was the opening up of the new horizon for womanhood in India.

Through the narrator Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* explains why patriarchy thrives in India not just because it is imposed by men. But these societal rules and restrictions are internalized by women. *One Indian Girl* examines bigger issues such as gender equality, society verses individualism, feminism and humanism. Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* exemplifies the story of twenty seven years old Radhika Mehta, who is a vice president in the firm of an investment bank in which she earns in millions. Surprisingly, this novel *One Indian Girl* defines feminism from different angles where protagonist's anti-feminist mother plays a very interesting

role to highlight the norms and conditions of how women should live according to the expectations of the society. The researcher intends to highlight the ridiculous choices that society forces women to make.

This novel *One Indian Girl* is a journey many Indian girls go through, a journey through compromises and rigid social structures always bent in favour of males. Educating any child gives the child financial independence allowing them to lead a life of dignity and self-respect. In India, women are not given enough freedom to do what they want in life, some families do not allow women to work. Some families limit their ambition in work place. An educated woman has the financial independence and the ability to escape situations where the husband or the family turns abusive.

In India, there was a time when very few women received proper education. But the times are changing now that girls are receiving good education across all parts of India. Some people insist that it is very important to provide girls with good education while others strongly oppose women education. Being educated, a woman can manage her home much more efficiently. She can maintain family budget and expenses. An educated girl understands her duties well. She is a source of comfort to her husband in times of trouble, besides this as a mother; an educated woman has a lot of advantages that she can expose a lot of things to her children. An unfortunate widow, if she is educated, need not remain at the mercy of others. She can support herself and her children without any external support. This is only one side of the picture. A modern educated wife, due to her love for fashion and expensive habits is often a financial burden for her poor husband. An educated girl is not always obedient and faithful as

she does not like to observe family tradition and customs. She always tries to dominate her husband. She tries to live in her own independent way, often she looks down upon less educated and uneducated persons of society.

Female education is not always a blessing only if a girl has been educated properly at home, can she remain unaffected by the evil effects of modern education. She can be a great asset to her husband and her family, if she is good natured and respects the tradition of the society. In most parts of India, the attitude towards girls is somewhat like Radhika's family reaction when she tells them that she does not want to get married;

“What is the problem, you mad girl? My mother screeched at the top of her voice she came and stood in front of me slap! There's no need to hit me, mom, I said, fighting back tears. So what do I do to cure you of your madness? Look at your sister married after a simple graduation this is what happens when you educate girls too much, Kamla Bua said in a low consoling voice (160)

Radhika Mehta is educated, intelligent and ambitious, fighting away the stereotypes. Radhika does well professionally, has a string of relationships that makes her move base, from New York to Hong Kong and then to London. It teaches her life's important lessons and gives her an insight into what she wants and who she exactly is. The novel *One Indian Girl* delves into the deep lying patriarchy in Indian society. The restrictions that are not spoken about yet exist all around us. Radhika deals with an insecure boyfriend who cannot handle her earning more than him and later a married boss who becomes her love. Neither of the men she encounters

understands that she would want to have both worlds- a home as well as a career. Like the indication that the society needs to change, Radhika too evolves from an under confident geek to a decisive character living on her own terms.”Why only me, every time? “Is a question present in her gaze which is frequently argued by Radhika with her mother and her lovers? Entire plot moves around Radhika’s journey to search her true inner self while she was trying hard to satisfy everyone’s expectations around her. Modern girls seemed to have forgotten our culture, heritage, patience and self control they were once famous for. They do not have the appropriate qualities or attitude they once had which impressed our society and made them look holy and great.

Modern Indian girls are being over influenced by western culture. Most of the girls in the modern era neglect not only their responsibilities they should ideally carry, but also the basic culture for which India has been famous for. Few decades back there was no chance for girls to pursue education as freely as today, but at present parents give a lot of freedom to their daughters to prove them in the society, but few of these girls utilize this freedom in a bad way. They tend to totally ignore the traditional values and principles their parents had been giving since childhood.

It is common and unfortunate to see modern girls imitate others in all aspects like smoking, drinking, visiting pubs, taking drugs even opting living together relationships. Good or bad, most women allow relationships to define them, a lot of women are scared of being alone and some even get their sense of worth from being in a relationship and being viewed by society as a partner /wife/girl friend of so and so. Outwardly women may appear to be confident and smart, but inside, they only get their confidence and sense of value only with the support of men.

This paper suggests that girls should play the roles with more care and dedication; there should be a balance between modern and traditional values.

On the point of feminism, woman can enjoy their life according to their likes and dislikes. They do not depend on any one's hand and no need of getting permission from their males. But, according to Indian culture, woman can have the relationship only with one male and she can share her personal urge to one man who is called husband or lover. But in the novel *One Indian Girl*, author has given different dimension of woman at New York and Hong Kong and finally, has settled herself with new boy from India for her permanent life partaking. This novel can attract the new trendy readers those who are in the emerging of new style of life.

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