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An assessment gender disparities in Chetan Bhagat's novel 'Half Girlfriend' (2017)

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Abstract

Chetan Bhagat has very careful observation of a particular situation occurring in entire world, especially in India. He has presented his characters in the flow of reality and connectivity. He visualizes the whole panorama of the sense and his mission is to equip the youth with their own aspirational identity. The present study was carried to analysing the gender disparities in Chetan Bhagat's novel 'Half Girlfriend' (2017). The study was investigated in context of descriptive research. The investigator found that the novel half girlfriend (2017) represents the marginalised experience of women characters in factual analysis. After exploring the novel the investigator can argue that every female character displays strength and clarity of thought despite living in patriarchal society. Women of Chetan are ready to face challenges and risks. Bhagat is a realist and creator of new society which lives freely. The women protagonists in entire novel show the intellectual versatility to cope the bitter experience of the society. They speak their mind and they believe in confidence, clear vision, a perfect and a noble freedom. The novel prompts the youth to lead their life according to their wish and aspirations, so as to resist the patriarchal society. The novel rejects the old ethology and classical concepts and tradition which are enforced by elders to make new generation salve of gendered disparities.

Keywords: gender disparities, Chetan Bhagat, half girlfriend' (2017)

Introduction

Gender discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of one gender member by the other gender member, especially the unequal treatment towards women, which holds that one gender is superior to the other. In other words, it is based on the physiological, psychological, sociological differences between men and women to identify men and women in terms of social status and economic status. Infact, the term gender disparity, being used in criticism after post-modernism, is related to the stream of female equality movement- which encompasses the freedom and sisterhood for woman. The gender disparity means: the norms, regulations, customs and traditions are different for male and female; the social set up is male dominated and female is subdued in it. It indicates that social usages are centralized in favour of man and woman is marginalized. It results in gender disparity in utmost context. The masculine gender based Indian culture is dominated in the society and makes the male master, exploiter and female mistress and suppressed. Therefore, the exploitation, oppression and suffering for woman are due to male oriented traditions, customs and forms of society. This present research paper tries to find out the study of gender disparity in the novel 'Half Girlfriend' (2017) written by Chetan Bhagat. Indeed, Chetan Bhagat is the writer of modern India and he has explored the contemporary youth problems in his novels. Almost in every novel he has highlighted his deep concern about the youth today, i.e., what are the problems, hopes and aspirations. Chetan Bhagat believes that India tends to have an academic and social resilience to prevent young people simply adopting what they learn without thinking. Chetan Bhagat intends to deliver this message across to the Indian youth even if they don't get stratospheric marks, they are still entitled to a happy life and it's not the end of life if they fail. Chetan Bhagat generally talks about youngster's worries, their anxieties and all those things which pre-occupy them, by means of his writings. Chetan Bhagat's writing subjects include parental academic pressure along with pre-marital sex, drinking and other compulsion based topics occurring in conservative India.

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Location of research gap: The novel 'Half Girlfriend' (2017) has embarked international attention especially in the domain of feministic resistance. Thus, after publication of the novel 'Half Girlfriend' (2017), the amplification for hot discussions has been emerged throughout the world. Besides, bulky number of the research works has been operationalized in the domain of female marginalization. However, most worthwhile research studies have been investigated on the writings on Chetan Bhagat. The notable research studies have been conducted by; Jain, A.K. (2019)^[2], Sharma, K. L. (2020)^[9], Sidhanta, L.K. (2012)^[10]. The results reported in these research studies are less oriented towards female marginalization. Keeping in view, investigator consider ample gap to explore the below mentioned research problem:

Problem under investigation: The research problem under investigation is itemized as:

“An Assessment Gender Disparities in Chetan Bhagat's Novel ‘Half Girlfriend’ (2017)”

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study was to investigate the prevalence of women disparities in Chetan Bhagat's Novel 'Half Girlfriend' (2017).

Rationale of the study: Gender disparity is a new term being used in criticism after post modernism. It is related to the stream of female equality movement-which encompasses the freedom and sisterhood for woman. The gender disparity means: the norms, regulations, customs and traditions are different for male and female, social set up is male dominated and female is subdued in it. It indicates that social usages are centralized in favour of man and woman is marginalized resulting in the gender disparity. The culture has snatched the identity of woman from her, for she depends on parents when she is unmarried. It has subjugated the women with the classical culture. After marriage husband is her master and on being mother, she is known other son's name, not to her own name. At every stage of life her identity is extinct. Indian culture has taught woman to be virtuous, chaste, submissive, homely and devoted to her family as she stands for sacrifices, silent sufferings and faith. Religious epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata has depicted woman as sufferers and victim. Therefore, the exploitation, oppression and suffering for woman are due to male oriented traditions, customs, norms and forms of society. In the novel we found that Riya's husband was not paying attention towards her because of his busy schedule, he was drinking and slapping her. Besides, her mother-in-law was expecting only to wear Indian clothes. The novel reports the gendered disparities as under:

‘Wear only Indian clothes.

Can you believe this?

This is what Rohan's Mom said to me today.'

‘He slapped me in front of his mother thrice.

She didn't stop him. She liked it.

He even pulled my hair' (HGF: Pp.201)

In Indian society we have observed the prevalence of patriarchal system. Birth of a daughter brings the lines of worry and anxiety on the fore heads of the parents, whereas the birth of a son becomes a matter of happiness for them. It is because of the culture. In context to same Sidhanta (2015)

found that “Chetan Bhagathas raised a voice against the exploitation and the oppression that are in the roots of Indian systems, customs and traditions. He has touched the feminine sensitivity and brought female agonies and plight in front of the society, so that it may exterminate as early as possible.

Evidence of gender disparities

Gender disparity is noticeable in 'Half Girl Friend'. The novel reveals the gender disparities at number of occasions like; “*Dual standard of family for boy and girl*” depicts the preference were more oriented towards male as compared to female. Besides, “*Dropping out of Riya from college*” indicates the discrimination of female in the domain of education. Besides, the parental rejection of Riya and receiving no parental love specify that the female marginalisation is deep rooted in India society in post-modern era also. Through the sufferings of Riya's the novel indicate that female were used as an object to give sexual pasture to men and despite that suffering are in their fate. The novel proves in amplification that “Girl in Indian society is the means of entertainment. The tortures by husband are their fate based abode. Torture by in-laws, No love from husband, Taunting from Madhav's mother, Rohan's mother ill-treated by her husband, gradual suffering of Riya's, no understanding of the suffering of daughter by mother, no empathy of female protagonist height that gender disparities are still existing in Indian patriarchal society”. Indian social structure is patriarchal, where for the male self-interest the priority is rendered, whereas the female is made subsidiary to the man's will or the female is treated as a secondary thing in the role of society.

Patriarchal system

The novel in the domain of gender violence drag its readers in the classical and rampant patriarchal system of Indian society in which male dominated cultural were prevailing in the entire society even in 21th century. However, the voice of the novel half girlfriend is like the words of Cate Millet (2015) when he argued that “*women are not born but they are made so*”. Chetan Bhagat highlighted that the root cause of female submissive part in society is the cultural inertia so indeed that novel 'Half Girl Friend (2017)’ brings out that it is replete with the gender disparity which is revealed in the case of males who discriminate females like Riya, Riya's mother and Rohan's mother. It is also perceptible on the part of females who misconduct with their own female-sex. Rohan's mother and Madhav's mother are the perfect examples who ill-treat Riya.

Conclusion

The novel half girlfriend (2017) represents the marginalised experience of his women characters in factual analysis. After exploring the novel the investigator can argue that every female character displays strength and clarity of thought despite living patriarchal society. Women of Chetan are ready to face challenges and risks. Bhagat is a realist and creator of “*New Society*” which lives freely. The women protagonists in entire novel show the intellectual versatility to cope the bitter experience of the society. They speak their mind and they believe in confidence, clear vision, a perfect and a noble freedom. The novel prompts the youth to lead their life according to their wish and aspirations, so as to resist the patriarchal society. The novel rejects the old

ethology and classical concepts and tradition which are enforced by elders to make new generation salve of gendered disparities.

Conflict of interest: During the entire research process, the investigator has not declared any conflict of interest.

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