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**Women's representation in the novels of Chetan Bhgat**

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### Abstract:

Since women and property are bracketed together in several references in the epics, *Smritis* and *Puranas*, women came to be regarded as a sort of property. Position of women in society is the index to the standard of social organization. In ancient India woman enjoyed equal status with man in all fields of life, she received the same education like man, many Hindu religious books like *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* have mentioned the names of several women who were great scholars, poets and philosophers of the time. The position of women in modern India has changed considerably. Her position in modern India is equal to that of men, socially, economically, educationally, politically and legally. Men and women are no more seen through the old spectacle which marks men as superior and women as inferior. In this global atmosphere, so far belittled women are given their due place and respect. With their own intellect and abilities, they are seen to be working shoulder to shoulder with men. Women's representation in various fields portrayed in all the novels of Chetan Bhagat is the justification of above statements. The paper will provide all justifications for effective representation of women in contemporary Indian society.

**Key Words:** Representative of cogency, various field performances, powerful modern women characters, novel, tradition, culture, society

### Introduction:

Chetan Bhagat is seen more as a youth icon than just an author. Chetan also writes open columns for leading newspapers, focusing on youth and National development. His characters are social rebels and his female protagonists remind us of the female characters of G. B. Shaw for their vitality viz. Natural female instinct. The place of action of his novels is set in the hustle and bustle of Metropolitan Indian cities. With the growing urbanization and globalization, a number of opportunities have opened up all around. Thus, in this new era, all men and women are equal. Even in case of marriages, now girls assert their own opinions and choices. In the bygone era, a marriageable boy/girl was bound to marry the match of their parents' choice and that was regarded as their religious duty to repay the debt of parenthood. 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 footage 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 positive effects of globalization; at the same



time, it is incontrovertible that his novels definitely give us cultural shocks which are an inevitable impact of globalization, modernization, and corporate exploitation. These changes represent the pathetic cry of a majority of orthodox Hindu women in Indian society, thereby, it is understood that being under the guise of emancipation, there is an actual degeneration in the status of women as voiced forth in the novels of Chetan Bhagat. Though girls are trendy and externally 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. "[Mishra Ravikumar, 2013] Love, the very essence of our livelihood, is known for its omnipresence and omnipotence. Even now, we cherish the memories of the immortal lovers like Ambikavathy-Amaravathy, Romeo-Juliet, etc.... In Bhagat's fiction the attitude of youths towards love, marriage, and sex is not at all emotional; on the contrary 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 definitely changed. As we see in his fictions, there are love proposals and rejections of but everything is taken quite healthily or say in a matter- of fact way.

### Representation Of dark side of Tradition and Culture In Modern India:

Any culture, of course, won't entertain sexual advancements for women in the name of freedom, whereas culture functions as a protective agent for women from falling prey to the temptations aroused. Along with being competitive, ambitious, and techno- savvy, the new generation women in Bhagat's fiction are trendy as well. The global trend has not left the society untouched. Due to the free incoming values, costumes, dresses and the living habits of the western world, the basis of Indian culture has been greatly influenced. Through *One Night @ the Call Centre*, Bhagat exposes the filth of the modelling industry. One of the main characters in that novel, Esha Sing is a tantalizing beauty and a modern, fashionable girl who has moved from Chandigarh to Delhi, against her parents' wishes hoping to become a model. Bhagat has traced the shocking causes of the dried up tears in the glowing eyes of the people of the glamour world. His portrayal of the character, Esha symbolizes 'the dark side' of the new Indian career woman of the twenty-first century.

Krish and Ananya in *2 States* fall in love with each other in a strange way. At IIM Ahmedabad, they started studying together in Ananya's room. Krish could not concentrate on his studies, as he is distracted by Ananya's looks. One day just like that, he tells her so and their love-life gets started quite surprisingly. His treatment of love distinguishes Bhagat from others. His men do not chase women. The women are the chaser and the men are the chased in his novels.



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Vidya chases Govind. He responds to Omi thus, “I didn’t hit on her. She hit upon me.” [*The 3 Mistakes of My Life*: 21] Vidya has hunted him and he is the hunted. Bhagat’s women take initiative 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 snoop of the women’s charms. When they fail to exercise vitality of the counterparts, they become passive in the game. They neither expel nor receive the stimulus. Things happen to them naturally. Govind is a passive participant in the amorous pursuit. While depicting this acceptable reality, Bhagat also shows us the nonsensical attitude of fickle-minded youth. People are so much fancied by the word love, that sometimes love relations get started even between the people calling and receiving wrong numbers.

Marital Fidelity is one of the most famous and precious 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 instrumental in keeping the family harmonious and united disregarding how worthless and cruel he may be. But as a matter of fact, even in such a patriarchal set up, women had a pivotal role to play in the Indian household and was worshipped for her sacrificing nature. This sensitive value of marital fidelity has taken a 360 degree turn now. Govind Patel’s father who left his mom ten years ago, and then to a great shock, he was found to have a second wife in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. Vroom’s dad was a business man who parted his wife in the name of duty for two years, preferred to live with his secretary and so Vroom and his mother lived in the agony without him in *One Night @ the Call Centre*.

In India, where marriage is a sacrament, a man and a woman living together without getting married is a sin. But the majority of Chetan’s protagonists enjoy Pre-Marital Sex. No other writer of the past, but Bhagat sanctified sex in his works. They watched the reluctance of the woman in it, whereas Bhagat has installed it in the willingness of the woman. Perfect examples for this stance will be the sexual relationship between Hari and Neha in *Five Point Someone*, Shyam and Priyanka in *One Night @ The Call Center*, Govind and Vidya in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, Krish and Ananya in *2 States*, Gopal and Aarti in *Revolution 2020*.

By this aspect, Bhagat has invited a big sign of interrogation on the chastity and fidelity of the girls in the new era. Bhagat’s writing matches with the youth mentality, but it fails to stand on the moral expectations of the older generations and unknowingly, it invites trouble for ladies that would end up in great disasters. Bhagat forgets that what he celebrates before marriage is a sin in Indian society; he is often criticized as an amoral writer. But what he does is to present the things as it is. The need of an hour is his reader’s rationality to understand what he wants to say because even in



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this technical era, women are treated as sexual objects and men always want to possess and renounce them. It is impossible to stop people from looking at a girl and it is up to the girl to protect herself by being not an eye-catching object to others. Women must not assert that this is their freedom in this shameful aspect.

Being under the impact of westernization, women may wish to sport any adventure against the will of the societal restrictions and succeed, but the sport may put them into vast complications for which they should have got enormous guts and support to meet those challenges. Is it possible? – My question to the entire women's community with an added adage, “Easier said than done”.

### Women’s quest for love and premarital sex:

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most famous living novelists of India. He is a favorite of the youth and has many a time been crowned as an icon of them. Youth is his main theme because whatever he writes he associates it with the concerns of them. In all his novels he deals with nothing but the youth and their concerns. He tries to give voices to their unheard feelings and emotions and it is this reason that he is counted among the most preferred authors of the youth.

In his novels he talks about lots of things including the youth and their troubles, tensions, joys and feelings etc. but one thing that is very common in all his novels is his celebration of the loss of virginity by his lady characters. All his ladies enjoy premarital sex but none of them regrets it rather feels proud having done it. Bhagat’s writing is more feminine than masculine. He gives voices and shows his concerns more to his ladies than to his heroes. Like Shakespeare he too deserves to be blamed for creating better heroines than heroes (Shakespeare’s heroines are considered better than his heroes).

Sex is something that enjoys the privilege of being considered masculine. A female, particularly in a country like India where male domination is an accepted trend in all norms of the society and life, is not supposed to make a demand for it. However it is not a genuine demand, there is something preoccupied in our minds that we daunt and discourage any such demand arising from the fair sex. It seems as if sex is something personal property or patent or fundamental right of men and women are nothing but a source which can be used any moment in any way.

Bhagat has emerged as an iconoclast for this masculine illusion and has tried to feel and express the feelings and emotions of the ladies. He believes that women have equal right to demand for sex and perhaps she is the most bonafide candidate who deserves to initiate the talk regarding it. Love and sex are no different things for Bhagat. He finds both these as the two facets of the same



coin. Like head and tail. In our coins if we call the lion face head and the value print tail in his novels love is head and sex is the tail.

The simulation is very apt as the lion faces or the head are the same in all coins but it is only its tail which determines its value, in Bhagat's novels love remains as head but it is only sex that makes his one story different from the other. Bhagat celebrates the moment when his lady loses her virginity. Nevertheless, there is no sign of his intentional incorporation of such scenes in the novels but that is the very need of the story. Bhagat realizes that it is high-time to give voices to the hidden feelings of the fair sex because someone has to dare someday to expose their feelings or else they will keep burning within their heart like the embers beneath the coal.

In his debut novel *Five Point Someone* Bhagat introduces premarital sex as a natural need in the youth. He is an open minded author who feels no shade of parochial preoccupation for sex before marriage. Neha encourages Hari and both indulge in a premarital sexual activity. He also exposes how demand for sex naturally grows in girls more dominantly than in boys. Hari has nothing of this sort in his mind when he comes to meet Neha but he has to surrender before her seduction. He says, "We kissed, and then we kissed again. Then she held my hand and did something that she had never done before; she put it on her breast." [*Five Point Someone*: 168]

In Bhagat's opinion girls are in no way inferior to boys. They are equal to them in all respects. He is an advocate to the liberation and empowerment of women but the pity is that he has equaled them only in doing wrong things and taking wrong turns. Neha has never smoked a cigarette but after losing her chastity she also wants to have a fag like Hari. She enjoys her loss of virginity and thanks her partner, which shows her hunger and want for sex. When Hari says in an understatement, That was quite... amazing." [*Five Point Someone*: 169], Neha says, "Thanks. I like it too." [*Five Point Someone*: 169] boldly.

Bhagat has successfully tried to describe the opinion of the youth about love and premarital sex. He finds sex as a common activity like smoking or taking a sip of wine. It is not untrue that our newspapers are full of such news like finding of condoms in toilets of call centers, academic buildings and other such places. However this is also remarkable that whenever Bhagat portrays premarital sex he presents it with their common consent. It is nowhere that he makes a pressure on any of the partners to surrender before the other except in *Revolution 2020*.

Govind in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* regrets his deeds after finishing the course but Vidya is happy beyond expectations on the contrary. She thanks god for making her adult and feels happy after losing



her virginity. She says, “Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God” [*The 3 Mistakes of My Life*: 201]

Bhagat does not know nor does he want to know the definition of love. For him sex is everything. He is a producer and propagator of modern and western thoughts and ideas. He thinks only in the way the western teenagers and adults think like. Still he does not realize he is wrong because he does not exaggerate the act. He writes only what he thinks true. In today's life young people are found craving for sex and quenching it whenever they get an opportunity for it. In his autobiographical novel *2 States*, he is somewhat on the ground and his heroine is not very anxious to lose her virginity but she is satisfied to begin it. She says after finishing, “This is my first time.” [*2 States*: 26]

Nevertheless the trend has changed a lot and the same has happened with the mindset of the youth, no youth would still afford to pick up a girl as his wife who has already had sex with someone else in her college days. By this story Bhagat has invited a big sign of interrogation on the chastity and fidelity of the girls studying in IIMs. Bhagat calls himself an advocate of the youth concerns but at the same time unknowingly he invites troubles for them.

However, Bhagat does not give any thought to the aftermath of the premarital sex relations. He thinks only about present. Future is his no concern. He is an amoral author. He has no sense of morality. Similarly he has no sense of what is called immoral. He is amoral. He is a sinner of ignorance but his sin can be pardoned as his intention is not to harm but only to entertain.

Bhagat is an author who paints the scenes of premarital sex with utmost care and attention. But he forgets that what he celebrates before marriage is a sin in Indian society and deserves its place only after the marriage of the two. Bhagat is a creator of a new society which lives freely and does everything freely even sex. But he forgets that the society he has created cannot find its place even after attaining 2020 in the Christian era. Still Bhagat is a good entertainer. He is a good storyteller. He knows the heart of the youth. He talks about the youth and their feelings. He tries to tell the world about the existence of the youth and their desires. He perhaps wants the youth not to do the things his characters do. But the only thing is that he does not tell it clearly. Bhagat should not be taken as it is.



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### Conclusion:

Bhagat is the first writer among 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 tactics to serve the female instinct. They incarnate the new woman, who chides the man for feminine behavior. They suffer because of their strong desires for something or somebody. In order to achieve that, they are ready to face challenges and risks. Some win the game and some lose the game. Obviously they themselves are to be blamed for it, but one cannot deny that globalization is also responsible for it. To avoid this unnecessary race between the culture and their psychology, modern women's mentality or attitude needs to be mended very seriously. An easy and apt suggestion from my side will be, 'It is better to follow the traces of the past rather than taking a new diversion and suffer'.

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