

## PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF CHETAN BHAGAT'S NOVEL: ONE INDIAN GIRL

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### ABSTRACT

The simple meaning of literature is the reflection of society through written work of a particular culture or people. The aim of a few novelists is to represent the society as it is where as others aim at representing as it must be and a radical few bring in a touch of magical realism bringing in creativity into reality. Chetan Bhagat, the youth icon in the arena of Indian English literature, has carved a unique platitude among the book lovers, especially youth. His simple and eloquent language used for the articulation of current issues in the society attracted the readers and it makes him the favourite writer among the readers of the present era. He explores the social and political issues of the contemporary young generation who passes through various challenges in their life. His writings prove that the language can make the people arouse with humanity and to build stable human relationships irrespective of culture and ethos. Bhagat explores the possibility of fictional writings and non-fiction writings to enter into the minds of the readers to make them think about the social issues and their solutions.

The present paper Is an attempt to study Chetan Bhagat's novels from psychological perspective to understand a paradigm shift in the characters behaviour. Like in Chetan Bhagat's novel "One Indian Girl" presents a female's inner psyche -her desires and storm raging inside her mind and ready to erupt and explode at even the slightest prink. If we talk about his popular fiction "Half Girlfriend" which tells how the deficiency of a human relationship can be rectified and how the incomplete can be made complete. The 'half' in the title shows incompleteness and at the end of the story, it becomes complete and contented. It also reveals the importance of language proficiency in the globalized society and how its impact can make changes in the human relationships. This paper analyses Bhagat's novels and explores how the human relationship can make changes in the life of an individual and what strategies are used by the author to make the incomplete to complete in every human relationship.

Keywords : paradigm shift, female's inner psyche, prink, globalized society, chaos etc.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most read fiction writers in Indian Writing in English. His writings are labelled as representative of issues bothering young generation. He highlights the confusions, troubles and predicaments that the youth is facing in modern society. His works are famous for their themes like love, sex, marriage, politics and educational problems prevailing in India. He is also a columnist and, in his columns, he presents social, political, economic, ethical and educational problems of Indian middle-class society. Psychoanalysis in literature has been observed as a crucial practice to dig deep into the characters as well as happenings. Sigmund Freud is considered to be the founder of the theory of personality, which has three-tier structures, i.e., id, ego, and superego. Id is the impulse, unconscious part in the mind that is based on the desire to seek immediate contentment. It does not have a grip (control) on any form of reality or consequence. The ego is responsible for creating a balance between pleasure and pain in order to maintain a realistic sense here on earth. It is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality. Ego is aware that all the needs cannot be met at a given time. Ego operates the reality principle in order to satisfy the id's demands as well as compromise according to reality. Without superego, Freud believed people would act out with aggression and other immoral behaviour because the mind would not understand the difference between right and wrong. Superego provides yardsticks for separating wrong from the right as Freud believes : whereas the ego is essentially the representative of the external world, of reality, the super-ego stands in contrast to it as the representative of the internal world, of the id. Conflicts between the ego and the ideal will, as we are now prepared to find, ultimately reflect the contrast between what is real and what is mental, between the external world and the internal world." (Freud & Riviera, 2011a). These above-mentioned personalities propounded by Sigmund Freud can be viewed in Radhika which has developed due to the discrimination that she has faced in her life since her childhood, so it can be said that the societal role is

clearly visible in forming Radhika's personality as Erik H. Erikson has explained in his book **Identity : Youth and Crisis**:

*Only Psychoanalysis and social science together can eventually chart the course of individual's life in the setting of a changing community." (Erikson, 1968a).*

*Freud proposes that literature and the other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined or fantasied, fulfilment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of mortality and propriety (248)*

The study aims to analyze Chetan Bhagat's novels to understand the role and importance of society in framing protagonist's psyche reflected in their behaviour by applying Freud's personality theory of id, ego and superego. It also aims to examine customary gender discrimination on the basis of colour, education and gender and their impact on human being as well as society and community.

Chetan Bhagat's novel "One Indian Girl" was analyzed by using qualitative and analytical method. The researchers study discourse of the novel using socio-psychoanalytical approach. The study has been designed to investigate how the socio-psychological approach in the text can help to investigate Radhika's psychological conflicts, which are the result of traditional discrimination based on colour, gender and socio-cultural environment. It is believed that social constructs (such as family, culture, income, and religion) and psychological factors (such as emotions, perceptions and beliefs) plays a significant role in shaping the norms in him or her. As a result, the psyche is shaped by the social ethos.

The novel presents the continuous psychological conflict blended with feminist thoughts and desires which get triggered in various situations. The novel begins with Radhika Mehta, trying to settle down a sudden crisis of room allocation at Marriott Hotel in Goa where her family has landed for the first destination wedding in Mehta family, that is, of Radhika herself. She agrees to get married just because of her ever-grumbling mother. The decision to the wedding with Brijesh is her last attempt to have happy and satisfied life after two failures in relationships. In Goa, Radhika finds herself in a situation where she should be more concerned about her facial value as she is getting married within few days but she is found allocating rooms for the guests. This is where ideas clash in Indian society. A bride cannot allocate the rooms to guests in her marriage. Radhika, in the novel, has described herself that she has her own opinion on everything, and it can be seen right from the beginning. Radhika, can be seen as a feminist and a representative of women empowerment. She becomes agitated to hear the logic of 'girl's side' and 'boy's side' in which the 'girl's side' has to adjust and it would be a kind of crime if the 'boy's side' is told to be adjusted. She does not want to compromise with the less number of the rooms for the 'girl's side' whereas her mother and Kamla bua adjusted all the guests of 'girl's side' in a fewer number of rooms using "complex algorithm with criteria like the people sharing the rooms should not hate each other (mixed gender rooms were avoided even if it involved people aged eighty plus)" (4) and somehow 50 rooms were kept aside from the "boys side".

Radhika doesn't want to be dolled up for the 'boy's side', but all goes in vain when an Indian mother shows her emotional side. Though she doesn't want to be dressed up, she has to do so; though she doesn't want to get married to a guy she hardly knows, she is going to do so. This is the Indian social construct; where a girl has to do so many things that she doesn't want to do willingly. Radhika, despite being the Vice President at one of the topmost banks, has to kneel down in front of the demands of society. She loses weight, becomes slim, and goes on diets, just to look beautiful at her wedding. Gender equality was not only the thing that Radhika demanded, many a time Radhika raises the topic of the difference between the colour complexions as she has wheatish complexion and her elder sister, Aditi didi is fair.

*She asks why the people don't call the fair-complexioned people "rice-ish" (7).*

She refers herself to the girl shown in fairness cream before using the cream and her sister, the one after using the cream. Radhika had been a very intelligent student but when it comes to popularity, she was not popular like her Aditi didi who was fair and started dieting at the age of 12 only. Aditi won the title of Miss Hotness at a farewell whereas Radhika faces pranks and becomes a topic of laughter. It's not only the literature that one can get reference resembling black Madonna in Christian iconography and Shakespeare's Othello but this distinction has been deeply ingrained in Indian society and somewhere in the Indian psyche too where we can observe the cases of colour discrimination even among the family members. Bhagat has very nicely presented this in his work. The instances like-

*"you should also get married soon" (8) and "The younger the better. Especially for someone like you ". (8)*

Said by Aditi didi is the perfect examples of colour discrimination prevailing in society where a girl having 'wheatish' complexion should get married soon with anybody. Moreover, Radhika has been symbolized here as a strong and intelligent girl who completes her studies and gets a job on day zero and gets an offer to work in Goldman Sachs, New York. Instead of listening to her sister and getting married, she chooses her own way, simultaneously the thought of looking beautiful occupies Radhika's mind and as a result of it Radhika can be seen as the one who waxed to look beautiful in order to be noticed and loved by Debu, and this is true even when she is dating Neel.

The Id in Radhika wants to get intimate with Debu but the ego inside her wouldn't allow her to do so. Sigmund Freud rightly delineates in his book, *The Ego and the Id*:

*"The ego has the task of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies, and endeavours to substitute the reality-principle for the pleasure-principle which reigns supreme in the id. In the ego perception plays the part which in the id devolves upon instinct. The ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the id which contains the passions."* (Freud and Riviera, 201 (b)).

Radhika along with her mother makes a mutual agreement to marry Brijesh. She reveals about her relationships to him and feels better but still hides all other bitter truths of those relationships. Radhika finds herself in complicated circumstances where she faces difficulty in taking decisions. It arises when Debu texts Radhika after three years which could have been ignored by Radhika or should not have replied to it but instead of doing so, she replies back and had a good number of conversations with him. She focuses on messaging Debu. She gets distracted even though she decided not to check it due to which she can't focus on Brijesh's words. This makes her acquaint with the lie to Brijesh and reminds the readers that they might not like her as she is talking lies to her husband-to-be. Things accidentally happen where Radhika keeps on doing so many things which she could have resisted doing. She reveals the wedding place to Debu which makes her fall into a more complicated situation. Her bafflement augments as Debu and Neel arrive at her wedding and want her to marry either of them. Knowing the behaviour of both the men that they had done to her before, she gives those ideas thought and lets her suffer from so many conflicts which flood her mind.

Karen Horney, rightly perceives in her *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neurosis*:

*"When conflicts center about the primary issues of life, it is all the more difficult to face them and resolve them."* (Horney, 2001a)

Among all the men, only Brijesh seems to be a true feminist to which he calls humanist. Radhika admires him for his support in her decision.

## 2. CONCLUSION

The paper reveals the life of Radhika and the complexities of her psyche as she gradually shrivels from existence which lets her escape from the reality and find solace by involving in relationships. In the end, Radhika finds her way to lead a peaceful life. She comes out of her confused State of mind and understands her existence. Thus, *One Indian Girl* becomes a tale that raises social issues and highlights the ways how the people around affect the psychological status of an individual which creates a lot of suffering and confusion due to dissatisfied desires.

## 3. REFERENCES

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