



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

Characterization of Female in the Novels of Chetan Bhagat

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ISSN 2454-8596

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An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

ABSTRACT

Chetan Bhagat is regarded as more of a youth icon than a writer. Chetan also publishes columns for the country's leading newspapers, looking to youth and national development most of his characters rebel against conventional social conventions, while his female protagonists' personas depict natural instincts and values such as those Shaw depicted in plays. With urbanization and globalization having occurred, a number of opportunities have emerged. There is no evidence to support that men are inherently better shots than women. Women have, for the most part, received their due in this globalized environment. There is a recent publication on Bhagat's female protagonists. In the several fictions, the chief female characters, Vidya, Neha, Aarti, Riya, and Ananya exhibit modern-style or postmodern sensibilities that put their cultural Indian womanhood in question.

Key Words: Characterization, Feminine, femininity, Sensibilities, Post-modern

Introduction

Chetan Bhagat (1974) is a well-known name in Indian English literature for his postmodern popular fiction. He has gained a lot of popularity in recent India, despite his young age, through his creative fictional writings. Five Point Someone (2004), One Night@ the Call Centre (2005), The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008), 2 States: The Story of My Marriage (2009), Revolution 2020 (2011), and Half Girlfriend (2012) are among his six novels (2014). His non-fiction book, What Young India Wants (2012), is a collection of his news articles and columns that he writes for various leading newspapers, as well as speeches he gives as a motivational speaker.

Chetan Bhagat's Art of Characterization

Chetan Bhagat's female characters are shown to be working side by side with men with their own



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ISSN 2454-8596

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intelligence and abilities. The number of men and women working in call centers is equal, as one observes in One Night @ the Call Center, and women frequently choose to work night shifts. They are self-employed and make their own career decisions. In the same novel, Esha, for example, lives in Delhi after leaving her home to pursue her modelling dream. As a result, all men and women are equal in this new era. Even in marriages, girls now express their own views and choices. Even though girls are fashionable and appear to be modern on the outside, they are still deeply rooted in the past. 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.¹ (Mishra Ravikumar, 2013).

Youth aspirations, love, sex, marriage, urban middle class sensibilities, issues of corruption, politics, and education, as well as their impact on contemporary Indian society, are major themes in his fictions. Bhagat's main characters are all modern young boys and girls in their teens and twenties. With his modern sensibilities and sentiments, he has echoed the voice of India's contemporary youth. In his various fictions, all of the main characters are shown to be modernized, or to put it another way, westernized in their thinking and behavior patterns. In their thinking and behavior patterns, they exhibit postmodern sensibilities. They frequently consume vodka and smoke cigarettes. They dress casually in jeans and t-shirts. Pizza, burgers, and sandwiches are among their favorite foods. They consume soft drinks and cold beverages in large quantities. They make use of the internet and mobile phones. In many ways, they are light years ahead of the previous generation. They demand democratic rights while also acknowledging their social and national responsibilities. They also recognize and respect the democratic rights and responsibilities of others. They are modernized in their thinking and refuse to accept castism, racism, or communalism in any form. Despite all of the modernized ways of life, they are dissatisfied with their current circumstances. They are depicted as rebels or revolutionaries against outdated lifestyles. They find it difficult to accept the current adversity in



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ISSN 2454-8596

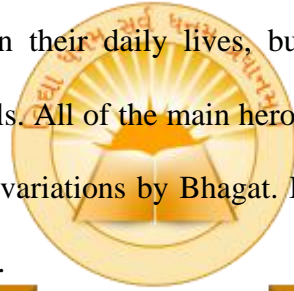
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their lives. They retaliate, revolt, or attempt to reform the unyielding circumstances that surround them. Chetan Bhagat's female characters are seen as more advanced, pragmatic, and rebellious than the traditional Indian womanhood mentality. All of the main female protagonists are depicted with postmodern sensibilities in their thinking and behaviour patterns, which differ from the ideal concept of Indian womanhood in many ways.

A Study of Chetan Bhagat's Female Characters

Neha, Priyanka, Vidya, Ananya, Aarti, and Riya, among Bhagat's main female characters in his fictions, are depicted as realistic representations of postmodern Indian female sensibilities. They are educated, advanced, and modernized, but they have an overabundance of modernity in their thinking and behaviour patterns. They are practical in their daily lives, but their practicality is self-centred, and it contradicts many Indian womanhood ideals. All of the main heroines are depicted with a common mentality of postmodern sensibilities in all of their variations by Bhagat. Individualistic, pragmatic, and free-spirited are the temperaments of Bhagat's heroines.



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Neha is a character in the film Five Point Someone. In Bhagat's debut novel Five Point Someone, Neha is the main female protagonist. Prof. Cherian, her father, is a strict and principled professor. She stays away from him because she doesn't agree with the lifestyle he's created. She thinks like a modern person. She tries to stay away from her father and avoids talking to him. She acts as a passive defiant to her father's dominance in her family. She despises talking to her father, and whenever she does, they get into heated exchanges, escalating the tension in their household. Hari, a young loafer who studies in the department headed by her father, is the boy she dates. She encourages him to take a test from her father's office. Neha is a modern girl with a lot of freedom. She is in a relationship with Hari, who is a heavy drinker and smoker. Hari is not a serious person in any way. She enjoys his physical company, but she is not seriously in love



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with him because she has never said or expected Ryan to say the three magic words that express love. When her parents go to the railway tracks to pay their respects to her deceased brother Samir, she enjoys physical pleasure with his boyfriend and also requests a cigarette, believing that a cigarette is good after sexual intercourse. She cheats her parents for her pleasure by having physical pleasure with a boy who is not very serious in his studies or life, and when her parents are only a kilometer away. She betrays her parents' trust. Neha has been portrayed as a modern female character who is independent and individualistic in nature, with different perspectives and understandings of life than the previous generation's traditional concept.

Priyanka is the main female protagonist in Night @the Call Center. She is from a middle-class family, but she is a modern woman. She holds a bachelor's degree. Nobody is allowed to interfere in her personal life. She has developed her own unique tastes and dislikes. She has chosen her boyfriend. Despite the fact that her mother dislikes him, she continues to date him. She dresses in whatever she wants. She is unconcerned with what other people think or say. She works the night shift at a call center. She dresses in modern clothing that complements her appearance. She prefers to eat fast food in high-end restaurants in order to maintain her modernity. She dislikes golden jewellery because she believes it is outdated and that only aunts prefer to wear it. Her mother is of a traditional mindset.

She wants her daughter Priyanka to be respectful of her feelings about her. Priyanka is a very independent person. She initially obeys her mother's commands, but as she grows older, she begins to believe that she has matured and that her mother is attempting to dominate her, implying that she rebels against her mother's dominance. Her mother wants Priyanka to marry a well-established boy, preferably an NRI, and to be away from her boyfriend Shyam, a call center co-worker who is a loser of some sort. Priyanka used to be in a relationship with Shyam. On her third date with Shyam, Priyanka appears to be a very irresponsible girl who approaches Shyam for love making. Her expression: when was the last time we made love? (Bhagat One 102) clearly exposes the fact that she has enjoyed love making with him earlier



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many a times.

She does it because she enjoys it. She plans to enjoy confined sex in a company Qualis car on her third date with Shyam, and she asks if Shyam has a condom, for which she feels no guilt. When Priyanka realizes that Shyam is not well-adjusted in life and that her life might be disrupted if she stays with him, she ends her relationship with him and agrees to her mother's wish for her to marry an NRI boy named Ganesh, who is doing well in life. She is content with her engagement to an NRI, and she does not allow her mother to play a significant role in her decision. She wants to marry him for a secure and comfortable life, but she needs more time to get to know her fiancé. For her marriage, she disregards her mother's haste. In addition to being an individualist, Priyanka is intolerant of social evils such as dowry and domestic violence of any kind. She has the audacity to speak out against such wrongdoings in public. Shyam and Priyanka were on their second date at Havmore restaurant in chapter 10, titled My Past Dates with Priyanka-II. It felt like a home away from home. They were having a great time there. They ate delicious food. They discussed their coworkers. As they were getting ready to leave, they overheard an elderly woman berating her daughter-in-law. She was torturing her with her venomous words because she had brought in insufficient dowries. Priyanka couldn't stand it any longer, so she intervened in another family's dispute to defend a helpless daughter-in-law who was being tortured by her husband and mother-in-law. The complexities of modern sensibilities among the young generation of contemporary India are easily understood here.

Vidya in Three Mistakes of My Life, is a striking example of the young generation's modernized mindset. She does not like being manipulated by her parents while she is still in school. She is a young lady who is dissatisfied with her current situation. She wants to live her life according to her desires. She doesn't want any kind of external dominance in her life. She dislikes being referred to as a "indigenous" town girl. She wants to pursue her career on her own terms, not as dictated by her parents. Her parents want her to become a doctor, but she wants to study public relations and live in a big city like Bombay. She believes in



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unrestricted relationships, despite the fact that she is only eighteen years old. She approaches Govind, her brother Ishaan's best friend and her Maths tuition teacher. She develops a physical relationship with him as a result of her overabundance of modernity consciousness. On her eighteenth birthday, they have a physical relationship on her house's terrace in the evening. Here, the relationship between student and teacher is no longer sacred. Vidya defrauds her parents on the terrace in the name of Maths tuition, despite the fact that they are present on the ground floor and have no idea what is going on. This isn't the end of their sexual relationship. In the story, it is mentioned that they have had sexual pleasure eight times (Bhagat Three 206).

Vidya is a character who is depicted as a young woman obsessed with modernity. She has a strong attraction to modernity even at such a young age. She lives in a lower-middle-class neighbourhood, but she has aspirations for a better life. Through the character of Vidya in this novel, Bhagat has portrayed the complete replica of the lower middle-class mentality of female young generation in contemporary India.

Ananya in Two States Ananya is a post-graduate student. She comes from a Tamil Iyer family where non-vegetarian food and the consumption of wine or vodka are strictly prohibited. Despite this, she eats non-vegetarian food and drinks vodka with Krish, his classmate. She prefers to live in the modern world. She prefers to dress in shorts and smoke a nicotine-laced cigarette. She tells Krish that she was born into the purest of upper-class families, but she prefers to smoke a tobacco-laced cigarette. She also freely employs a number of derogatory terms. Ananya has no qualms about inviting her boyfriend Krish to her hostel room to read with her. In the hostel room, she also gets physical with him. She is a young woman who lives in the modern world. She is financially self-sufficient. She works for a multinational corporation. She won't put up with any unnecessary pressure from her future mother-in-law. She responds to all of Kavita's taunts, who happens to be her boyfriend Krish's mother. She is opposed to the dowry system. She expresses her outrage at Rajji mama's humiliation at the hands of the bridegroom's family. The bridegroom's family requests a cash difference because Rajji mama is unable to provide the promised large car. As a modern youth, Ananya



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will not tolerate this incident and will skillfully handle the situation and resolve the issue. She is not a fan of arranged marriages. She wants to marry a boy of her choice, but only with her parents' permission. She thinks it's a silly idea to keep her virginity for her husband, and she laughs at Harish, who is highly educated and has come to see her for marriage. Against the wishes of her traditional Tamil family, she invites her boyfriend to dinner. She misses the non-vegetarian food and wine she used to have in her neighborhood, so she plans to have it with her boyfriend Krish at his rented apartment. She enjoys sitting on the beach kissing her boyfriend and walking through the market with him hand in hand, unconcerned about the so-called family reputation imposed by her traditional family. She is a character who is very self-reliant. Regardless of her disagreements with her parents about her life-choice, partner's she will not tolerate any insults directed at her parents. She even breaks up with Krish as a result of the insulting incident with her parents, and she never attempts to contact him again. In comparison to all of Bhagat's other lead female characters, Ananya appears to be more mature and advanced.



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In Revolution 2020, Aarti is the main female protagonist. When the fictional story begins, she is a high school student. She is the granddaughter of the former MLA for the constituency and the daughter of the district magistrate. Despite her strong family background, she prefers to be self-sufficient. She wants to take an aviation course and become an air hostess. She has been advanced and modern in her thinking and behavior since she was in school, despite the fact that she is an average student. She has a date with Gopal, the main character. She is free to go river rafting with Gopal on the Ganga. As she grows older, she is greatly influenced by Raghav, the main character, who is opposed to all forms of corruption in the country. She, like India's modern youth, believes that there should be no corruption of any kind in the country. Gopal, who is now corrupt from top to bottom, approaches her, but she keeps a safe distance from him because she despises corruption. Aarti's character has been twisted to be more pragmatic and opportunistic, like modern youth who are easily swayed by the fear of loss in any form. When Aarti cannot see her secure future with



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Raghav while fighting the corrupt system, she bends towards Gopal, who is surrounded by all of life's luxuries. She is having sex with Gopal prior to marriage, and she is only slightly concerned that she is betraying Raghav by doing so. Despite her modernity and advanced thinking, Aarti's character does not dominate the novel's situations. The author has depicted Aarti's characters from various modern perspectives. The character of Aarti exemplifies the modern female sensibility of being unconcerned about public issues and exploitation of any kind, and only thinking about herself and her family. Aarti could have been shown supporting Raghav in his noble deed of fighting corruption with all her might, but her actions are depicted as personal decisions that have nothing to do with the public good.

Riya is the main character in the novel Half Girlfriend. She attended an English-medium school and is fluent in the language. She is also an excellent basketball player. Her language, fashion sense, way of thinking, and way of life are all modern. In the case of Riya, the researcher's hypothesis that Bhagat's heroines suffer from an overdose of modernity is proven false. When compared to the other five main female protagonists, Riya's character appears to have developed from various perspectives. Riya is modern in her thinking and behaviour, but not to the point of being excessively so. Riya's character appears to be very close to the ideal of Indian modernity. Madhav is a friend of hers, but he cannot be considered her boyfriend in the modern sense. Madhav's attempts to be physical with Riya do not sit well with her. She allows kissing and hugging on occasion, but she deftly prevents their friendship from progressing any further. In Riya's case, drinking vodka, smoking cigarettes, partying, and enjoying sexual pleasures with her boyfriend are not acceptable recreational activities. She appears to be very tolerant, as she does not immediately leave her in-house law's due to unbearable torture for fear of social or family infamy, but she is bold enough to leave her in-house law's when the torture becomes unbearable. She isn't as rebellious as Priyanka and Aarti, who are averse to any form of injustice or exploitation in their lives.



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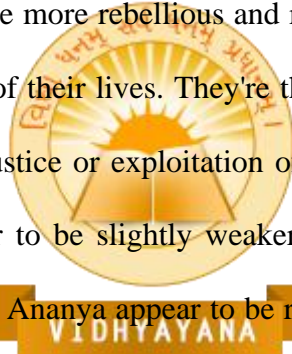
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Conclusion

Chetan Bhagat's female characters are shown to be more modern, advanced, pragmatic, and, of course, individualistic. They exemplify India's post-modern female generation. In his fictions, the writer appears to have captured the multi-faceted modern sensibilities of contemporary India's female generation. The female characters are shown to be deviating from the so-called ideal traditional Indian womanhood concept. In terms of thinking and behavior, almost all female characters are depicted as more advanced and irresponsible. All of Bhagat's female characters appear to have crossed defined boundaries of idealism in their lives. They consume vodka, smoke cigarettes, attend parties, disobey their parents, and engage in sexual activity with their boyfriends on a regular basis. In addition to advanced or westernized behavior, Bhagat's female characters are shown to be more rebellious and revolutionary in various fictions. They find it difficult to accept the negative aspects of their lives. They're the type of characters who can do whatever they want. They react quickly to any injustice or exploitation of any kind perpetrated by others. With the exception of Aarti and Riya, who appear to be slightly weaker in attitude and behaviour and victims of circumstance, Neha, Priyanka, Vidya, and Ananya appear to be rebellious and revolutionary in their actions and reactions.



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