

## Chapter 1

### Patriarchy and Bhagat

#### Background

This thesis is an attempt to explore a feminist move that Chetan Bhagat employs through the central character Radhika Mehta in his novel *One Indian Girl*. It is a novel with dominant women characters and their progressive feelings against patriarchal practice. Radhika's father and her boyfriends, Debu and Neel of this novel seem powerful in the beginning but female characters prove more powerful at the end. Quest for freedom and self-esteem motivates the female protagonist to revolt against patriarchy in the novel. This novel depicts the clear picture of social and cultural scenario of male domination in the world with a focus on how it can be overcome. The ways to challenge the system of domination are illustrated in the central character Radhika's actions.

Radhika tries to quest for self-esteem and freedom through her activism. Her views and opinions are always progressive and against patriarchal system. Radhika's relationships with her male counterparts represent her as a modern and independent girl. Her mother and her elder sister suggest her to follow each and every dominant form of culture from patriarchy. But she has different point of view on it. She tries to ignore such stereotypical code of conduct. She wants to live a life full of freedom and independence.

Radhika is financially independent. She had sex with her two boyfriends before marriage; it shows her sexual freedom. She is bold. She shows her boldness by rejecting her boyfriends yet providing invitation of her wedding to them. These are the examples of progressive thought against patriarchy. The story revolves around Radhika and her acts. Radhika's struggle and her success imply gender is a socio-

cultural construct. To clarify it, Radhika's mother tells her, "who wants to marry a girl who earns so much" (9). If she were a man, her mother would not stop her to earn much. In our culture, a male enjoys economic freedom and he also can win the heart of his family but for a woman even earning a lot seems to create a problem. Many other such socio-cultural issues are laid bare in the novel. Thus, this research moves through a blend of Simone de Beauvoir for socio-cultural aspects of feminism in its theoretical orientation. Besides, it makes references of many other feminist scholars such as Eleanor Marx and K. K. Ruthven.

The plot of the novel moves forward with the interaction between male and female characters along with their socio-cultural significance. Chetan Bhagat is fond of writing on feminist issues from what he has seen and experienced in his day to day life. He observes many socio-economic events and depicts such events in his literary production. The protagonist Radhika is from Indian culture, she also has exposures to Western culture in her life. Her family supports for quality education which assists her to acquire self-respect and self-esteem. Her growing sense of self-respect and self-esteem help her to determine her future goal and upgrade her socio-economic status.

After acquiring high level of education, she gets a well-paid job. Her mother and elder sister motivate her to quit job and be ready for marriage but she rejects. To motivate Radhika, her mother states: "Who wants to marry a girl who earns so much? If the boys earns less, he won't consider you. If he earns more, why would he marry a working girl?" (Bhagat 9). These lines show her mother's efforts to make her interested in marriage and it also deals with valueless existence of female in patriarchy. According to patriarchal norms and values, having sexual intercourse with male before marriage is not allowed but here she frankly expresses her desire and experiences sex with multiple partners. She breaks every unscientific action of

existing patriarchy. Thus, she shows her progressive thought.

*Sexual Politics* examines how power relations work in society and how men operate and perpetuate male dominance over women. Females feel that patriarchy is the cause of women's operation. Power is exerted to restrain women directly or indirectly in civil and domestic life. *Sexual Politics* means the exploitation and suppression of women appropriated through cultural premises. As a result woman also form an oppressed group as the proletariat of the Blacks and conduct a political struggle to raise consciousness so as to effect a radical change in the power relation between the oppressor and the oppressed. Operation exists not only in terms of politics but also in terms of psychology, economics, culture and religion. The theme of sexual politics is closely interrelated with *OIG* which is depicted through the major character, Radhika and her relatives.

Radhika has faced lots of undesired patriarchal practices as she is a female. Her struggle against such practices covers the plot of the novel. Acquiring high level education, well paid job, expressing opinion in public are not allowed easily in a deep rooted patriarchal society. But Radhika tries and gets success in it. She uses her creative mind to determine her own golden future and career. Although there are lots of boundaries in a patriarchal society, she struggles against them and conquers. The struggle to get a well-paid job and an upgraded socio-economic status is a revolution on part of a female against the existing society.

*OIG* is a feminist novel, a form of fiction that came into prominence in the nineteenth century; it upholds the notion that if there is the availability or possession of material resources, of which one is money, it makes a big difference in a woman's status in the society. It represents various situations of females in a male dominated society. The struggle of women especially the main character's struggle against

patriarchy is the focus of this dissertation.

This thesis is a library-based research with the help of some notable published works and some online information. For the justification of hypothesis, the researcher draws from Socio-Cultural feminism with reference to feminist scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir and Eleanor Marx as well as other literature dealing with the elements of feminism. Besides close-reading of the text, other supplementary materials such as journal articles and internet websites are used to gather information required. This research will pave comparatively an unexplored path to view Bhagat's works through the lense of Socio-cultural feminism.

This thesis attempts to clarify the causes of Radhika's dissatisfaction with the existing society, quest for freedom, her struggle and her success. Radhika, irrespective of all the stereotypical roles expected by the male dominated society, struggles against it and secures her space in the society she lives in, is its hypothesis. To justify the hypothesis, the researcher uses the lens of Socio-Cultural Feminism along with two major queries: What makes Radhika quest for freedom and self-respect? And how does she revolt against patriarchy? The objective of this study is to shade light on the factors and actions that can set a woman free from patriarchy as shown in the novel.

Structurally, this thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is the introductory part which provides background for the study. This chapter includes area of study, statement of the problem, objectives, and the organization of the study. The second chapter deals with concepts and theoretical orientations applied to analyze the text. It is Socio-cultural feminism that has been brought into application for analysis. The third chapter includes the detailed textual analysis of the work *OIG* on the basis of the theoretical insights formed in chapter two. And, finally the fourth chapter presents the conclusion of the study.

## Chapter 2

### Feminist's Activism and *One Indian Girl*

Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* (*OIG*) can be studied from different perspectives, it is a new novel; therefore, it lacks abundant of former writings and reviews on it. However, the study includes as much evaluation is available to date.

Geetika Mantri talks about *OIG* in her article, "Four Times Chetan Bhagat Tried to Mansplain Feminism and Failed miserably." She says this novel is written about female each and every sub-plot of this novel is related to feminism she supports her view exploring the fact about feminist elements inside the novel: "The novel is written in the voice of female protagonist who is strong, independent, rich, and opinionated" (2). As her article states, Radhika is a strong, independent, rich and opinionated. She makes her own decision about her life and career; she is free to make a decision. This story of Radhika is also a representative story for all successful women. Radhika has played many risky and controversial roles in order to upgrade her socio-economic status.

Emmanuel Herman in his article, "Celebrating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Feminism and Why It Matters," opines:

Feminism is as relevant as ever in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the coffee machine tell your co-worker about the Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women, tweet about the Hollaback movement to end street harassment, casually drop Chilean president Michelle Bachelet in to a conversation with your accountant, or if you're felling lazy, just share this blog. However, you do it, take a minute, to learn about and celebrate our recent feminist successes. (42)

Feminism supports true gender justice. As the core of this article, we know we all

have great role to get and provide gender justice. To spread the progressive thought of feminism, everybody is requested to deliver the message to Chilean President Michelle Bachelet into a conversation from their own level. If all the people follow the request, then we can hope that gender justice will be perfectly implemented in the world. As in the novel *OIG*, Radhika plays such inspired role about the progressive effort from her own level. This article is associated with Nepali and Indian culture. It also suggests we all are equally responsible to maintain gender justice in our culture.

However, this research is limited within the frame of Social-cultural Feminist's approach, taking into account the major characters along with the role of Radhika Mehta in its foci it brings into discussion some socio-cultural aspects that tend to draw females back which the protagonist Radhika rebels against.

Marxist Feminists are feminists who ally themselves with the philosophical and economic theories of Karl Marx, who discovered the economic laws underlying capitalism and wrote about them in his masterpiece, *Capital*. It is closely related to socio-cultural and economic phenomena. The struggle of two classes is the dominant feature of Marxism (Marx 56). The two classes have regular conflict in order to achieve socio-economic status. The original intention of Karl Marx was those of social and political revolution.

Marxism has its own type of literary criticism. There are many critical approaches. The changes in the world certainly affect any theory or thinking. And that theories or thoughts certainly cause the change of the world. Marxists believe that economic and social condition determines religious beliefs, legal system and cultural frame work (52). As Marxism focuses on class struggle, Radhika in *OIG* struggles to get her socio-economic goal. She rejects the male dominance of patriarchal society. She proves that female also can do the same work as if she gets the equal opportunity.

It will abolish her exploitation in the society she lives in.

Radhika tries to show such equality and justice in the novel. She uses her full potentiality and authority to clarify the equal existence of male and female in modern society. She proves herself as determined, self-dependent and courageous woman although there are lots of challenges and obstacles. Self-esteem and freedom motivate her to get success in her life. The ruling classes are also subjected to the illusions and appearances of the mode of production as much as the exploited class. The examination of class struggle in relation to ideology brings in more positive view.

Marxist theory and feminist theory have both similarities and differences. As this research work is based on Socio-cultural Feminism which is in a way a hybrid concept between Marxism and Feminism. Marxism and Feminism are very close topics; by the influence of one, the other is affected. There are some elements of feminism like education, job and other opportunities to female, women empowerment, power and political position. When such elements of feminism are given to women only then we can upgrade their socio-economic status in their society or nation. We cannot separate those two concepts; Marxism and Feminism as they both are interrelated in terms of women's liberation.

To prove my claim that is— Radhika's quest for freedom and self-respect assist her to achieve socio-economic status which finally sets her beyond the patriarchal boundary, I have taken the major sources from Simone De Beauvoir and Eleanor Marx including other supportive theorists' ideas. The activities of Radhika in *OIG* make her a revolutionary character. She rejects the marriage proposal and continues her higher study. She rejects the tendency of low-paid job in patriarchal society for female and acquires success by gaining high-level job (48). Such higher study and well-to-do status make her a successful and satisfied female rather than

closing another step of support on dependence on males via marriage. She cannot cross the patriarchy boundary easily. She has to face lots of obstacles and challenges to get her position in society where she lives in. She also expresses her sexual feeling and desire. She believes that she can enjoy her sexual feelings and sentiments although she is female.

Simone de Beauvoir has described woman as “other” in her famous book *The Second Sex* (68). Being female, they have to accept each and every rules of Patriarchal Society. There is no matter if such rules are against or for female. According to Beauvoir’s view, we can get the clear information about women’s situation in sixteenth and seventeenth century. Naturally the males and females are different to each other. To make them recognized by others, female firstly have to recognize themselves as woman. In *The Second Sex* she writes: “If I wish to define myself, I must first of all say, 'I am a woman': On this truth must be based all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex: it goes without saying that he is a man" (Beauvoir15). It clarifies the miserable condition of women in this world. There is great difference between husband and wife or man and woman according to the patriarchal system. Even if they have performed equal works but that will be judged on the basis of gender. Men are not needed to define themselves because they are superior to female. But female should define herself that they are women at first before the performance.

Beauvoir expresses her views through her seminal work. Similarly, Radhika expresses self-assertive opinions from herself after she breaks the patriarchal boundary by developing relation with two boyfriends, earning lots of money and expressing her opinion in public on everything. She claims that if she was a guy other would easily accept it. But since she was a girl such things didn’t really make her too



likeable. But her self-esteem and self-respect motivate her to achieve her status beyond the patriarchal boundary.

Simone de Beauvoir as one of the most famous writers, some important views of her regarding the political and socio-economic philosophy published on *American Philosophical Association* by Larry D, UK Friend of Aeon, states:

*In the Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) she argues that to be free is to be able to stretch ourselves into an open future full of facilities. We share the earth, and have concern for one another; if we respect freedom for ourselves, then we should respect it for others, too. She authored and signed the *Manifesto of the 343 in 1971* which paved the way for birth control and abortion in France. (6)

The above mentioned political philosophy is relevant to make this research work more authentic and meaningful. Human beings are always superior than other creatures of the earth. When people are free only then they can get all kinds of facilities. In the situation of horror and terror nobody can express their feelings and sentiments. We are natural being, so to conserve the nature and its surrounding is our responsibility. For that we need to respect all no matters for males and females. Even though this research is the combination of the ideas of many theorists' views, this research is mainly based on the ideas of Eleanor Marx and Simone de Beauvoir.

Beauvoir tries to express some socio-economic condition of female in her *The Second Sex*. She opines:

'Women and the proletariat', he says, 'are both downtrodden.' Both are to be set free through the economic development consequent upon the social upheaval brought about by machinery. The problem of woman is reduced to the problem of her capacity for labor. (86)

Women are compared with proletariat, they both are inferior. They try to revolt against existing patriarchy but there needs many efforts to implement. According to the given lines, women don't have any significant role for economic settlement. Although female get employment opportunity, their wages will be reduced as proletariat. According to existing patriarchy the wages is also different for male and female even if they both performed equal role. Radhika in *OIG* tries to get good economic status as men. She wants to break existing patriarchal rules. She rejects most of the rules of deeply rooted patriarchy. We can get it, when she rejects her marriage proposal. Beauvoir explains about married women, how she lives in society and gets the treatment from male counter parts:

He is the economic head of the joint enterprise and hence he represents it in the view of society. She takes his name; she belongs to his religion, his class, his circle; she joins his family, she becomes his 'half'. She breaks more or less decisively with her past, becoming attached to her husband's universe; she gives him her person, virginity and a rigorous fidelity being required. She loses some of the rights legally to the unmarried women. (449)

These lines tell about male supremacy. Beauvoir focuses that after marriage, female losses their identity. They start to belong according to their husbands' name, caste and religion too. They do not have their personal identity. She becomes his half avoiding gradually her past life and existence. But she becomes success in her hidden desire. She gets freedom and self-respect. She got higher education, well paid job and her respectable position in her society. To enjoy her own personal rights and freedom, she rejects the marriage proposal. She thinks herself as she is capable to choose her life partner. But male become matured economic leader and superior after marriage.

Beauvoir expresses progressive thought to make self-dependent existence of female in her novel *The Second Sex*.

Beauvoir describes the girl's childhood situation while she is playing with brothers. Woman looks very pretty, beautiful, artistic and normal biologically but not homosexual. The woman concerned is very intelligent, artistic, active, biologically normal, and not homosexual. She says that the urinary function played a great role in her childhood; she played urinary games with her brothers, and they wet their hands without feeling disgust. Here, are some lines from *The Second Sex*:

My earliest ideas of the superiority of the male way connected with urination. I felt aggrieved with nature because I lacked so, useful and ornamental an organ. No teapot without a spout felt so forlorn. It required no one to instill into me the theory of male predominance and superiority. (302)

Sex and gender are similar but not the same. Female are also biologically normal like male. Here is an event that 'she' has played with her brother. While playing she finds herself that her brothers have perfect and clean urinary system. They can wet their hands without feeling disgust. It is because male's sex organ i.e. penis symbolizes the sign of bravery, supremacy and first one and other opposite side is fully covered by females. She lacks penis which means she cannot perform her action clearly. Only female can break such boundary of patriarchy but females have to be limited on existing social norms and cultures.

Eleanor Marx, one of the scholars, I refer to, in her article, "How Should We Organize?" elaborates Marx's notions of unity and organization for freedom. According to Marx, every socio-economic conditions of women will be improved when female are treated in an organized way. When females get all kinds of chances

and facilities as equal as men then their every socio-economic condition will be improved (Marx2). In working places both male and female should be equally treated. As the article states, they should be treated on the basis of skilled and unskilled not men and women. The theme of Radhika's story in *OIG* is similar to Marx's thought in his article.

As this article argues good environment for females lets them grow and enables females to have the equal existence in all round human progress equal to males. To be advanced and organized, we should assure about equal treatment to males and females in different sectors of development like health, employment and education. Likewise Gliniecki Ben reviewing Marx in "Review: Eleanor Marx-A Life" observes:

Women should be forming a united feminist front, challenging across class divisions the divide and rule that regulates production and reproduction and further on Edward and Eleanor's landmark essay make it absolutely clear that the struggle for women's emancipation and equality of the sexes is a prerequisite for any effective form of progressive and social revolution. (262)

According to Ben, Marx focuses on Marxism. Women should be united in order to fight against existing challenges in patriarchal society. Women's role is needed to get equality in this society. Without women's emancipation or participation in public program no any progressive achievement is possible as this is the prerequisite for any effective form of progressive and social revolution.

Likewise, in Jane Freedman's *Feminism*, Stacey and Price (1981:189) are quoted to show their opinion that females should take the initiation to defy domination:

If women wish to make changes in the societies they live in, they must seek and achieve power positions. It is essential that women should enter the political arena since the societies are all male dominated, for men certainly cannot be relied upon to initiate or carry through the necessary changes. (qtd. in Freedman 35)

In these lines Freedman, shows taking reference from Stacey and Price, the situation of female in this time and chances of female progress. If females themselves play very significant role only then they can do progress. Every woman is responsible to avoid patriarchal domination. Female must seek and achieve power and position.

Jane Lewis shows the way in which the equality-difference question has structured feminist debates over women's relation to the welfare state, arguing that:

Feminism has also experienced what is in fact an historical tension between an organization and practice that starts from women's claims as mothers and one that believed the main task to be the problem of defining and obtaining equality for women as individuals in the public sphere. (43)

Feminism has experienced about historical tension. It is related with female's job and their working place. The way of treating them is on the basis of their prestige and wages in working place. It was very difficult to challenge against patriarchal dominations by females in the ancient time. But nowadays females can use their socio-economic right to express their feeling on public in any subject matter as male.

In K.K. Ruthven's *Feminist Literary Studies*, Ferdinand de Saussure about the existence of females, opines:

Linguistically, 'woman' is a sign, not essence, and hence whatever meaning that word happens to have does not in here in it 'naturally'

but is conferred upon it by the society which uses it: its meaning is determined by custom or convention. The key to 'woman' is therefore not biology but semiotics, that so-called science of signs which studies what David Saunders calls 'the process of production and recognition of meaning in society'. (37)

As Sassure states, 'women' and 'men' have not any natural meaning to identify them as superior and inferior. The meaning of men and women is created by the society they live in. To categorize the nature of male and female is totally manmade practice. Linguistically, woman is a sign not an essence. And there is not any fix literary connection with the figure of 'woman' and the word 'woman'. It is traditionally accepted but not naturally.

According to German Lindsey's review on *21<sup>st</sup> Century Feminism/Socialist Review*, Rebecca West wrote the given lines around 100 years ago. Today women who want to differentiate themselves from doormats face some of the same problems. More than 40 years after women's liberation become part of radical politics. It seems incredible that there is still so much confusion and division about what feminism is. Feminism has different stages in history. Rebecca west focuses on feminism is not a clear and constant subject. What is right on today may not be right tomorrow. As she states, "I myself have never been able to find out what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat" (340). From the above mentioned lines we came to know that feminism has broad concept and ambiguity to understand. Different feminists express different views on female politics according to their knowledge and experience. Different stages have different meaning of feminism. But the common theme of them is that it is a dynamic concept as it is always progressive. Lindsey in his manifesto for 21<sup>st</sup>

century feminism opines:

We will not win without fight. Every great social movement raises the question of woman. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the movement for women's emancipation took its name from the movements to abolish slavery. 21<sup>st</sup> century women's liberation has to fight to change the world and to end the class society which created oppression and exploitation in the first place. (340)

Even West and German have claimed in progressive thought of women. Without any revolution or struggle there is no chance of any progressive achievement. Different phrases of history have its own significant achievement. As the article states, movement in nineteenth century was for women's emancipation to abolish slavery. Similarly movement in 21<sup>st</sup> century was to end female's exploitation.

Feminism presents experiences and ideas about the basic features of the social life perceive by women or through women's perspective in the society. It strives to reconstruct a better academic, economical and psychological world for women.

Elaine Showalter has undeniably observes:

English Feminist Criticism, essentially Marxist, stresses operation; French Feminist Criticism, essentially Psychoanalytic stresses repression; American Feminist Criticism, essentially textual stresses expression; all three, however, have become geocentric, searching for terminology to rescue the feminine from being a synonym for inferiority. (qtd. Guerin et. al. 203)

As the theme of above lines, the core aim to reduce the feminine from being a synonym for inferiority is common in all feminists' criticism. Females have always hidden desire i.e. to express their feeling openly in public. In nineteenth and twentieth

century, women had to come across various challenges as the writers in the society. Feminism became a dominant approach in literature only in the late nineteenth century. It had two centuries struggle for the recognition women's cultural roles and achievements.

The campaign was started earlier formally through the writing of Marry Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of The Rights of Women." This work was unique in suggesting that the betterment of women's status be effected through political changes as the radical reform of national education system. Such change should benefit all society. So, she attracts the sentimental novels of her time for their pernicious influences on women's intellectual development (792). It challenged the idea that women exist only to please men and proposed that women should receive the same opportunities as men in education, works and politics.



### **Chapter 3**

#### **Radhika's Revolt against Patriarchy**

Radhika is a female character in Bhagat's *One Indian Girl*. She shows her reaction and progressive thought in the novel. According to patriarchal norms and values, females are considered inferior and males superior. But she tries to take revenge against this stereotypical notion. Educating oneself, empowering through various employment opportunities and making a decision about one's marriage on part of a female is going against the patriarchal boundary. Radhika does the same in the novel; she upgrades her social and economical status by taking up a high-salary job. She rejects her marriage proposal. She focuses more on her status and career rather than marriage.

Radhika expresses similar opinions from herself after she breaks the patriarchal boundary by developing relation with two boyfriends, earning lots of money, expressing her opinions in public. She claims that if she were a man other would easily accept it. But since she was a girl such things did not really make her too likeable. Her self-respect and self-esteem motivate her to achieve her status beyond the patriarchal boundary.

The social condition of Radhika in *OIG* is representative of many modern girls. She tries to raise her voice against to the existing patriarchal rules. But her inner desire is not totally to suppress man only. She wants to gear up her socio-economic and political condition. She is a woman so she cannot be free from this natural system of creation. She mainly focuses to upgrade her economic status. To upgrade her status, she needs to gain higher education, well- paid job and good networks with high profile to represent the presence of woman in this world. I try to explain my claim by citing the example i.e. without struggle we can't achieve our freedom and self-respect.

To gain such things we have to do lots of work. So, Radhika in *OIG* does the same.

Bhagat is hopeful for the success of woman in Indian culture. He has tried to show Radhika's struggle as a representative struggle of an Indian modern girl. Bhagat and Beauvoir have some common feeling and sentiment about women in their works. To illustrate this statement we can take up the ideas by Beauvoir from *The Second Sex* as she predicts: "It seems almost certain that sooner or later they will arrive at complete economic and social equality " (738). The word 'they' indicates both male and female. Radhika wants to make her position as equal as male. Radhika is progressive woman who has awareness for economic equality and freedom. Radhika wants to show her equal status as male in Indian society through asserting financial independence, developing relationship, and expressing her views as an individual not only as a woman.

Remaining unmarried, Radhika symbolically shows her progressive thought in *OIG*. She rejects her marriage proposal and sticks to her job. She does not want to destroy her position in her profession. She has faced a lot of difficulties and challenges in order to get her position beyond the patriarchal influence. She never gives up her career and self-respect. Sex before marriage is not acceptable but she does it. It can be judged as a symbolic revolution and progressive thought. She wants to break each and every prominent and deeply rooted assumption of patriarchy as discussed in chapter two with the ideas of Beauvoir.

We can find two kinds of female characters in the novel. Rakhika seems so progressive and independent whereas her mother and her elder sister, Aditi are supportive of patriarchal society. Aditi and her mother think that a daughter should marry before she involves herself in a good job and having good economic independence. It is because if she has good job and higher study then there will be

difficulty at choosing her life partner. According to them males are always superior than females. They should always follow the spirit of patriarchal and traditional notion of our society. But Radhika's point of view is distinct from their views. She wants to break every unscientific activities of male dominated society:

‘Stop it, Mom what boy?’

Who wants to marry a girl who earns so much?

If the boy earns less, he won't consider you.

If he earns more, why would he marry a working girl?’

‘I have no idea what you are talking about. But I am moving to America. I have a great job. 'Can you save your melodrama for another time'? (9)

It clarifies that Rakhika's mother is trying to impress her about the importance and reliability of marriage in Indian culture. Radhika's mother has very narrow minded thinking that she has feared because her 23 years daughter is growing of in middle class family. She doesn't think about her daughter's great job and career. She has a narrow concept i.e. if the boy earns less, he will not consider her and if he earns more, he does not need to marry a working girl. Thus from every point of view, she is trying to stop her job and career but focuses only on marriage. To this query, Radhika does not give any concern and interest in it and continue her great enthusiasm and struggle in order to get her self-respect and freedom.

As a progressive woman Radhika tries to achieve her position equal to a male. She rejects her mother while her mother is searching a perfect partner for Radhika. Her inner desire and feeling motivate her to get education, job and good academic status. The interest of Radhika is to reveal all things which she dislikes. Radhika in *OIG* is an organized and successful woman. She raises voice against patriarchy. The

behavior and hobbies of Radhika and her elder sister are totally different from each other. Even if they all are ladies, Radhika's elder sister Aditi and her mother seem fully patriarchy oriented females. They follow and believe blindly the rules, regulations and every system of patriarchal society. Aditi and her mother can't reject the mandate rules of patriarchy.

Her mother wonders: 'How will I ever find a boy?' (Bhagat 9). It was her prime concern that her twenty-three-year-old daughter, who grew up in middle class Delhi, had a sound job at one of the biggest investment bank in the world and she cared about was its impact on her groom-hunt. Aditi marries the man suggested by her family as there is not any freedom and self-respect for female. Aditi and her mother try to motivate Radhika to marry a man having greater job, richer older than Radhika as per the rules of patriarchy. According to patriarchy, man should be more powerful in all sectors like socio-economic, political, academic etc. which Radhika wants to break.

Radhika shows her progressive character in *OIG*. She leads her life herself to make fruitful and meaningful. She has faced lots of obstacles and challenges in patriarchal society. She directly rejects male supremacy and male dominance. Her boyfriend, Debu did not reply at the situation when she is in a dilemma. But later the same person is sending about ten text-messages in a minute, which shows Radhika's status is built up.

While choosing her dress, she chooses red a short one. But symbolically, wearing short dress is not good according to Patriarchy. Aditi, her sister tries to impress her to wear long and normal dress as the intention of patriarchal heart but she rejects and wears western dress (Bhagat 9). Debu (her first boyfriend) is trying to talk with full interest with her but she is rejecting him. Radhika's rejection of Debu, her

boyfriend shows Radhika is important for Debu but he is not essential for her in the context.

According to their conversation, we know that Radhika is ignoring him and Debu is trying to impress her (252). This shows the upgrading status of female. He shows extreme desire to get her as a girlfriend. In the novel *OIG*, Radhika expresses her opinion in public. She tells her mother that she is working in one of the popular investment banks in Delhi. Such intention of Radhika clarifies that she wants to change her previous status and makes her society free from the suppression of male domination. In the novel *OIG* Radhika tries to prove her progressive thought in the society she lives in. She tries to prove that there is not any difference between male and female on the basis of their physical and mental ability. Female also can do the same as men if they have same access. To clarify it, Radhika earns a lot, secures high level job as man even if she has lots of patriarchal limitations. Her self-esteem and sense of freedom motivate her to achieve her goal.

Radhika involves in drinking alcohol in different hotels with her boyfriends. Some female relatives are in favor of patriarchal norms which she rejects (8). Aditi didi married Anil, owner of three Sanitary ware shops in Paharganj and two Honda CR-Vs. She doesn't have any intention to be beautiful but has interest to upgrade her status to generate her self-income. She believes that economic and academic level of women support to represent the role of modern girl. Next day, who take drink last night had a hangover. Among them she is that type of lady who breaks norms of patriarchy. She thinks inside her heart that what is Brijesh's (Radhika's husband to be) family thinking about her as the newly to be bride and define herself as the irresponsible and uncultured lady. Every old people are interested for Bhajan but she does not show any interest in it (251). As discussed in chapter two with reference to

Simone de Beauvoir (86), such socio-cultural aspects like breaking away from one's past and trying to become or belong to the man's world in terms of social, religious and cultural practices are always on part of a woman which Radhika challenges by resisting and denying them.

She makes various plans and compares the negative and positive aspects of marriage with Brijesh, her husband to be. It is because she doesn't want to harm others as she has progressive thought against patriarchy (258). She shows every human has equal existence in society. We can examine that there is the influence of western music which symbolizes as the advanced music rather than others. Radhika's enjoying that music shows the upgraded status of her. Throughout the novel, the story revolves mainly on Radhika's actions and sentiments. She expresses her feelings and sentiments.

However, the other females do not want to or cannot express frankly whereas Radhika speaks out. Here is a line which is taken from the novel in which she says: "Why don't people do this all the time? Wow, why didn't anyone tell me sex feels so damn good?" (57). The excitement of her sexual intercourse with her boyfriend is also spoken out by her. These lines are spoken by Radhika herself. While she is having sexual intercourse with Debu, she cannot describe the climax of sexual excitement as it is beyond her imagination and experience. She does not get any words to describe that climax. In this situation, she speaks out such statements in excitement. Such opinions cannot be spoken by any ladies in a patriarchal society but she does it. She frankly agrees that if she is a guy everyone supports her but as she is a girl, nobody likes her as a perfect girl.

We can find lots of elements to prove Radhika as a representative of modern girl who breaks every negative and discriminatory rules of patriarchal society. She

loves her work more than her marriage. Her career and education, she never gives up. Radhika in *OIG* tries to get freedom and self-respect. She tries to revolt against patriarchal boundary. She rejects her marriage proposal proposed by her mother as well as by her father. Firstly, she gives priority on her study and socio-economic status rather than patriarchy-based marriage. This action is against deeply rooted patriarchal assumption which she wants to break out and wants to remain free.

If we view Radhika from Marxist point of view, her education, academic level and career are very important which clarify her determined nature. Simone de Beauvoir has mentioned some lines in *The Second Sex*. The following lines tell something about Marxism and prove Radhika as a Marxist woman:

Most bourgeois women accepted this glided confident, and the few who complained were unheard. Benard Shaw remarks that it is easier to put chains on men than to remove them, if the chains confer benefits. The middle-class woman clung to her chains because she clung to the privileges of her class. Freed from male she would have to work for a living; she felt so solidarity with working-women, and she believed that the emancipation of bourgeois women would mean the ruin of her class. (142)

Women have their different level in society. Bourgeois females have full of authority where as middle class female are not getting such access in society as bourgeois female. Here in *OIG* Radhika refers the middle class. So, she has to struggle a lot to get all the access (education, job and opinion in public) of socio-economic status as bourgeois females.

Since birth female are inside the chain of patriarchy. No females are free to express their feelings and opinions until they are limited inside the patriarchal

boundary. Radhika in *OIG* is a representative character who tries to escape from the chain of patriarchy. To escape from patriarchal chain, her education, working status and high self-esteem help her. When she does not have good job and education, she can't get good respect and reputation from the society she lives. But after getting such things, she empowers herself and increases her enthusiasm in order to lead a progressive and meaningful life. Every times she rejects the unusual and unbelievable things even if they are suggested from her own family members.

Radhika has done many struggles in her life. It is because she is a typical lady who wants to live her life full of freedom and satisfaction in her own way. There are different conditions mentioned in the novel. The next day is Radhika's wedding ceremony but she does not concern about it because her life is full of storm and stress. Her mobile is busy due to messages from her to ex-boyfriends time and again (Bhagat 252). Women should not be too much frank and open according to patriarchal philosophy but she rejects all it in her own way. Her sister tries to make Radhika as a disciplined and honest girl but her each effort is in vain. At that time Radhika thinks herself about her wedding dress and other required ornaments. The following lines are taken from the same condition of Radhika's mood from the novel: "Why I am not thinking about how my lehenga looked on me tonight? Why I am not worried about my nails? Why I am thinking about my dark life rather than my dark circles?" (253). This is a monologue from Radhika herself.

When the events reach in climax, she realizes her past deeds which are against the patriarchal limitation. She thinks she did wrong in the past one way and she also thinks and feels satisfaction because she had revolted against deep-rooted patriarchy. She is considered as progressive and successful lady because she can take her own decision and choice at last even if there are lots of challenges and difficulties.



Last night before her wedding Radhika could not sleep. So, next morning she called her two exes and Brijesh too at the coffee shop. The two exes met her first. They discussed more and more but both are unknown to each other and confused too. She recognized herself as they both are her exes. And at last, she rejects both of them and they leave the coffee shop at same time Brijesh enters and starts to talk with Radhika as she is his own wife to-be (255). But slowly and gradually she convinces him as she is not interested to marry right now and she rejects him too. It is because she will not lose her career and high-five job. It means she gives first priority to her work than to her marriage.

Thus, she proves herself as she is capable in her own way. She wants to get high-five job first in order to upgrade her economic status. She thinks that only dependent and capable woman can live freely in patriarchal society. Radhika has such ability to adjust in patriarchal society. And to be independent, we should follow the progressive track and we should erase the bad ones. After erasing all misdeeds and evil practices, we can easily establish a sound, bias less, durable and progressive society that is the needs of present time too.

Bhagat expresses common feeling of progressive women through Radhika in the novel *OIG* about the feeling of modern girl. She has expressed her inner feeling and experience which shows her rebellious feeling against patriarchal society. She describes about her working places, wages and boyfriends. According to the given conversation there is also the discrimination between male and female:

Hi, I am Radhika Mehta and I am getting married this week. I work at Goldman Sachs, an investment bank. Thank you for reading my story. However, let me warn you. You may not like me too much. One, I make a lot of money.

Two, I have an opinion on everything.

Three, I have had a boyfriend before. Okay, maybe two.

Now if I was a guy, you would be okay with all of this. But since I am a girl, these three things don't really make me too likeable, do they?

The above line expresses Radhika's inner feelings and emotions. Radhika is a representative character of modern girl. She tries to live her life with full of freedom and self-respect. She cannot express such feeling openly. There are some existing rules and regulations of patriarchy. It hinders women to express her feelings and sentiments. Living in a patriarchal society, females have many challenges to face in her life. The protagonist imparts us a lesson that is— we should not give up but continue to get success in life.

From the prologue of the novel, we can get some glimpses of the uniqueness of major character Radhika. There is mentioned that all the people have their own thinking and interest as well as their capability to perform. The prologue looks like, "Some people are good at taking decisions. I am not one of them. Some people fall asleep quickly at night. I am not one of them either. It is 3 in the morning. I have tossed and turned in bed for two hours. I am to get married in fifteen hours" (253). These lines depict about what is going on in Radhika's mind. Although there is Radhika's marriage ceremony, she is not enjoying on that situation. She thinks how she can convince to her exes. She shows her feminine character with great enthusiasm. She has done witty action as we are not able to know what she will do for her exes. She thinks herself as unique character as she is not like others. And she is satisfied as she is. This feeling makes her self-confident. Another monologue, "I am the bride. I should get my beauty sleep. I can't. The last thing I care about right now is beauty. The only thing I care about is how to get out of this mess. Because, like it

often happen to me, here I am in a situation where I don't know what the fuck is going on" (253). Radhika tries to show her uniqueness in case of being modern girl. She tries to escape from the chain of patriarchy. She wants to gear up her own career. The scene is that of her wedding ceremony. Everybody is excited but Radhika just wanted to get out of this mess. She has stress about her career and her past deeds which she had done knowingly but it was against the spirit of patriarchy. It cannot be digested well in such an Indian culture. From the prologue, we know that she wants to express her hidden feeling and shows her anger against existing socio-cultural rules.

Radhika is an economic woman. She has concern about her career rather than her wedding ceremony. She is planning to get out from the mess. She has not great concern about the prestige of Mehta family but her personal matter deeply influences her. She is going to marry after some hours and there are 200 guests (251). She needs to sleep well but she cannot sleep. She is just waiting not for wedding party but she wants to clarify about her interest and past activities in front of her husband to be.

Mehta family is preparing wedding ceremony in their own way. Everybody seems responsible to fulfill their responsibility. Radhika's mom focuses on Radhika's dress. She wants to make her daughter as pure as Indian-cultured lady. There is separation of side to stay in wedding ceremony for boys and girls. Radhika rejects such separation of boy's and girl's side. She doesn't want to be separate from boys. She thinks both are equal in social and cultural values but it does not look like. There is discussion between Radhika and her mother about the management of such ceremony. They both have different views. Radhika doesn't want to follow every traditional feminist aspect. At that time some feeling aroused in her mind after seeing the deeds of her honest and obedient mother. The feeling like, "Why am I agreeing to this? I wondered even as I wore it. Maybe because I failed when I did things my way.

All the women's empowerment and feminism bullshit didn't really take me anywhere, right? Maybe Kamala bua and mom's way was the right way" (6). These lines present the time of Radhika's confusion. She has confusion on either her work is better or her mother's. Although she has confusion, her own decision influences her more at last.

She thinks time and again about why her elder sister and mother are following such deeply rooted masculine domination. She cannot reject her mother totally because there is great influence of patriarchy. She has new concept in her mind so she rejects directly as well as indirectly the patriarchal assumption. She thinks about women empowerment and feminism when her mother forces her to wear bride-dress and pretty dress in order to make their daughter likeable to the Groom's family. Such one-sided opinion does not match with Radhika. Such new arousing concept on Radhika's mind shows the seeds of new wave of feminism and working status of female too. As a high-fived job holder Radhika herself can manage her full wedding ceremony. This shows Radhika as a successful economic woman to represent the modern scenario of Marxist feminism.

As discussed in chapter two with reference to the ideas of Eleanor Marx, Radhika shows her revolutionary sentiments for the existing class struggle in a male dominated society (262). According to her there is equality between male and female. It is challenged across class division due to the influence of existing norms of patriarchy. Equality and understanding between male and female is the base for social progress. When male and female are equally paid then only our society can be well managed and there will be effective form of progressive and social revolution. Here in *OIG* Radhika tries to get her power and position through upgrading her academic level and well paid job. She rejects as the suggestion of her mother as well for marriage. It is because she wants to make her career first. And she wants to upgrade

her socio-economic status in the society she lives in.

Drinking whiskey is not good according to the Indian culture and it is also not allowed in patriarchal society. Radhika is an Indian girl, who drinks whiskey at bar with her many friends including men. She does not hesitate to take drink. Such drinking culture is strictly prohibited in her Indian culture but she is influenced by western culture. There are some lines which prove she used to go bar for drinking purpose: "I entered whiskey Blue at 9. The plush bar and lounge had decadent leather sofas and dim lighting Avinash noticed me first" (161). Radhika has habit of drinking alcohol. She does not like to drink too much because originally she is from Indian culture. Radhika enters in bar while other people are waiting for her at other places.

Her entering a bar late symbolizes that she has a good job and high level profile. She enters as hero and plays the role of a leader. She does not have the habit of getting dominated by others. She wants to show her superiority. She rejects infirmity and inferiority of female. She sees the equal capacity between male and female. Radhika becomes dazed due to the blend of compliments and wine. Such ideas are clearly explained in chapter two with Rebecca West's theoretical ideas.

Radhika and Neel (her boss) have meeting at a restaurant. They have big age gap around 25 years. Radhika tries to impress her boss by doing various activities for excitement. Radhika herself begins to talk with him more frankly. At first they have gap as the co-worker and boss but gradually they become partners. Here is taken a part of conversation from which we can get Radhika's intention:

We became quite and enjoyed the silence and isolation. I felt calm because of the surroundings. May be champagne also had something to do with it. I could hear him breathing. I stretched my legs. A wave touched my foot. I moved in reflex. As I did that, my ankle brushed

against Neel's. He turned his head and looked at me. 'I am sorry,' I said.

'It's fine,' he said rather whispered. (178)

There is physical relationship between them at climax. After having sexual intercourse they realize themselves as real partners. Radhika keeps such physical relationship with Neel although she knew about Neel's married life and his kids. Radhika is a successful woman. She rejects every limitation of patriarchy. According to patriarchal concept female are considered as backward and inferior in comparison to male. But here Radhika starts everything while she is talking to her boss Neel. At first they have huge gap of the working level. Neel hesitates to accept her as friend. But here Radhika starts everything while she is talking to her boss Neel. At first they have huge gap of the working level. Neel hesitates to accept her as friend. At last they become very close to each other.

According to traditional Indian mind set, no female can accept married person as partner but in this novel Radhika herself develops physical relation although she knows everything about Neel. She knows her inner feeling and desire to calm herself. She crosses the boundary of patriarchal system. She expresses new ideas. She does everything just for the sake of her sexual satisfaction. She knows that Neel (her boss as well as her second boy friend) is much older than her; he is married and has two kids. She keeps the relations and upgrades her socio-economic status. Neel was boss before but after having physical relationship they become very close where Radhika upgrades status as she is close with her boss. From such events she wants to show equality between male and female. She also wants to prove female can do every works what male can do in the same society. So, she does such action in the society she lives in.

## Chapter 4

### Radhika`s Success in Securing Female Status

This research attempted to show the progressive character of Radhika against patriarchy in *One Indian Girl*. Radhika in the novel represents a modern Indian girl who rejects the limitation of existing patriarchal society. Radhika crosses every boundary of patriarchal society. Throughout the novel, lots of feminist elements are discovered. She faces challenges and obstacles to get her goal. She is influenced by Indian culture but later she experiences the Western culture which has some flexibility to females` freedom. She rejects her marriage proposal but she never gives up her self-esteem and career. She has joined many famous universities and acquired her academic qualification.

Radhika is from middle class Indian family. So, she has to face numerous challenges and obstacles. Her mother has a stress that her 23 Year-old daughter is needed to marry. Her mother tries to search a perfect boy for her daughter seriously. But Radhika refuses it and names this as melodrama. As a woman with feminist`s consciousness, Radhika tries to achieve her position as equal as a male`s. She rejects her mother while she is searching a perfect partner for Radhika. Her inner desire and feeling motivates her to get education, job and socio-economic status. Radhika`s interest is to expose and challenge all the things which she dislikes as Beauvoir does her book *The Second Sex* concerning the equality of male and female regarding economic and social status.

To prove the claim that Radhika's quest for freedom and self-respect assists her to achieve socio-economic status which finally sets her beyond the patriarchal boundary, the ideas are drawn from Simone de Beauvoir and Eleanor Marx including other supportive scholars. The activities of Radhika in *OIG* make her a revolutionary

character. She rejects her marriage proposal and continues her higher study and paid working status which make her a successful and satisfied female. Viewed from socio-economic point of view, she is a female and to upgrade her status, she has struggled a lot.

Radhika crosses many patriarchal boundaries and accomplishes her academic goal. She has achieved paid working status and a well-to-do socio-economic status. Radhika's self-esteem and freedom motivate her to achieve her goal. To uplift her self-esteem and freedom, her academic level, paid job and good status are shown as a support. The entire plot of the novel revolves around Radhika's struggle to get her economic goal fulfilled which eventually gains her a good social status. The struggle is a representative of a female's revolution in a patriarchal society.



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