



## Attitudinal Differences of Women in 2 States by Chetan Bhagat

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**ABSTRACT:** Denial and subordination always take the major part of the destiny of women long back from the time immemorial. Women encounter suppression, humiliation, molestation, and deprivation in every phase of their lives be it family, society or the workstations. This phenomenon is not in any way confined to the periphery of rural area; it has always been existent in the urban location as well. Quite a number of scholars have taken up this issue; however, this phenomenon has gone through certain transformation with the enlightenment of education. Chetan Bhagat is surging his face to protest against this discrimination. He depicts the female principal figure in a resolute demeanor. However, he has presented the family hierarchical system where senior male member, by tradition, possesses the power of holding the purse-string of a family whereas the female figure, by the old age configuration of patriarchal society, relegates herself to the status of minor and insignificant one. The present paper will investigate and evaluate the efficacy and the perspicacity of women in the urban society and assert women's triumphant upliftment as observed in the present Novel.

**KEYWORDS:** feminism, patriarchal society, women empowerment and women liberation.

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### I. INTRODUCTION:

Denial and subordination always take the major part of the destiny of women long back from the time immemorial. Actually, they suffer as dependent specie. They are essentially tortured and downtrodden in the name of protection. Women encounter suppression, humiliation, molestation, and deprivation in every phase of their lives be it family, society or the workstations. Quite a number of scholars have taken up this issue; however, this phenomenon has gone through certain transformation with the enlightenment of education. Education has, eventually, empowered women and provided them the impetus to have faith in them and help them consolidate their feet on the strong ground of their own identity, equal mentality and determination. Vandana Shrivatsava states that "feminism is more than a voice of protest or questioning. It is moral self-reflection, a conquering of inner fears and a realisation of self-worth ... It does not abandon values or relationships but goes on to create new ones." (Barathi, 74) She moved on to suggesting that it is a struggle of women against cultural and religious restrictions as well as socio-political and economical oppression. Chetan Bhagat is surging his face to portray the female principal figure in a resolute demeanor. He depicts that females are not in any way beneath the males; instead, they are complementary to each other. However, he has brought up the family hierarchical system where senior male member, by tradition, has been endowed with the power of holding purse-string of the family. The mother figure, by the old age configuration of patriarchal society, relegates her to the insignificant one in terms of intellectuality, efficiency, eloquence and aptitude. The present paper will investigate and evaluate the efficacy and the perspicacity of female character in the urban society and show her potentiality and expertise, and assert her triumphant upliftment as presented in the works of Chetan Bhagat.

### II. MAIN DISCUSSION:

Domestic violence turns up to a regular incident, and females are prey to that violence. In *2 States* Kavita, Krish's mother, suffered lot due to the violence that her husband imposed on her. Nevertheless, she never thought to neglect her responsibility. She continued to perform her daily chores of works round the clock. Every endeavor she took for the betterment of her family, she unfortunately faced the rage of her husband.

Husband hardly found any logic behind his activity. She couldn't understand why that type of insult she had to endure from her husband. Her husband by profession a military man was always drunk. His appearance creates an atmosphere related to apprehension, frightfulness and excessive tension: "The bell rang twice. Panic spread in the house as my father had arrived earlier than usual." (85) Kabita was concerned about the marriage of her son Krish. She was looking for a bride for her son Krish, and she planned it all with her married sister. She invited her sister Shirpa to her home for discussion of it. Krish's father arrived in the meantime, out of courtesy, she said "... hello jijaji'..." (85). His father brusquely replied "I like your goodbye more than hello (85)." Here the father figure didn't like his wife's relatives visited his house. When Shipra retorted that she did not come there willingly, rather her sister called her on. He commented rudely "Useless people invited useless people (85)". His reply to it, very conveniently, reflected his deep aversion not only for his wife, but also for her relatives. Chetan Bhagat has presented a perception of male psychology where the dominating ego of a male is hurt:

In this house, I make the decisions, my father said. He picked up a crystal glass and smashed it on the floor. The violence intended at my mother had to come out somehow... 'I don't know why I come to this house'... 'Bastard, mind it!' He shouted at me like he did at his army jawan ten years ago... (86) 'You will not choose a girl for marriage. I will choose for you'...Kavita, this boy... (234) 'I won't come for the wedding, Kavita,' my father said. The sound of a clattering plate, presumably shoved away on the dining table. (235)

In the male dominated society males are not involved in the family nitty-gritty; it was the females they perform that: "She bent to pick up the splintered shards...she let him get away with this and start cleaning up calmly... (86) The ego or the sense of superiority finds little injured while male's prerogatives are not given due importance: "You have no qualities I can be proud of. These degrees mean nothing. Just because you send your mother money, you think you can boss around..." (137) In a family, a decision should be taken with the mutual consultation of the family members. Conversely, in many cases two types of family are seen: one where male alone takes all the decisions, and female member is hardly counted; another case where female is bound to move forward to take any decision since male is oblivious of what is happening in his family. However, they will criticize female at every possible way:

My father stared at me and turned to my mother. This is the result of your upbringing. All the degree can go to the dustbin. You only have at the end.(73)

'...does your mother know about it?'

...

'Why hasn't she told me? Kavita!' My father screamed.

...

'He told me only a few weeks ago,' my mother said.

'And you hid it from me, bitch,' my father said.

...

My father lunged menacingly towards my mother. He raised a hand to hit her. I pulled my mother behind me...

...

Leave us and go. 'Why do you even come back?' My mother folded her hands at him. (195)

Male member holds the purse-string and hectors everyone in family at his whims in the hierarchy of our society. Domestic violence is palpable in every corner. Quarrel and hot altercation are not the only medium that violence has been imposed on the female. Hitting hard with hands and throwing some articles at them are also the common factors. Terror and panic prevail all the time. Female figure under the pressure of this domination and torture lithifies into numb. She accepts that it is the fate of girl, and none can avert it. Women become the victims to the aggression of men; despite the fact, they have any implicit or explicit connection with the incident. They are accountable for all what are not in consonant with the desire the male figures make:

'Don't you dare go anywhere, Kavita,' my father said, his eyes wild.

...

I heard enough arguments of my parents throughout my life to care...

'He is growing up', my mother said.

'With all the wrong values. What does he know about this girl? He is my son, he is from IIT, see what deal I get for him at the right time.

...

'You are responsible for bringing him up like this,' my father screamed at my mother. I heard the sound of a glass being smashed against the wall.

...

Slap ...slap...my father interrupted my mother. I banged the door open as I heard a few more slaps. I saw my mother's hand covering her face. A piece of glass had cut her forearm.

...

...I saw the tears on my mother's face...She had lived with this for twenty five years... (196)

All these insultations, molestation, and thrashing were pervasive in the given situation. In the midst of these the inherent quality of mother was not stifled. Forgetting all her humiliation and the fear of upcoming aggression from her husband, she turned up to be very anxious about her son Krish, that is evident, when she said, "Don't walk barefoot, my mother called out. She bent to pick up the splintered shards." (86) Krish was gobsmacked to see the patience of her own mother:

My mother pushed me towards the bedroom...

My mother came to my room after cleaning up the glass in the living area. She came and sat next to me on the bed...

'You let him do this, so he does it. Why did you have to start cleaning up?' I sulked.

'Because he'll break the other glasses too. And then we will have no more glasses left for guests,' my mother said. (87)

Kavita is the representative of the entire womanhood of her generation who faces this blatant cruelty only because of being weak in muscle power. Simone de Beauvoir has argued in her work against this mental fabric of men. She asserted in the argument against Sigmund Freud's universalized view 'female sexuality' and 'penis envy' that it is not the penis that causes woman alienated; the real reason does not lie in biological distinction rather it lies in the social construct that causes women anxious and alienated. Women metamorphosed into pawns of patriarchy by turning into meek and gullible beings of male consumption. Nanda Kaul in Anita Desai's *Fire on The Mountain* was also the prey to the unhappy conjugal life. She faced psychological tormentation. Physical torture she hardly encountered. She led her life in the seclusion. She was the wife of ex Vice Chancellor of Punjab University. She apparently enjoyed the social status of the wife of dignity. She performed her duties. However, deep inside, she was all alone. She felt traumatic pain inside. Her husband did not love her. He had extra marital affaire. He treated her as a decorative and useful object required for running the house. Emotional deprivation engulfed her. Beauvoir stated that women have got all the potential: productive and reproductive abilities; still "she is for man a sexual partner, a reproducer, an erotic subject—an 'Other' through whom he seeks himself." (Second Sex, 90) Eventually, she found an isolated place to be recluse. Maya in *Cry, The Peacock*, was also suffering from emotional deprivation. She didn't receive love from her husband. She yearned for that conjugal love like a love sick person. She psychologically shattered inside and out. She was stuck with the prophecy that either she or her husband would die soon. This prophecy impelled her to murder her husband. She again went into the solitariness. Unlike Mrs Kaul, and Maya, Kavita didn't leave everything behind and move away to lead a solitary life, rather she held on the family and mingled with all the relatives and enjoyed with all the people around. She never became hopeless and helpless; rather she very calmly and meekly accepted her husband and his torture. She never took her off the life. Instead, she believed in her skill and proficiency, and she asserted: "Don't worry. I can manage him... 'I can handle him. It is you who get angry and fights with him,'" (87) Simone de Beauvoir's observation purely substantiates:

When man makes of women the 'other', he may, then, expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies toward complicity. Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bind that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is very often well pleased with her role as the 'Other'. (Second Sex, xxvii)

The next generation is not so meek and mild that they accept orthodox without incurring any question. However, they also confront humongous debacle or acid test. The predicament they face in their course of life in the patriarchal society should also be encountered. Traasha Chopra has made an observation germane to the scenario of Indian context:

The more education I received, the more aware I became,... The problems of underprivileged women became nothing more than just facts and figures on a paper. The feminist discourse became more nuanced, and we moved on to talking about issues such as socialization, subtle messages of discrimination, rape culture, glass ceilings etc. So the focus of my feminism was more oriented towards the privileged, urban, educated women who were stuck in traditionalist roles while having modern mindsets. (The Ugly Truth about Feminism in India, Barathi, 73).

In the present novel, the female protagonist Ananya, is very smart, brave, and spunky. She is strong enough to take her decision and has the mental firmness to pursue that. She always raises her voice against the wrong deeds. She was resolute in her decision, and she was very realistic. Krish and Ananya fell in love in college. After the completion of college they must part from each other. Krish was not conscious about it. But she realized that she insisted Krish on making a plan for the future. Modern educated females know modernism, but they don't want to give up those values which are relevant. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni on the feminism in India observes that "...Independence with social acceptance, success and autonomy that set its boundaries but not require a complete break from the traditional, extended, semi-feudal family structure" (Barathi, 74) Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a man of intellect and visionary. He understood the importance of English in society. He urged women, "To come out of the four walls of their homes and acquire knowledge of the modern world."

(Sharma, 239) They showed respect to the elders, but they never let elders consider it is their weakness. She almost accepts all the tortures of Kavita:

Mom shrugged and passed the plate to Ananya. Krish likes a gobi aloo. I thought we will also make black daal, bhindi, raaita and salad. Nothing much simple dinner.

...

The dry atta is in the drum below the gas stove. Knead some for the roits' my mother said...

...

My mother sniggered. I gave her a dirty look. 'I have a headache. I'll rest in my room. Call me when dinner is ready.' (229)

Ananya realized that Kavita did it deliberately to impose pain on her and humiliated her and embarrassed her before Krish: "See, this is how she will use you after marriage. She can't even make rotis." Ananya could not help bursting out: "No aunty, I can't make dosas,...And I can't make a roti either. In fact, I am terrible at cooking anything." (229) When all the elders apparently failed to save the wedding between Duke and Minti, Ananya turned up as savior. She persuaded Duke that the car as dowry his parent demanded was unjust. She shook the foundation of his superiority. She mirrored his lacking:

Ananya continued to stare at Duke until he became uncomfortable and stood up. She asked him to follow her. (251)

...

Duke stood up. He was six inches taller than Ananya and twice her weight. Of course, these anatomical facts didn't register with my mad girlfriend.

'What do you do, Duke?' Ananya asked.

'I am a software engineer,' he said.

'How much do you make?' Ananya said.

Duke kept quiet.

...

'Ten thousand a month,' he said in a heavy Punjabi accent.

'Great, I make twenty-five thousand. Still, can you tell me what have you done to deserve a wedding like this? What have you done to deserve a car to be gifted to you?'

...

'You are having an arranged marriage. That is why you are getting a girl like her. If you had to woo her, can you ever in your dreams have a girlfriend like her?' (253)

Duke realized the inherent fault in this system, which actually looted the bride side and implicitly suggested the incapacity of groom. She said, "Do you know what Minti's parents had to go through to do this wedding for you? That car cost two and half years of your salary, Mr. Duke! These two parties have thrown him into debt. (ibid) Duke realized and stood straightforward and convinced his parents. Finally, marriage took place:

Mummy, I want to marry Minti.

...

Daddy, I have kept quiet for so long, no? Everything you have decided. Now whatever, it is don't spoil my marriage.

...

Mummy, enough! And why this drama of keeping their jewellery? What do you think? I can't buy my own car? (255)

Ananya was very honest woman. She has her own value. In Goa, there is a second meeting of Ananya's parents with the parents of Krish. As soon as Krish picks up the luggage of Ananya's parent, his mother scolds, "Shut up, these people, you want to make your in-laws. Are they in-laws?...at the airport. You don't even realize you have become their servant? (262) There is a quarrel among the parents of two parties about their superiority. Ananya's father suddenly gets heart attack. Under such condition, Ananya redefines her position and denying all limitation imposed by Krish makes a direct dialogue to defend the welfare of her parents:

Aunty, I think you should apologise to my parents...Aunty, please don't generalize. We spent four hours in Panjim today buying gifts for you. My parents did whatever Krish asked us to do...Aunty, you have insulted them. They have not trapped anyone. They were dead against Krish to begin with. And now they have accepted him, they'd like some dignity. (270)

Her mental strength is very vividly reflected through these words. Ananya has gone to a great extent to endure all the insult and the humiliation of Krish's mother and their relatives, but she does not lose her self-identity and respect for her own parents. Therefore, when the critical junction appears, she chooses standing with her parents and protests against the unjust behavior of Krish's mother. She does not like her parents to be humiliated at the cost of saving her love and possible marriage with her beloved. Jaya in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* went through an unhappy marriage life. She was taught that she had to comply to the order of her in-laws, and she did the same. However, her husband Mohan was jobless, and she had to shoulder the

responsibility and began writing. She found her place in society; she felt the real happy of independence. She made her way; her husband Mohan might not like it. She continued doing this and derived a sense of satisfaction. Mohan gradually understood the significance of Jaya, and promised to return to her. Unlike her, Ananya did not yield to the oppression of Kavita; but she gave her due respect and attempted to abide by the instructions. Eventually, her stand point and her logic deliquesced the mental fabric of Krish's father and the two families got united.

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

Chetan Bhagat has shown his proficiency in treating the inequality of women characters. He has foregrounded the character of Kavita to exhibit the inhuman torture inflicted on women in society, and the dominance and supremacy of men in society. Kavita accepted that this torture and the subservience are the fate of her. She submits to this. However, she didn't abandon her family. She stuck to it and always held positive thought of how to elevate her family: marrying off son, interaction with the relatives, tendering helping hands to the needy as the middle class family could afford of. In contrast of this, Chetan has depicted his female protagonist in more strong and determined portrayal. She speaks her mind, and she believes in her proficiency and has a clear vision of a perfect and noble freedom. She dug at the dowry system and made the young one convince that this dowry actually demeans his position rather elevates. Chetan has suggested implicitly that it was education that inculcates freedom of speech, independent sensibility and clear vision to her mind and heart, and all of these, in return, ignites in her the fire not to follow the age-old traditional concepts and thinking percolated down to the young generations through ages, but to adjust between traditional value and modern life.

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