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**Women Safety: Challenges and Remedies**

Organized by  
Late Ramesh Warpudkar College, Sonpeth and  
Shri Panditguru Pardikar College, Sirsala

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## EDITORIAL

Security of the women has been one of the burning issues in India and world across for last two decades. Various expeditions at world level to ensure the security of women points to the gravity of the issue. The social status of women has travelled through various phases in the course of time. In ancient times, a woman was treated equal with her male counterpart. Indian scriptures have assigned the role of *Mata, Devi, Jagatjanani* and other godly forms to women but she was subordinate to male. She was reduced to be an object of joy in the medieval times. However, in the modern age, thanks to the efforts of some enlightened men and women, they started getting education and respectable status and are treated equally with their male counterpart. This status offered her the opportunities to work with males in the public places. In recent times, women in India seem to have become vulnerable targets. The reports of sexual assault, molestation, sexual harassment, rapes, human trafficking, ill treatment of women in houses and violence against women have become the routine news of media. In the age of information and technology, the issue has become more complicated and challenging despite of various laws to protect women. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has recently reported Maharashtra as the third worst state in terms of women security in the country. There are various forms of crimes against women. The recent incidents like Shakti Mill rape case in Mumbai, Acid attack on Preeti Rathi, Nirbhaya rape and murder case of Delhi, honor-killing case of Aarushi Talwar and Kopardi rape and murder case compel us to think over the issue and ponder over it to have solutions.

In this backdrop, the special issue on *Women Security: Challenges and Remedies*, published by Newman Publication will sensitize the issue, initiate the discussion and will offer some concrete suggestions on the issue of Women Security. The research papers published in this special issue cover almost all the aspects regarding women security. I take it as the first step in the right direction in finding remedies to this issue. The researchers /contributors of the special issue clearly infer to the conclusion that men need to be cleansed of their parochial and bigoted attitude towards women for they need to be protected against men. The present issue will surely spread this message in the academic world.



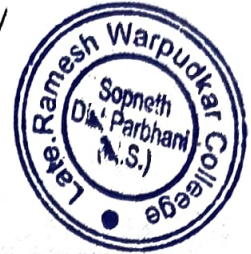
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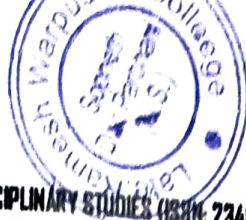
(Guest Editors)

## CONTENTS

### SECTION 'A'

1. Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Rural Area / **Dr. Arundhati Patil**
2. Role of Police Administration for Women's safety in India / **Amle B.P.**
3. 21 Century women striding towards self esteem /  
**M. Vijaya Bharathi & Dr B. Parimala Devi**
4. Feminine Psyche, Identification and assertion of self in poetry of Kamala Das /  
**Dr. Bhosale Balasaheb Shivaji & Nakade Meera Murlidhar**
5. Sexual Harassment in Sports / **Dr Vithal Ramkishanrao Bhosale**
6. Efficiency of the Existing Laws for Women's Safety / **Sow. V.R. Bhutada**
- ✓ 7. Theme of Gender Discrimination in Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* /  
**Bidwe N. R. & Dr. V. D. Satpute**
8. Women Empowerment- Objectives and Acts / **Dr. Durgadas D. Choudhari**
9. Literature Search on 'Women Safety' through Variety of Databases: With Special Reference to  
Knowledge Resource Center Dr. BAMU Aurangabad /  
**Gajanan P. Khiste, Dnyaneshwar B. Maske & Avinash P. Awate**
10. Abhaya: An Android App For The Safety Of Women / **Mrs. Neha Girish Deshmukh**
11. Challenges Of Education Before Women / **Deepak S. Dharwadkar,**
12. Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place: A Serious Issue /  
**Dr. Dhole V.S. & Dr. Quadri W. I.**
13. Rethinking The Challenge Of Women's Safety / **Dr. Kalpana Deokar**
14. Current Status of women In India / **Dr. Nanasaheb B. Patil**
15. Efficiency of the existing Laws for women's safety / **Miss. Raithak Dipmala Vishwanath &  
Chudavekar Kamalakar Kashinath**
16. Role of Economic Policies for Women's Safety in India / **Dr. Balaji Madhukar Ekurkekar**
17. Crimes against Women: A Matter of Concern / **Dr. Fulmante B. M. & Mr. Bansode G.S.**
18. Multidimensional Empowerment of Women in 'Pardhi' community of Scheduled Tribes category /  
**Pramod Bhagwat Gadekar**
- ✓ 19. The Study of Gender Discrimination in the Novel- *A Fine Balance* of Rohinton Mistry /  
**Mr. Rajesh S. Gore & Dr. Vasant .D. Satpute**
20. The national commission for women / **Hatkar Jalba Umaji**
21. Domestic Violence: The Mysterious Verisimilitude of Our Society / **Dr. Rupali Hiwarkar**
- ✓ 22. Voice of protest in Manju Kapur's novel *A Married Woman* /  
**B. S. Jadhav & Dr. V. D. Satpute**
23. Impact Of Non Government Organization On Women's Empowerment In India /  
**Dr. V. D. Jawle & Ms. Sapna M. Gholap**
24. The Woman in India: Past, Present and Future / **Jaybhaye Vithal K.**





7.

## THEME OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN BHAGAT'S ONE INDIAN GIRL

CHETAN

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Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* (2016), as its name suggests, is a story of an educated and successful Indian girl. She goes through much struggle and trouble only because she is self-reliant and successful and because of the gender bias of the society. Through *One Indian Girl* Bhagat handles the theme of gender bias in India; how successful women are controlled, discouraged and sexually abused not only by men and women in the society but also by men and women in the family itself. On the back cover of the book the mouthpiece of the writer and the protagonist of the book, Radhika warns the readers that they may not like her because she earns a lot of money, she has an opinion on every subject and she has had boyfriends before. She tells that if she were a boy these three things would be normal but since she is a girl she doubts whether she will be acceptable with these three things. This shows how Indian society is biased.

*One Indian Girl* thus is a story of Radhika Mehta, the twenty-seven-year old Punjabi girl from Delhi. When the story begins she is in Goa to celebrate her destination wedding at a hotel. She is marrying a Punjabi boy, Brajesh Gulati from Mumbai in an arranged marriage. Both of them are working abroad, he in New York and she in London. She is the VP in the Distressed Debt Group of the Goldman Sachs, an investment bank. Over 200 guests from both the families are present to attend the seven-day long celebrations of the wedding.

She is going to get married in fifteen hours. It is 3 a.m. but she is not able to sleep because while, on one hand, she thinks of sharing bed, home and life with her groom, on the other, her ex-boyfriends Debashish Sen and Neel Gupta reach Goa and wish to marry her. These are the same ex-boyfriends who declined to marry her only because she was too successful.

In the "Q&A" on *One Indian Girl (OIG)* Chetan Bhagat states that the book is about sexist attitude, pseudo feminism versus feminism. He tells that the book hopes to question society judging women achievers. It asks why when it comes to love, being intelligent and too successful is almost a drawback for women . . . it isn't equal world for women achievers and most men and even several women don't even realise it.

According to Bhagat men controlled and designed the world earlier so clearly they didn't keep women in mind as much. He thinks that to have a successful career and be a great mother at home are core needs for women, but we often ask them to make a choice. We feel we have done our feminist duties by giving women the freedom of choice. He concludes that they need not make such choice because we men do not make a choice between sex and career.

In an interview given to the TOI Bhagat says, "We have said, 'Study well, get jobs, do whatever you want to do', but socially, society is not ready. Once a woman is successful, we don't know what to do with her. We wonder if she will be a good daughter-in-law, a good mother-in-law, a good mother? Will she be a good wife? Will she make roties at home? . . ."

Bhagat narrates how gender discrimination begins even before a girl takes birth. Radhika's mother has done two abortions because she wanted a boy after two girls- Aditi (one year older) and Radhika. Even now when Radhika is grown up and getting married at the hotel she experiences that even her mother is gender biased. The wedding guests have to be lodged in the hotel but there is a shortage of twenty rooms and her mother suggests that as they are from girl's side they shall take fewer rooms. They also make her ready to meet the boy with make-up, traditional clothes and jewellery. She also remembers how the society is skin-colour



conscious because the boys were after her sister Aditi because she has fair skin, but they played pranks on her because she is wheatish.

As an effect of neglect since her childhood Radhika turns to studies and tops every class and completes MBA. After completing graduation her sister gets married and there is burden upon Radhika to get married. Mother asks her to 'start looking at boys' (Bhagat, *OIG* 9). Meanwhile she joins the Goldman Sachs, New York with the annual compensation of 120,000 dollars and her mother thinks that with such a high salary it will be difficult for her to find a groom for Radhika. Meanwhile she makes friends with Debashish Sen. She longs for Debashish's love but she cannot take initiative in it because women are not supposed to take initiative in sex. Debashish too talks like a feminist- that women can do every work that men can and the rumour (thought), that banking is a man's work, is spread by men to scare women out of those roles but in fact men are afraid of talented women like her. He has said this unknowingly but actually he himself is one of such men.

After some dates Debashish and Radhika have sex and begin living together. They live together for two years. The writer states the pathetic condition of a successful woman by giving a number of examples. Just to look better to Debashish she takes too much trouble, waxing and removing all hair from her body. But when it comes to marriage he avoids it telling her that he wants to become a senior creative director and get a raise. He also tells her that he wants a wife and mother for his children and not a working woman. But actually he does not want to marry her because she earns more than him- (her that year's income was 270, 000 dollars and his was 80, 000 dollars.) This is shown with his behaviour when she gets a raise. Radhika throws a party when he gets a promotion but when Radhika gets a raise in her salary, he even does not give her proper reaction. He does not attend the party which her staff throw to celebrate their raises. She has decided to introduce Debu to the staff. He even does not return her calls and messages and gets rude.

At home, when she mentions this to him, he tells her plainly that she cannot be a potential mother and that he needs a housewife. He even asks her to leave her job but that is not true because he has become insecure due to her high salary. In the end he breaks with her and moves out. She messages him after that and tries to call continuously for five days but he neither receives her calls nor answers her messages. She decides to leave the job and goes to his room to tell him about her decision but he is found with another girl. She knows the reality that her boyfriend has left her. Every place in New York reminds her of her boyfriend, so being disillusioned, she submits her resignation, but her boss understands her problem and transfers her to Hong Kong office of the company.

While in Hong Kong, she works under Neel Gupta and has sex with him on a Philippines Island as an effect of alcohol. But later on Neel forces her into sex continuously. They keep physical relations for almost one year. Neel is a married man so Radhika knows their relation has no future. Neel sleeps with her but when it comes to the future of their relations he tells her, "I never thought of you as the maternal type. I don't know if you were even meant to be a mother" (Bhagat, *OIG* 209). She finds no meaning in continuing the affair with Neel but he is not ready to let her go. She thinks that Neel is giving her a chance to fly without giving her a nest. She breaks up with Neel and on the condition of not disturbing her again Neel transfers her to London office of the company.

Meanwhile Radhika's mother forces her to consent to see boys. She posts Radhika's profile on *shadi.com* and writes some false things that Radhika does not like. Radhika does not like the content such as – "I am quite fair . . . currently working in London, but flexible to move anywhere with my husband" (Bhagat, *OIG* 217). Her mother thinks that they need to show that the girl is fair-skinned and submissive. She does not mention her salary. When asked she tells that she is hiding her achievements so as to get more boys to choose from. She explains to her daughter, "If they see a girl who is too independent-minded, too qualified, doing too well, they get scared." (Bhagat, *OIG* 219). Mother tells her that if she had been a son she would have put her salary. She tells about men that there is 'no such thing as an ugly man' (Bhagat, *OIG* 221).

Radhika meets, on a video call, with a prospective groom who excuses himself on listening of her salary being half a million dollars. They had shortlisted ten men. Three weeks later they talk with all the ten and

nothing happens. She tells her mother that when she says that she wants her to be more homely, it actually means that she wants her to be more submissive. Radhika remembers what her father had told when she was a child. He used to tell her, "Beta when you grow up, you can do whatever you want. The sky is the limit for you" . . .

'Why do people tell girls all this? You ask them to achieve things, but when they do, you can't handle it. Why does it become "you are not even a girl anymore"' (Bhagat, *OIG* 225)?

In the end Radhika says 'yes' to a boy called Brijesh Gulati and now they are getting married at Goa. But Debu and Neel reach Goa and bagger her on marrying them. In the end Radhika calls Debu and Neel at a place and tells them that both of them gave her choices of either home or career. They think 'choice' to be a benchmark word of feminism. She explains what women want, "We don't want to choose. We want to fly and we also want a beautiful nest. We want both'. She asks whether male birds tell female birds to choose. "Hey honey, choose. Either fly or sit in the nest"' (Bhagat, *OIG* 259).

The choice of 'either career or home' given to women is as ridiculous as the situation if we ask men to choose from either sex or career. She also tells them that men have fixed the office time of 9 to 6 because it suits them. But if they fix office timings as they suit women, women can handle both career and home. But men are not ready even to acknowledge this issue.

She rejects Debu telling him that he could not handle her little success because he was envious of her and that it is intrinsic part of him. He would not be able to handle her success because she wants to be more successful. She rejects Neel saying that he loves a party girl and not a diaper-changing wife and that he would not love her anymore when she turned old.

In the end she tells Brijesh everything about her ex-boyfriends and tells him that the wedding is cancelled for then. The news is communicated to the respective families and after some row the matter is settled.

In this way we see that through *One Indian Girl* Bhagat has tried to put the plight of modern women. There is discrimination in the families based on sex. There is discrimination even in society. Women are expected to be either house wives or working women. People are afraid of successful women. They cannot bear a woman earning more than them or to be more successful than them. Society judges the character of a woman based on her physical relation with other men. If she is unmarried and keeps physical relation with other men she is bad. That is why Radhika's love with Neel can be called affair and not love and she needs to discontinue it.

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