

A Critical Review of Thorny Entanglement of a Girl's Life in Chetan Bhagat's 'One Indian Girl'

(A Study of Influence on Indian Diasporas of Foreign Culture)

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Abstract

One Indian Girl is a master piece novel By Chetan Bhagat. The title of the novel is up to the mark as the girl, Radhika Mehta maintains Indian culture in spite of working in the world top most bank: Gold Man Sachs, an Investment Bank and is the vice president of Distress Debt: Special Situation Group. She is a girl between ages of 26 to 29 around which the whole 42 episodes in different incidents revolve. She gets 150,000 to 175,000 USD plus stock option as a salary. She is a girl of multicultural blend. On one side she is used to taking high qualities wines (Shiraz and Champagne etc.) and intoxicated drugs like weed grass (bhanga and ganja etc.). She has a great learning of Feminism that makes her take bold decision like cancelling her own marriage in spite of all ceremonies performed. On the other side, she maintains Indian cultures. She bows down before Sai Baba with her would be husband and touches the feet of all elders who came from groom side. Although she likes to watch English movies, she sings and dances on Indian Song: 'Chittiyani kalaiyan ve, o mery Chittiyani kalaiyan ve'. She participates in Mehendi, Dance Bhajan ceremonies in her on marriage that is going to be, but cancelled by her. The novel contains all the ingredients that Aristotle's theory of Catharsis in tragedy deserves. Its curious reading can cure a sadly or woeful heart due to involving the elements of purification or purgation to rise the feelings of pity and fear. The plot of the novel is compact and well constructed. The girl is entangle in thorny net, has a fickle mind, but some time a bold one also. She is desirous to have kids and a good husband and so she repeatedly pursues Debu, about 28 and Neel Gupta bigger more than one decade from her age. She is not a prostitute or marries-making object, but a girl who has intimate relationship with only her husband only. That is why she proposes for her marriage just after intimacy with the both. When she does not find them so, she breaks her relationship with them. All incidents in 42 episodes are evidence of a strong Feminism. The novel succeeds in proving that females can also reach the extremity or at the top if they are provided full liberty as being a student of IIMA and getting her M.B.A., she deserves the top position and is able to suggest a remedy if any firm or Industry is going to shut down. The language of novel is stylish, modern, communicative or spoken. It deserves all the salient features to make someone able how to speak on various occasions.

In ancient time, human beings used to wander to a great distances in search of food and shelter. They stayed wherever they found their needs fulfilled. They had to

change their dwelling places in case of any natural disaster or any other reason happened. This is not the case with human beings, but also with all living creatures or

animates (e.g. birds, animals, and organism). They also move from one place or region to the other one periodically or seasonally in search of food, shelter or any other security reasons. All living creatures mostly dwell where they make their ends meet. 'Human civilization' and 'Indian Historical Periods' are the evidence of this thing. Indian History is made of strong, but invisible threads following five historical phases: Saraswati (Harappan Civilization 6500 BC-1000 BC) or called Vedic Period, Golden Period (500 BC-800AD), Muslim Influence in India (1000 AD – 700 AD), British Period (1700 AD -1947 AD), and Modern India (1947- till date). During these periods, people have changed their dwelling places, regions or countries and settled in other ones. This dispersion is continuous process and is known as Diaspora.

The term 'Diaspora' is important one in the present scenario (especial in research area to judge the change in attitudes, behaviour, feelings, customs, tradition and culture of the people who have settled in another countries due to Jobs or career needs.) comes from Ancient Greek 'dispersion' a word meaning driving of or spreading something that was originally located (as people, or language or culture). Merriam-webster.com defines Diaspora as 'a group of people who lives outside the area in which they lived for a long time or in which their ancestors lived'. These people dwelling in other countries are known as immigrants, migrated people, or Diasporas.

The present paper deals with how far Indian Immigrant (as depicted in Chetan Bhagat's One Indian Girl), Radhika Mehta, a native residents of H Block, Naraina Vihar in West

Delhi later shifted to Bombay in India and then New York, Hong Kong, and London due to career Prospective: promotions and transfer, is changed culturally (in language, food, architecture and art, clothing, customs, celebrations etc.).The well known novelist, Chetan Bhagat presents heart shattering and rendering incidents of Radhika's life in 44 episodes related to overindulgence in love affairs, and making illegal relationships with Debu, an employee in BBDO, an advertising agency on Madison Avenue, New York, and Neel Gupta, a partner in Goldman Sachs in New York about 44 years of age. In each episode, he knits the threads made of either over excitement of joy: some time for love and the other too much increased in her bonus and total salary or her distressful mental condition caused by not making her a nod to be tied in marriage knot.

The novel involves well knit design, compact and closely knit plot. It is blend of both tragic and serious elements. It also presents realistic picture of life. There is balance in action and incidents. Every incident in 42 episodes seems really. If someone curiously makes the study of novel, he is compelled to realize that the characters are making a conversation in live form before him. The influence of the incidents in the novel is so real that it accommodates for a long time in the memory of the readers, and some time the tragic elements becomes so active that they make the reader shed his tears and has a deep sympathy to the chief protagonist, Radhika Mehta as she has an inner conflict to fight the situation instantly either to win or to lose. Inner frustration or inner dual of the girl between the age of 22nd to 29th is so

intense that readers also shakes within and keen to know the coming consequences. Some incidents in the novel are so deeper and uncontrollable that readers are pricked to shout: 'Radhika, don't do this. Radhika, control yourself.' There are equal feelings of sympathy and hatred that the readers realize: sympathy toward the girl, Radhika and hatred towards Debu and Neel Gupta who have made this innocent girl pollute. There is no delay in action like Shakespeare's Hamlet as depicted in Act I, scene V. The ghost of Hamlet's father suggests him to take revenge of his father's foul and unnatural murder revealing the fact that the serpent who stung his father is none but his uncle who bears the crown, But Hamlet delays in action in taking the revenge to make sure that it was really his uncle who killed his father. In Bhagat's novel, Heroine or chief protagonist does not delay in action. She wants the consequence instantly whatever the situation may arrive. She gives full liberty to her lover Debu to attend with her the most expensive hotels and to drink special wines like Shiraz and Champagne etc. She also allows him to live with her and to make illegal relationship with her, but when she thinks her own family, her own kids, she does not delay in asking Debu to get her married. "About marriage. How many times do I have to bring it up?" I said, 'I feel like I have to beg you.'... 'Tell me what is your plan for us. You want to get married in one year? Two year? Three year? Something at least?'... 'We have dated, sorry, lived-in for about two years. I think it is absolute the time to at least think about this' " (14, 94). The chief protagonist Radhika is herself responsible for her own

doom. Her extra frankness makes her victim of her misfortune. The entire incidents in the novel are serious. If someone starts reading the novel with a curious look, he hardly finds any chance to divert his attention towards it. There is always a desire to know what will happen the next? The whole novel runs very smoothly.

The entire novel depicts very stylish and modern way of communication. If a new learner studies the novel with a firm devotion, it is certainty that he shall learn: hi-fi way and style of spoken English. The novel presents very impressive style of Radhika's talking. "'Fantastic...?' 'Sure. Sorry...?' 'Hey...?' 'True...?' 'What?' 'Yeah,'... 'Well,'... 'No just...?' 'You sure?...' 'So then what?...' 'Yeah, of course,'... 'Huh?...' 'Sure...?' '...Okay....' " (14, 90-96). It discloses that novelist has a firm grip over the stylish method of 'Communicative or Spoken English'.

The novel also includes incident in episode eighth (8) relates to her illegal relationship with the first lover Debu in New York and incident in episode twenty six (26) relates to illegal relationship with Neel Gupta during Hong kong service while gone to Pengalusan Island Resort. These two episodes reveal the influence of western culture over Indian Immigrant, Radhika. She totally forgets that she was born in such a country that has been the land of great sagas, Rishis and birth place of Lord Krishna and Ram. India is world- wide famous in her rich culture. There is total denial of making illegal relation before a girl gets married as it pollutes her virginity. "Byabhicharattu bhartuah stri loke prapnoti nindhtam (a woman makes illegal relationship with other

man is considered mean)" (Smriti 5/163/214). Our Vedas and sacred religious books do not permit an unmarried girl to make any illegal relationship with anybody else. Many feminist women writer suggest some important thing to be kept in mind how to deal the girls or women with their boss as there is possibility to go wrong with them. "A woman or girl should deal with her boss in limited word and balanced language. She should talk in office only formal related to the work that is to be done...A woman or girl should not try to make personal relationship with her boss...avoid fake praise to make the boss pleased..." (Garg, 157-159). The quality of a person is determined by his gunas at what extant he has controlled over them. Prakriti has blessed each human being with three guans. "The three bind the soul to the body and don't let it free. Satgun being pure is illuminating...Rajogun keeps the soul bind to action...Tamogun deludes all embodied beings ...binds the soul to lust, intoxication, laziness and sleep. Rawan was seized by Tamogun and underwent destruction" (Dayal, 386). In the present novel, the girl Radhika has her Tamogun high that is why she forgets the culture of her native country and starts going to hotels and resort to drink wine. She slips to make illegal relationship that- ever comes in her contact showing intimacy, as a result she proves nothing at last. She makes her parents head down when she declares that she had illegal relationship with the two: Debu and Neel Gupta in the past. How painful and shameful does her mother feel when she dares to tell before all the guests about the doings of her own daughter? "We are ruined. I had no idea my

girl would do this to us. What do you do when your own child is defective?" My mother said, howling at top volume" (41,265). Radhika also gets ruined and meets destruction like Rawan who also values his Tamogun. Best examples of Indian culture are depicted in Ramayana when Sita was abducted by Rawan, but she did not melt at all before Rawan. Rambha the wife of Nalkubar also makes us introduce the rich culture of India how women keep herself refined. Rawan tries to seduce her (Rambha), but she makes negative signal being Patibrata, but Rawan does not listen to her request in spite of the fact that he made aware of she was the wife of his son, here Tamogun does not let his sex desire calm. At last he rapes Rambha and digs a deep well for his destruction as depicted in Uttarkand in Valmiki Ramayan. "Evmukta Sa taam raksho niveshya cha shilatale, Kaambhogabhisamrakto mathunayopachkrame" (Valmiki, 26/40/742". Valmiki says that Rawan didn't listen to Rambha due to his Kaamvasna, Tamogun was high and he forcefully makes her sit on the Stony seat, rapes her to make him what an orgasm feels like. This is Kaambhogbasana that later on becomes the cause of person's doom as he is cursed by Nakkubara in Balmiki Ramarana Uttarkand. "Yada haamkamam kaamarto dharshyayishyati yoshyitam, Murdha tu sapdha tasya shaklibhavita tada" (Valmiki, 26/54/743). In this couplet, Valmiki says that if Rawan in orgasm state (being sexual) further rapes, he will find his seven heads instantly fall down and shattering. The episode 8 and 26 in the novel that Bhagat deals are made so sexual intense that

someone forced to realize that he is either reading Kaamsutra book or xxx material served to him to study. The girl has been introduced in both the episode in such a manner that she is under the full grip of western culture not a bit on her Indian influence. These two episodes make the readers not to be sympathize with the girl Radhika as none thinks an Indian unmarried girl to fall so deep down as not to repent at all later on for such a mean thing that's even reading makes the reader feel shy, but the girl not. The two episodes served either intentionally or by fault or any other reason breaking the monotony that is successively maintained throughout the novel. Only a glimpse in few words about sexual relationship can make realize the readers that girl is over sexual. It doesn't need serve before the readers such huge sexual material that makes him think otherwise. Besides these two episode, Bhagat has succeeded making the novel containing tragic and serious elements to make the soul purgative or purify as Aristotle theory of Catharsis in tragedy says.

The novel maintains Aristotle's concept of 'Catharsis' (meaning 'purification' or 'purgation' or 'cleaning' or 'clarification'). Its reading can arise in someone deep feelings of pity and sorrow (fear arises from some awful incident, disastrous event, feeling of guilt occurred to someone, on the other hand pity is aroused by undeserved misfortune. Both pity and fear are related to emotions. Pity turns to fear when the hero, heroin or the chief protagonist is closely related to us and can be victim of any unwanted disaster or suffering. Pity and fear both have intimate alliance for the process

of purgation or purification. Both are successively in action and incident that cause someone to shed tears or stand hair and cry out loudly to check any misfortune going to fall on the hero or heroine whose we are fan or to whom we are sympathizes.).

The novel contains all the ingredients that the theory of feminism needs. A curious study of novel can make someone realize that Chetan Bhagat is a successful feminist of this era. No novelist has ever dare pen down so extremity over a girl's personal life including her love affair and tackling even the hardest and toughest condition as does Chetan Bhagat. When Radhika, the heroine or chief protagonist of the novel denies her arranged marriage going to be held the next day passing through (accomplishing) all ritual and ceremonies held in a very expensive hotel: Marriott hired for seven days in Goa, all are shocked at her. Members of Radhika's family are modern and have strong feelings of feminism means they are away from all patriarchal bonds. "It's her father's fault,' my mother snapped. 'He said no to anything. Ahmedabad, New York, Hong Kong, wherever she wanted to go, he would let her'" (41, 263). It is her father who let her go for doing jobs out. As Shakespeare in his plays so does Bhagat appears himself as a character to define true Feminism. Radhika defines Feminism to her would be groom, "Feminism is a movement that seeks to define, establish and achieve equal political, economical, cultural and social rights for women. A feminist is someone who believes in this movement. '...If you are a fair person and want equal opportunities for all, that's a start' " (20, 137). Feminism is not a new idea; ancient

Rishis and social workers also give their preaching time to time to improve the status of women. There are many references about Feminism in Vedic period. There have been many female saints who also composed many suktas or mantras. "Apala, the daughter of sage Atri composed 90 Stotra" (Kuril, 374).

It is feminism that makes Radhika announces before her would be husband, to her family and even before members of groom that she does not want to get married with Brijesh, the would be husband as the situation does not seem favourable to her and she was in heavy distress as she threatens the past two lovers. "Both of you, I need you to leave right now. This hotel, Goa and my life. You will not bother me, my family or my guests. No message, no calls" (40, 260). When she finds that it is not a right situation to be got married. She has tremendous courage to announce that she quits the marriage. "Hello everyone, I will just take a minute. To all in this room, I am sorry, really sorry. I am sorry because I was not prepared for this marriage but I said yes. I am sorry because I brought shame to your relatives...." (41, 265). Patriarchal concept of gender has been criticized by different Socialist, Marxist, Radical, Liberal and Post-modern Feminists. Vinoba Bhave, one of the great spiritual leaders and reformer of modern India also raised a voice for the rights of women. It also means that he favoured Feminism. "Women should come forward in all fields: Literature, Education, and Religious Ceremonies" (Bhave, 70).

The novel reveals the fact that Indian immigrants like Radhika come in the influence of foreign culture as in spite of

being a female, she goes with her boss and lover to drink wine in expensive hotels and there she drinks more and more. "I opened the fridge, found a bottle of white wine, poured myself a big glass. Then, another and another" (15,104). Even in her own marriage, none Indian girl is so excited as to take wine and smoke ganjha, bhang etc. as is Radhika. "I had to take two. Jyoti asked for another round...The girls were hysterical. We finished four champagne bottles. We ordered four more..." (3, 22-24). In her own marriage, Radhika plans with her would be husband to go have a fresh air, and there in lonely place they (both Radhika and her husband) smoke bhang. "We smoke up.' 'What? Weed?'" (20, 136). The whole family is in puzzled condition having found Radhika spoilt as she has been habitual of drinking. When they are returning from drinking, the inspector of the police, checks the scooter on which they were rode. Brijesh, her would be groom could not produce a driving license as demanded by the police cop as a result the both are taken to police station. The both call their parents. The police inspector scolds their parents as they have spoilt their children who drink and smoke on the sacred occasion as their own marriage. Parents of the both feel guilty. Radhika's mother is heart stricken. "I have never heard of any girl drinking and smoking drugs before her wedding. Never.'... 'If our relative find out, what will they think? Out of control girl.'.. 'What would the Gulatis think?'" (21, 141). Even her sister is also shocked finding her smoking intoxicated things. "Aditi didi lay next to me. 'Weed? Grass? You did grass with Brijesh?'" (21,142).

Readers are faithful towards her, as Radhika is frank, quick-witted, never tells a lie, and wants the quick result. Although there is so many faults or stains in her character, the readers are sympathetic to her. She is not a drunkard as to roam freely on the roads to satisfy himself with the cost he spends. There are certain reasons behind her habits of drinking wine. The first one is the influence or effect of foreign culture. The second one she works in world's top most banks: Goldman Sachs, an investing bank where the typical matters are discussed and after making conclusion wine is served and drunk with cheers. None can keep himself safe working in such atmosphere and none can exist without taking wine. The third one is she is vice precedent of Distress Debt: Special Situation Group that tackles the serious matters about shutting down the factory. Such matters are discussed in hi-fi restaurants with special parties and in such a condition wine is common. The fourth one is she is not at all self-pride girl. She is ready after a small debate with her mother what she wants. She pursues for her marriage at last when her mother seems much more conscious about it. She edits her Bio-data, talks to the boys who have sent her proposal for marriage, and even accepts Brijesh's proposal seeing her mother worried. It is clear that she in spite of working in the top most World Bank maintains Indian cultures. She does in her marriage what Indian traditions deserve to be followed. "I went down. I touched the feet of people I had only Skyped twice in my life...." (1, 12). In spite of someone dwelling for a long time in abroad, the culture of India accommodates in her memory forever. Radhika has seen

their parents are religious, they worship Sai Baba. In her marriage, she along with her would be husband worships Sai Baba. "Come and pray in front, beta,' one of my aunts told me. Brijesh and I went ahead and Bowed before the gods" (4, 26).

She knows predicament of a divorced woman as she is aware of Indian Rituals. She does not want that Neel should divorce his wife for her. She is shocked at when Neel Gupta presents the paper of his divorce with his wife at her marriage. "I am leaving Kusum. These are the documents,' he said...He and Kusum had filed for mutual consent divorce at the Hong Kong Family Court" (37, 237). She assumes the condition of woman when she is going to accept a divorce. She asks why he is going to take the divorce. She also wants to know if Kusam is happy while accepting a divorce. As female, she knows the trauma of a divorced woman, and so she wants to know about it from him and the same reply comes that she (Kusum) also not feeling well. Divorce is not a simple word as it seems. It moves and shatters inwardly the both, and their mental calm also lost. "But divorced women still have to bear the disapproval and displeasure of the society and also stigmatized" (Devi. R, 152).

The girl Radhika in the novel is badly entangled in her life that is why it is called thorny entanglement. Although she earns so much money and high reputation in the bank, yet she is always devoid of true love. She is an Indian girl and cannot forget the culture and tradition of India. To her, true love is that, offered by a husband. That is why she cannot bear more remaining an object to play and discard. After making friendship with Debu, she puts before him

her marriage proposal, but she fails. She tries her best to recover her love with Debu, but all in vain as she finds another white girl lying with him when she at last goes to offer her resignation for him to remain a house wife with a precious gift. She returns in very distressful mood. In frustration she drinks and empties bottles to make her balanced. This is the episode that makes the readers more sympathize with her and hate toward Debu. In high mental frustration, she resigns from her post, but it is not accepted and this is the readers demand. At last, to forget the memory of her first love, she gets transferred from New York to Hong Kong, and while on the way to New York, she

throws her mobile phone in the river so as not to miss Debu. Similarly she does not continue her illegal relationship with her boss, Neel Gupta also for a long time. She makes a demand to get with her married, but again she fails. The repetition of same incident increases the intensity of her mental frustration. She again wants to leave the city. She has learnt more from the both heart stricken incidents, and thus she does not want to entangle in the thorny net that Neel Gupta and Debu want her to marry inspect of the fact that all formalities of the marriage have been made with Brijesh. She as a shrewd observer makes both of them run away from the marriage premise.

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