

DELINEATION OF FEMALE CHARACTER RIYA IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S NOVEL 'A HALF GIRLFRIEND'

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ABSTRACT

Chetan Bhagat is a very great writer. He has a cute and very careful observation of a particular situation. He has presented his characters in the flow of reality and connectivity. He visualizes the whole panorama of the sense and situation. When we read his characters, we remember the characters of Shakespeare. Though the heroines of Chetan Bhagat are brought up in the modern world but they are as innocent as the heroines of Shakespeare. Sometimes they rebels against the protocols of society and sometimes they become scapegoats of society. So Chetan Bhagat has not directly but indirectly advocated the feminism in his novels and urged for their rights to live as a respected and honoured person. Though he has presented his characters on the platform of modernization and globalization, they have not escaped from the persecution, harassment as well as domestic violence. His characters cried heartily to get too. But everyone follows the protocols of society, everyone give the reason to hide himself behind the curtain of tradition and foppishness. They thought about only their prestige than others mind and sorrow. Instead of showing any sympathy about them, they always protected themselves by any pretentions, then what might they be rich or poor. His every heroine suffers a lot by anyone and anywhere. But, they fought sometimes the pretending society or sometimes the real one. They fought bravely and they get their rights and respect firmly. They never begged or showed cowardness but snatched their rights and equal status in the male dominated and pompous society by showing their strength and making their career.

Keywords : *Feminism, Domestic violence, Modernization , Physical love, Emotional security, Playing basketball, Richness, Innocence and Self respect.*

INTRODUCTION

Bhagat has presented perfectly the womanness of his women. They behave with men sometimes in pretending manner or sometimes in a realistic way. But they never disclosed their reality or real happenings in their mind. His heroines give the preference to their feelings as



well as their career. They lived in modern age so they have to be independent on their own basis. Because they don't want to be dependent on others. So sometimes they seem very urging and stubborn, but they are very soft and emotional as well.

Even Riya Somani in his 'Half Girlfriend '(2014)' was not exception for it. Chetan Bhagat has presented her character very dexterously and carefully with preciseness with female whims and ambitious mind in his novel 'Half Girlfriend'. One important thing about his characters is that they are different than other girls. They have some exceptional qualities such as strongness, braveness and beautiful. His most heroines are beautiful and capable to attract others especially boys. So Riya Somani was the same. She was tall with long neck, long arms and long legs held ever guys attention. She was a basketball player and a part of the sports- quota applicants' team. She was a good player. When Madhav Jha from Dumraon, Bihar, admitted through the sports quota in the same Stephan's College in Delhi, saw her at first time on the ground while playing basketball, he fell in her love. He felt something in heart but he couldn't express. He thought that he should speak to her atleast once in his life.

*" No, I wouldn't say I fell in love with her. I wouldn't even say I felt attracted to her. But I felt something deep inside, strong enough for heart to say, you have to talk to this girl at least once in your life".
(p.15, Half Girlfriend).*

Madhav was attracted more and more towards her. He wanted to make friendship with her, but he was frightening about that he was from a rural area. He was unable to speak in simple English. He used his Bihari accents. He knows only Bhojpuri Hindi and even it was in Bihari accent. In that some mixed Hindi and English language, he introduces himself to her. She understands to him and becomes ready to be his friend because Madhav was a state level basketball player and he knew about the game and its rules. They were playing always on the ground. He was involving in her day by day, but the problem was of communication. One day he asks her that she was able to speak Hindi, she laughs loudly. Because that question was very foolish for her. A language was common for her, but the matter or message was important for her. This tendency of her shows her modesty. When she says that Madhav realizes the world turns in slow motion. He was very happy and feels great and unburdened..

*' Yes, you speak Hindi?'
She laughed, ' You keep asking me that . Of course I do. Why?'
' My English isn't good,' I said and switched languages. 'Can I talk to you in Hindi? '(p. 22, Half Girlfriend).*

Chetan Bhagat presents here her as a modern globalised girl. When Madhav noticed her delicate eyebrows. When she spoke, they moved slightly. They had the perfect length,



thickness and width. He thought she would win a 'best eyebrows' competition as modern girls do. So Bhagat has presented her through the perfect spectacle of modern girl. So Madhav always tries to say to her that he never saw a girl more beautiful than her but he had not courage to say that and even he was not controlling himself from her. Now Riya became his everything without her he was unable to breathe.

Riya was from a rich family. Her father was a big business man and a wealthy person. She was coming by BMW car in the college. She enjoyed everything which rich girl can do, but she never gave the importance to it. She has not the value only for money. She thought the richness of mind is important than the richness of money. She felt emotional security is important. Now a days that secureness has been lost.

'You are rich, right?' I said. Idiot Madhav. Couldn't think of anything Better.
She laughed at my direct question, 'Rich in money, or rich in mind? Two different things'.
'Huh? Rich like wealthy?'
'Unfortunately, yes'.
What's unfortunate? Everyone wants to be rich'.
'Yeah, I guess. It just embarrasses me. Plus, all the obsession with Money and how it defines you, I just don't get it'. (p.25, Half Girlfriend).

Chetan Bhagat has showed the same quality of both Riya and Aarti that they don't value the money because they are already from rich family but they both valued only the richness of mind. They feel only the need of understanding and the broadness of mind. Chetan Bhagat indicates that this is not applicable only to Riya and Aarti but to the whole category of women in the world. Because they are very emotional and they want the mental satisfaction and mental security. His heroines are ambitious but greedy for money. They give the emphasis on building and bonding the relationship not on the mechanism of dissatisfaction and separation from human values. So his characters live in the present, they live in globalised and modern world but they are attached with cultural values, especially Indian culture.

Through Madhav's mother, Ranisahiba Durga Jha, Bhagat has presented a strong willed lady who pursuit for her dream in a very inconvenient situation. She ran the Dumraon Royal School, which taught seven hundred kids from nearby villages. Bhagat has always tried to show that if any woman decides to do anything, she can do definitely. She has same power and strongness as the man has and she is equal to fight and struggle as the man. She runs her business as she runs her family.

Bhagat shows here again another quality of Riya as a modern girl.

Though she lives in modern era, in a sophisticated and high profile family, she feels uncomfortable in her own family. Her family is obsessed with money only. They have no any concern with relations, they have no time to think about their members. She thinks her brothers won't pay attention towards her after her parents. Even she has a doubt that one day her brothers would take over the business. So she wanted to get married and leave. She thinks only aim of her life is not to bear kids and shopping. She is not interested in it only. She wants to live free life and make her own career, like a modern girl.

*"I don't know, also, I don't matter, any brothers do, because they will Take over the business one day. I'm supposed to shut up, get married And leave. The high point of my life is to have kids and shop".
'And that's not what you want to do?'
'No!' She almost shouted. 'You know me better than that. Don't you?'. (p.32).*

Riya is a very ambitious girl. She is not interested in traditional way of life to marry and get only children. She wants to be something different than others as a modern girl. She wants to be independent to make her own career. But she has a doubt that she would do it or not.

*"In fact, I took up basketball because I saw an NBA game live at Madison Square Garden in New York".
'You have seen an NBA game live?', I said.
'Yeah, the atmosphere.....it's electric, you should see one sometime Madhav'.
I shrugged, Anyway, I like your dream Riya, ' I said. It's double Not unreal'.
'Unreal, like?', she said.
'Like becoming a top actress or the prime minister. You just want Something simple'.
She smiled, ' Nothing is simple for a girl in a family like mine', she said. (p.68)*

Through this conversation of Riya with Madhav, we come to know that though the modern girls live in modern world but they don't feel secure and at last they have to follow the advice of their family or parents. So when Riya's marriage was decided with her Rakhi -brother Rohan, a son of her father's friend, at that time she doesn't show any reaction. Though she has no wish to marry, she becomes agree. Why? Because they told her only that he is Rich, handsome and ambitious. So Bhagat presents here the issue of Indian marriage system. Girls have to marry sometimes without their consent. They have to obey their parents. They have no rights to choose their spouse on their own level or they are not asked about their wish. She was



obliged to leave her college in middle for her marriage. No one thought about her career. Her husband told her that she would learn from any well reputed college in London. Riya sacrificed all her career for him but in front of richness and busy schedule, he forgot all. But when she gets the divorce from her husband because of the domestic violence from her husband and her mother-in-law and her parents support them instead of her, she comes to know the reality of the real world. Chetan Bhagat has not presented the feminism or advocated the rights of women directly, but he has presented the feministic attitude through Riya here. Riya's husband was not paying attention towards her because of his busy schedule, he was drinking and slapping her, even her mother-in-law was expecting only to wear Indian clothes.

'Wear only Indian clothes. Can you believe this? This is what Rohan's Mom said to me today.'(p.201,HGF).'
'He slapped me in front of his mother thrice. She didn't stop him. She liked it.He even pulled my hair'.(p.201)

When Riya comes to know about the illegal relationship of Rohan with Kristin, she didn't feel bad but she felt light because she was free to take tough decision to leave him. Here Bhagat shows the feministic attitude. If her husband expects from her to be loyal to him, even she can expects from him the same, but it didn't happen. She was his wife, she was equal with him in everything. When she came at her parents' home and told such things even they didn't react anything. Opposite they told Rohan is right. He is a conquerer. She can't complaint by fearing to the people.

'He seemed so nice',Dad said at dinner without looking at me. I explained Rohan to them, 'Rohan liked to conquer.Whether it is a Hotel property or his wife , he liked the thrill of chasing more than he Chased'.(p. 202).

Chetan Bhagat presents here the dominating nature of men over the women.They think women has no value, she has no feelings, she is only useful commodity to satisfy the men's thirst. As Lord Tennyson says in his poem 'The Princess'(1851),

*'Man is the hunter, woman is his game,
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skin;
They love us for it, and we ride them down'. (Lines147-150).*

So she left the home and find the job in Nestle Company in Patna to be independent. Madhav met again her there, she helped him to get fund from Bill Gates Foundation for his school. She teaches him English to give a speech. But when Madhav's mother comes to know about their

relationship and that she is divorcee, she warns her to be out of his son's life. When she asks her about her marriage, Riya says she was stupid at that time. She regrets too much on her decision, but time has gone. Her marriage and divorce became only at her twenty. Even Madhav's mother was not ready to accept her in that condition. Ranisahiba thinks about her status, her position in the society, so she warns her. She insults her, though she has no any lust for Madhav. So unwillingly she leaves Madhav's home without giving any intimation to him. She protects her self-respect and to be independent and to make her career as a singer, she leaves for New York. She speaks lie to Madhav that she is suffering from a fake lungs cancer against her wish. She sacrifices her love for others but she never became a burdon on any one.

So Bhagat's heroines live in modern world but their modernness rooted in the past thoughts and traditions of society, because of it they have to suffer more and more, though they are innocent like the heroines of Shakespeare.

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