

**GENDER INEQUALITY IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S *FIVE POINT SOMEONE*
AND 2 STATES: *THE STORY OF MY MARRIAGE***

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ABSTRACT

In the post millennium era, gender inequality is an overwhelming issue in India. The society has made-up the hallucination called gender. The term 'gender' indicates both genders not particularly women. In India, men seem to have the emancipation to enjoy every aspect of life but not women. Gender inequality is flooding in the veins of Indians; even the Indian by-laws have given equal rights to women as to men. Still, Indian women face societal threats such as, poor education, poor health, lack of political representation, sexual abuses, and teenage pregnancy etc. Chetan Bhagat is the most celebrated youth writer in India. Some of his novels depict gender inequality, which intimidate the society. The research paper deals with how inequity dominates the larger societies towards women. The aim of the study is to bring out the ill-treatment of women and persuade the ignorant people to renounce the abuses towards women to create hassle-free society.

Keywords: Gender inequality, gender stereotype, male-chauvinism, gender issues.

INTRODUCTION TO CHETAN BHAGAT

Chetan Bhagat is the contemporary Indian novelist, columnist, and familiar YouTuber. He has written both fiction and non-fiction that made record breaking sales in the market with massive success. Many of his novels were made into Bollywood films. Bhagat is a popular icon among the Indian youth as his novels speak about the youth and the problems of youth. With his humorous stories, he has triggered millions of youth to cultivate the reading habit.

To Bhagat, novels are the tools and the weapon, through which he bursts out his views and opinions of the society. Political and the national issues are his interest in his columns. His columns have highlighted social issues, provoked questioning, and even raised several debates among the parliamentarians. Besides great entertainment value, his books bring out issues to light that curb the progress of our country.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA

Forty-eight years have passed since the United States of America has declared 8th March as International Women's Day, though the gender inequality critically hinders the development across the world, especially of India. As per the Human Development Index (HDI), India has been ranked 122 on the Gender Inequality. Across India, the issues related to gender have deep impact on both genders, yet the women gender is the most deprived according to the statistic report, including economy, education, health, survival, political empowerment and legal protection etc. For example, in India, women were permitted to pursue less education and have low employment opportunities, under-representation in politics and such vicious violence against women. The Indian society has enabled men to enjoy greater freedom in everything including morals, whereas women are facing the elaborated restrictions in decision-making, choosing their life-partner, maintaining societal relationships and so on. Because of the frequency of the gender issues, child marriage, premature pregnancy, child labour, sexual abuses and violence against women have increased. Most of these issues can be abolished only when women are weighed as equals to men in the society.

DISCUSSION

The researcher has taken the select novels of Chetan Bhagat to analyse the gender inequality that exists in India. The women should be given equal rights and must be respected in the society as men, since both genders are not only equal in the sight of God, but all beings love the golden rule. The protagonist Neha in *Five Point Someone* and Ananya in *Two States: The Story of My Marriage* are shown as victims who fight the oppressive family and society in order to attain the minimum rights of freedom to live their lives.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN *FIVE POINT SOMEONE*

Chetan Bhagat's debut novel, *Five Point Someone* was published in 2005. The novel primarily deals with the problems of Indian education system especially in the prestigious

institutions like IIT, and how the system endorses the rotten learning pattern and examination-based curriculum. Though, the novel also discusses the gender-based issues especially the patriarchal mentality of the society, traditional views regarding women and the oppression of women as inferior sex.

The patriarchal mindset dominates the Indian society and it results in the rise of gender-based issues even today. The teachers and the professors are playing a significant role transferring education to the student community, and teaching them the gender equality in the society. But, the fact is patriarchal thoughts are inborn quality in their psyche too. The novel *Five Point Someone* has the character named, Professor Cherian, who imparts education to the students brilliantly at IIT. To the students in that institution. Cherian is depicted as dedicated, wise, and efficient project guide. However, his relationship and treatment towards his daughter shows his traditional and patriarchal nature. According to Dr. Racheti Anne Margaret, “It was important for the experiences of women under the patriarchal influence to come out to the forefront and expose the undue cruelty beheld on them by men. It was necessary for the women to oppose this male dominance over them.” (Margaret 34)

Professor Cherian has prohibited his daughter from chatting with boys or to maintain friendship with them. This incident clearly uncovers the hidden face of the torchbearers of education, who are also dominated by the traditional prototype to hold the freedom of women genders. To Cherian, women are exclusively connected to the honour of the family, so that they must be the stereotypical gender as prescribed by the ancestors, while, men are given more freedom to talk to the opposite gender, to befriend them, to date and to make love etc. The society equates women not to men but to the property, pride, and honour of the family. In this novel, Professor Cherian curbs the freedom of expression and decision-making of his daughter. He has forced a boundary to his daughter within which she can explore her interests. Neha clearly expresses her father’s attitudes regarding permissible freedom of expression in speech and action for his daughter,

My dad is really strict about me talking to boys and he will totally flip out if he hears I am friends with a student” Professor Cherian told to Hari, “Don’t tell me what to think. I knew my daughter was distracted these days. God, and because of scum like you! You stay away from my home and my daughter. Just away, understand?” (FPS 90)

Even though the freedom of expression for both genders have conserved in article 19 of Indian constitution, many educated people have crooked mindset towards women. Many Male as a dominant gender in the society have framed the terms and conditions for women and expect them to act as per their expectations. The conditions of the male genders in the rural and uneducated families would be worse than the attitudes of educated male genders in the cities towards female genders and no doubt it is a threat to the society.

Love is proscribed for the female gender in many urban and educated families. In this novel, when Cherian imagines himself that Hari is giving a love letter to his daughter, he bursts at Hari, “What is it, you rascal? Cherian said looking at me, his fist still firmly on the letter, love letters you write to trap my daughter. I told you to stay away from her. So, one Disco wasn’t enough?” (FPS 129)

The above lines show that in India, female genders are prohibited to love affair with a boy. Even the female genders are not permitted to share their love affairs directly to their fathers. By turn from the stereotype the society could cut off the disorders like Gender inequality and the freedom of female genders.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN 2 STATES: THE STORY OF MY MARRIAGE

The novel, *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, is an autobiographical work that narrates the story of how Bhagat has met his beloved at IIMA and how their relationship ended up in marriage. However, the novel also depicts the gender inequality of our Indian society, through the female lead character, Ananya. In this novel, when Ananya told to her mother that Krish is my boyfriend, her mother replied, “You are my daughter, do you understand? You are spoiling our name in the community, do you understand? I brought you up, educated you, made sacrifices for you, do you understand?” (TS 170)

In the above lines, we come to know that Ananya decides to marry her boyfriend, Krish, but her parents refuse to approve her decision, as it is not their custom, at the same time, it is to be noted that in most cases this is not the problem for men. The society recognises the female genders as objects that are responsible to protect and preserve the pride and honour of the family, culture, and tradition.

In our society, choosing of bridegroom for a bride is entirely at the hands of the family and the parents more than the bride. In this novel, Harish is the perfect Tamilian bridegroom approaching Ananya’s parents in order to hold Ananya’s hand in the name of

marriage. Ananya's parents did not ask for the willingness of Ananya. According to Radha aunty, Harish is a perfect groom, who fulfills every eligibility criterion that Indian parents expect with a bridegroom. The female genders are not even permitted to choose their life partner, which Krish expresses thus "And we thought our love is enough reason for us to get married. We thought our parents will meet at the convocation and things will be smooth. Well, we were wrong." (TS 77)

So, the fundamental rights of female gender are violated by the family in majority of the circumstances. The society has constructed the structure of selecting the groom for the bride, but the terms and conditions for selecting bride to groom will not be similar, where mostly the male genders are given freedom to do so. Even in some families the educated and financial independent women too come across lots of obscurities to choosing their bridegrooms. Kohli has expressed the female genders in the society as,

The traditional patrilineal joint family system confines women's roles mostly to the domestic sphere, allocating them to a subordinate status, authority and power compared to men. Men are perceived as the major providers and protectors of a family while women are perceived as playing only a supportive role, attending to the hearth. Most of the women are unaware of their basic rights and capabilities. (Kholi 182)

CONCLUSION

Thus, Chetan Bhagat has depicted the treatment of gender inequality in his novels in an elegant manner. This clearly shows that gender inequality is deep-rooted in the minds of people and the larger society. The issues related to gender cannot be eradicated only through the laws of Indian constitution. People should develop a positive view on the gender equality and everyone must change their twisted perception towards the female gender. We must create a society, where women should not be treated indifferently in the name of gender. A nation without the contribution of women will not attain its full development.

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