

From Her Place to Her Voice: Female Agency in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl*

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Abstract—Chetan Bhagat occupies a distinctive position in contemporary Indian English fiction, particularly for his engagement with the aspirations, anxieties and social negotiations of India's young and emerging middle class. Although his fiction is frequently classified as popular romance, his novels also engage with questions of education, class, culture, family, professional ambition, gender and individual choice. The representation of women in his fiction is therefore worthy of sustained literary investigation. This paper examines female agency in three of Bhagat's novels—*2 States* (2009), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), and *One Indian Girl* (2016)—through the female protagonists Ananya Swaminathan, Riya Somani and Radhika Mehta. Drawing primarily upon feminist literary criticism and the concept of negotiated agency, the study investigates how women exercise choice while simultaneously confronting family, cultural, class, linguistic, romantic and patriarchal expectations. The paper argues that Bhagat's representation of women demonstrates a significant movement from the negotiation of socially and culturally prescribed roles toward increasingly explicit forms of individual voice and autonomy. However, this movement is neither linear nor complete. Ananya negotiates cultural and familial boundaries; Riya's agency is complicated by class, language, emotional vulnerability and the male-centred narrative; and Radhika possesses unprecedented professional and economic independence while confronting persistent expectations concerning marriage, femininity and desirability. The study therefore proposes that Bhagat's women are best understood not through a simple binary of oppression and liberation but through the concept of negotiated agency. The progression from Ananya to Riya to Radhika suggests an expanding female voice, while simultaneously revealing the persistence of patriarchal structures within contemporary Indian popular fiction.

Index Terms—Chetan Bhagat, female agency, feminism, patriarchy, Ananya, Riya, Radhika, Indian English fiction, popular literature, gender

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Indian English fiction has witnessed a significant transformation in its themes, readership and narrative strategies. Alongside writers whose works are positioned within established literary traditions, a new generation of popular writers has addressed the everyday experiences of India's expanding middle class, particularly its young, educated and aspirational population. Chetan Bhagat occupies a prominent position within this literary phenomenon. His novels employ accessible English, contemporary settings and recognizable social situations, frequently combining romance with questions of education, employment, family, class and cultural identity.

Bhagat's popularity has generated considerable debate regarding the literary status of his fiction. Yet the popularity of his novels is itself significant because it provides a window into the aspirations and contradictions of contemporary Indian society. His fiction repeatedly places individual desire in conflict with social expectations. Relationships become sites where questions of class, family, region, language, gender and identity are negotiated.

The representation of women is particularly significant within this context. Bhagat's female characters are generally educated, articulate and capable of making important decisions. They may be professionally ambitious, financially independent, emotionally complex and resistant to conventional expectations. At the same time, their lives remain deeply connected to family, marriage, romantic relationships and culturally prescribed ideas of femininity. Consequently, their apparent empowerment often exists alongside forms of constraint.

This contradiction becomes particularly visible in *2 States*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl*. Bhagat's

official description of *2 States* foregrounds the difficulties faced by Krish and Ananya as they attempt to transform an inter-state relationship into a marriage acceptable to both families. *Half Girlfriend* places Riya Somani within a relationship complicated by class and linguistic difference; Bhagat himself describes the novel as a story of two people from different classes falling in love. *One Indian Girl*, meanwhile, places Radhika Mehta at the centre of the narrative and explicitly addresses love, career and feminism from a female point of view. Bhagat's official presentation describes it as his first novel written in a female voice.

These three novels therefore provide an especially useful corpus for examining the changing construction of female agency. Ananya, Riya and Radhika are not identical representations of the Indian woman. Their social positions, narrative circumstances and forms of resistance differ considerably. Yet all three encounter a fundamental tension between individual choice and socially prescribed womanhood.

The present study asks whether these differences reveal an evolution in Bhagat's representation of women. Does the movement from Ananya to Riya to Radhika indicate an increasing emphasis on female autonomy? Or do the apparent gains in agency remain contained within conventional structures of romance, marriage, family and patriarchy?

The paper argues that the answer is neither wholly affirmative nor negative. Bhagat's female characters demonstrate a movement from negotiating their place within existing structures toward claiming a more explicit voice, but their agency remains negotiated rather than absolute.

II. CHETAN BHAGAT AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN POPULAR FICTION

Chetan Bhagat's fiction is closely associated with contemporary youth culture, middle-class aspiration and accessible Indian English. His novels frequently employ familiar institutions and social environments—colleges, workplaces, families, urban centres and romantic relationships—to explore the dilemmas of modern India.

This accessibility is important to the gender politics of his fiction. Rather than presenting feminist questions exclusively through explicitly ideological narratives, Bhagat embeds questions of gender within popular

stories about love, education, employment and marriage. Such a strategy brings questions of women's choice and social expectations into a mass literary context.

This does not mean, however, that accessibility automatically produces progressive representation. A popular narrative can challenge traditional values while simultaneously reproducing them. Indeed, this tension is central to the present study.

Scholarship on Bhagat's women has produced broadly two tendencies. One strand identifies education, employment, independence and resistance to traditional expectations as evidence of female empowerment. Studies of his fiction have argued that his women frequently challenge patriarchal norms and participate actively in personal and social transformation.

A second strand is more critical. It questions whether the apparent empowerment of Bhagat's female characters always translates into genuine narrative and social autonomy. Recent feminist criticism has particularly emphasized the possibility that female independence can remain filtered through male-centred narrative structures.

This debate provides the intellectual context for the present study.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on women in Chetan Bhagat's fiction has expanded considerably. Earlier studies generally emphasize the presence of modern, educated and independent female characters. Khan, for example, reads Bhagat's women as representations of contemporary Indian women confronting social challenges while pursuing education, employment and personal fulfilment. Similarly, Chauhan argues that Bhagat's female characters challenge conventional gender roles and are frequently presented as intelligent, independent and ambitious.

Sathe's study of women's empowerment in Bhagat's fiction identifies characters such as Ananya as women who express their opinions and participate actively in decisions concerning relationships and marriage. Such readings are useful because they establish that Bhagat's women cannot simply be classified as passive romantic figures.

More focused scholarship has examined individual characters. Riya in *Half Girlfriend*, for instance, has

been interpreted as a figure who resists male domination and seeks freedom of choice. A 2020 study explicitly approaches Riya through radical feminist theory, emphasizing her resistance to patriarchal exploitation.

Radhika in *One Indian Girl* has attracted particularly extensive critical attention. Liberal feminist readings emphasize her professional success, financial independence and challenge to conventional gender roles. Other scholars have approached the novel through postfeminist theory, emphasizing the contradiction between Radhika's apparent empowerment and the social pressures surrounding marriage, beauty, emotional behaviour and male expectations.

This latter interpretation is particularly important because it complicates the idea that economic and professional independence necessarily produces complete liberation. The 2026 study by Ali and Erina argues that Radhika's empowerment exists alongside continuing patriarchal expectations, suggesting that contemporary forms of control may operate behind the surface of modernity.

The scholarship therefore reveals an important critical debate: Is Bhagat's representation of women genuinely emancipatory, or does it merely modernize traditional gender structures?

The present study contributes to this debate through a comparative examination of three protagonists rather than concentrating exclusively on Radhika or on Bhagat's women in general. Its central contribution lies in tracing a trajectory:

Ananya → Riya → Radhika

and examining whether this trajectory represents increasing female agency, changing forms of constraint, or both.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Existing scholarship establishes that women in Bhagat's fiction are significant sites for discussions of empowerment, feminism, class and social change. However, several areas remain open for further investigation.

First, many studies concentrate on individual novels or individual characters. Second, studies that consider several novels often categorize women broadly as empowered or modern without sufficiently examining the changing forms through which agency operates.

Third, relatively less attention has been given to the relationship between female agency and continuing patriarchal structures across a chronological sequence of novels.

The present study addresses this gap by bringing *2 States*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl* into a single comparative framework.

Rather than asking simply whether Bhagat's women are empowered, the study asks:

How does female agency change from Ananya to Riya to Radhika, and what social structures continue to limit or shape that agency?

The study therefore moves beyond the binary of empowerment versus oppression and proposes negotiated agency as a more appropriate interpretive category.

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the representation of women in *2 States*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl*.
2. To analyse the forms of agency exercised by Ananya, Riya and Radhika.
3. To investigate the influence of family, culture, class, language, marriage and gender expectations on female choice.
4. To compare the development of female agency across the three novels.
5. To determine whether Bhagat's representation of women moves toward greater autonomy and individual voice.
6. To examine whether apparent empowerment challenges patriarchy or remains negotiated within patriarchal and romantic structures.

VI. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addresses the following questions:

1. How are women represented in *2 States*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl*?
2. What forms of agency do Ananya, Riya and Radhika exercise?
3. How do family, culture, class, language and marriage influence their choices?
4. Does Bhagat's representation of women demonstrate a movement from socially prescribed roles toward greater autonomy?

5. To what extent do the novels challenge patriarchal constructions of womanhood?
6. Does increased agency necessarily result in complete liberation?

VII. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM AND NEGOTIATED AGENCY

The primary theoretical framework of this study is feminist literary criticism. Feminist criticism examines the representation of women, gender relations, patriarchal structures and the cultural production of femininity. It is particularly useful for analysing literary characters whose choices are shaped by expectations concerning marriage, sexuality, family, work and social respectability.

The present study uses five related concepts:

7.1 Agency

Agency refers to the capacity of an individual to make choices and act upon them. In literary representation, female agency can be observed when women make decisions concerning relationships, careers, education, sexuality, family and identity rather than merely functioning as objects of male action.

7.2 Autonomy

Agency and autonomy are related but not identical. A character may make choices while still operating within restrictive circumstances. Autonomy implies a stronger degree of control over one's life and identity.

7.3 Patriarchy

Patriarchy refers to social structures in which authority and power are systematically organized around male dominance. In the novels under study, patriarchy does not always appear as explicit male oppression. It may operate through family expectations, marriage norms, judgments about female sexuality, beauty standards and assumptions about appropriate feminine behaviour.

7.4 Gender Performance

Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity is useful for understanding how socially recognizable forms of femininity are repeatedly produced through behaviour, expectations and social sanctions. Gender

is not simply an internal identity but is continually shaped by social norms and their repetition.

This perspective is particularly relevant to Radhika, whose professional identity and personal choices challenge conventional expectations about how an Indian woman should behave.

7.5 Negotiated Agency

The central analytical concept proposed in this paper is negotiated agency.

Negotiated agency recognizes that women may exercise meaningful choice without existing outside structures of power. A woman may resist a family expectation yet still value family approval. She may pursue a career while negotiating marriage. She may reject one form of patriarchal control while accepting another social norm.

Thus:

Agency does not always mean escape from structure; it can mean negotiating one's position within structure. This concept provides a more nuanced way of reading Ananya, Riya and Radhika.

VIII. ANANYA IN *2 STATES*: NEGOTIATING LOVE, CULTURE AND FAMILY

Chetan Bhagat's *2 States* presents the relationship between Krish and Ananya against the background of inter-state and inter-community cultural differences. Bhagat's own synopsis emphasizes that their relationship becomes difficult because the two families must accept not only the couple but also each other's families.

Within this framework, Ananya is an important representation of a woman negotiating between individual choice and collective expectation.

Ananya is educated, confident and capable of articulating her desires. She does not simply wait for the male protagonist to determine the future of their relationship. Her participation in the struggle to obtain family acceptance demonstrates a degree of personal agency.

Yet her agency operates within the institution of marriage. Her objective is not simply to reject social structures but to negotiate with them. The conflict is therefore not:

woman versus society

in a simple sense.

Instead, it is:

individual choice versus the conditions imposed upon individual choice.

Ananya's struggle illustrates the complexity of female agency in contemporary middle-class India. She wants to choose her partner, but she also recognizes the emotional and cultural significance of family approval. Her agency therefore takes the form of negotiation rather than rebellion.

This is significant from a feminist perspective. Traditional structures are not necessarily destroyed; rather, they are forced to accommodate a woman's choice.

Ananya consequently occupies the first stage of our proposed trajectory:

She seeks a place within a structure that was not originally designed around her individual choice.

Her agency is visible precisely because she refuses to remain a passive participant in the marriage decision.

At the same time, the novel does not completely detach female fulfilment from marriage. Romantic love ultimately remains central to the narrative. Thus, Ananya's empowerment is real but relationally framed.

Her movement is therefore:

Silence → Participation → Negotiation → Choice
rather than:

Tradition → Complete Liberation

IX. RIYA IN *HALF GIRLFRIEND*: AGENCY, CLASS, LANGUAGE AND VULNERABILITY

If Ananya represents the negotiation of cultural and familial boundaries, Riya Somani introduces another dimension of female agency: class, language and emotional vulnerability.

Bhagat's official description presents Riya as a wealthy Delhi girl who speaks English fluently while Madhav comes from Bihar and struggles with English. Their relationship is therefore shaped by social and linguistic difference as much as by romantic attraction. Riya possesses forms of privilege unavailable to Madhav. Her class position, education and linguistic competence provide her with greater social mobility. Yet these advantages do not make her emotionally or socially invulnerable.

One of the most significant aspects of Riya's characterization is her attempt to define the terms of the relationship. The very concept of the "half girlfriend" emerges from a disagreement about what the relationship should mean. Riya refuses to accept

Madhav's preferred definition of their relationship and proposes a compromise.

This moment is important because it demonstrates relational agency. Riya attempts to establish boundaries rather than simply accepting the male protagonist's desires.

However, her agency is complicated by emotional trauma, social expectations and the narrative's strong focus on Madhav. This creates a tension that has also attracted critical attention. Existing scholarship has variously interpreted Riya as a feminist figure and as a character whose apparent independence remains constrained.

This contradiction makes Riya particularly valuable to the present study.

Riya is not simply "strong" or "weak." She is a woman whose capacity to choose is affected by circumstances that are not entirely under her control.

Her position may therefore be understood as:
agency under vulnerability.

Unlike Ananya, whose primary struggle involves cultural and familial negotiation, Riya's situation reveals the intersection of gender with class, language and emotional experience.

The novel consequently demonstrates that women's agency is socially situated. Economic and educational privilege can provide greater choice, but they cannot automatically remove gendered vulnerability.

Riya therefore occupies the second stage in the trajectory:

Negotiating her place → Negotiating her identity

Her agency becomes more individualized, but it also becomes more complicated.

X. RADHIKA IN *ONE INDIAN GIRL*: VOICE, CAREER AND AUTONOMY

With *One Indian Girl*, Bhagat makes a significant narrative shift. Radhika Mehta is not merely the female counterpart to a male protagonist. She becomes the narrative centre and speaks from a distinctly female point of view.

Bhagat's official description explicitly presents Radhika as a financially successful woman with strong opinions and previous relationships, while framing the novel around love, dreams, career and feminism in contemporary India.

This shift in narrative voice is itself important.

In *2 States*, Ananya's experience is largely encountered within a male-centred romantic narrative.

In *Half Girlfriend*, Riya's story is also strongly mediated through Madhav's perspective.

In *One Indian Girl*, Radhika speaks for herself.

The transition is therefore not merely thematic but narratological.

The female character moves:

from being represented to representing herself.

This is the strongest expression of the movement identified in the title of this paper:

From Her Place to Her Voice.

Radhika's professional identity is central to this transformation. Her economic independence gives her a degree of material autonomy significantly more visible than that of the earlier protagonists.

Yet the novel complicates this empowerment. Radhika's professional success does not eliminate pressure concerning marriage, femininity, beauty, relationships and social acceptability. Recent scholarship has particularly emphasized this contradiction, interpreting the novel through a postfeminist framework in which professional and

economic empowerment coexist with persistent cultural expectations.

This contradiction is crucial.

Radhika's question is not simply:

“Can a woman succeed?”

She has already succeeded professionally.

The more difficult question is:

“Can a successful woman define herself independently of the expectations attached to being a woman?”

The novel exposes the continuing double standard surrounding male and female behaviour. Bhagat's own presentation of the novel draws attention to the social judgment attached to a woman's income, opinions and romantic history.

Thus, Radhika possesses substantial agency but remains engaged in a struggle over the meaning of that agency.

Her movement is:

Negotiation → Self-expression → Voice → Autonomy

Yet autonomy remains incomplete because social recognition continues to matter.

XI. FROM HER PLACE TO HER VOICE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The three protagonists can now be placed within a comparative framework.

Dimension	Ananya – <i>2 States</i>	Riya – <i>Half Girlfriend</i>	Radhika – <i>One Indian Girl</i>
Primary conflict	Culture and family	Class, language and relationship	Gender, career and marriage
Major form of agency	Negotiation	Boundary-setting and choice	Self-definition
Social constraint	Family/cultural expectations	Class, language and emotional vulnerability	Patriarchy and gender expectations
Professional identity	Important but secondary	Important but complicated	Central
Narrative position	Female protagonist in male-centred romance	Female protagonist in male-centred romance	Female narrative centre
Relationship to tradition	Negotiates	Questions	Critically examines
Dominant movement	Participation	Negotiation	Voice
Degree of autonomy	Conditional	Complicated	Relatively high but contested

The comparison suggests that Bhagat's representation of women does change across the three novels.

Ananya's agency emerges through negotiation with family and cultural structures.

Riya's agency develops through the assertion of personal boundaries within class and emotional constraints.

Radhika's agency becomes more explicit through professional success, economic independence and narrative self-expression.

The progression can therefore be represented as:

Ananya: "Let me choose."

Riya: "Let me define the relationship."

Radhika: "Let me define myself."

This is not a direct quotation from the novels but a conceptual formulation of the progression identified through the comparative analysis.

The significance of the progression lies in the changing location of female agency.

For Ananya, agency is primarily relational.

For Riya, it becomes relational and individual.

For Radhika, it becomes explicitly self-reflexive.

XII. EMPOWERMENT OR NEGOTIATED PATRIARCHY?

The apparent progression toward autonomy must nevertheless be treated critically.

A simplistic interpretation might conclude:

Ananya is traditional, Riya is modern, and Radhika is liberated.

Such a reading would be inadequate.

All three women continue to operate within structures shaped by romance, marriage, family and social expectations.

Ananya's freedom is negotiated through the family institution.

Riya's choices are complicated by class and emotional vulnerability.

Radhika's professional independence does not remove the social expectation that she should be acceptable as a woman, daughter and potential wife.

Thus, empowerment does not necessarily equal liberation.

This is where the concept of negotiated agency becomes especially useful.

12.1 The Persistence of Marriage

Marriage functions as a major social institution across all three novels. Even when women exercise choice, that choice remains connected to questions of partnership and marriage.

This reveals a continuing tension between:

choosing marriage

and

being socially expected to marry.

The difference is important.

Agency emerges when marriage becomes a woman's decision rather than merely her prescribed destiny. Yet the institution itself remains powerful.

12.2 The Persistence of Family

The family is not represented simply as an oppressive institution. It is simultaneously a source of identity, emotional belonging and social pressure.

This ambiguity makes the novels culturally significant. Indian feminism cannot always be understood through a simple opposition between individual and family.

Bhagat's women often seek negotiated acceptance rather than complete separation.

12.3 The Persistence of Femininity

Radhika's case particularly demonstrates that professional success does not eliminate expectations concerning feminine behaviour.

A successful woman can still be judged according to standards that may not be applied to men.

This produces what may be called the paradox of modern womanhood:

The woman is encouraged to become economically independent while continuing to be evaluated according to traditional expectations of femininity.

This paradox is also identified in recent scholarship on *One Indian Girl*.

XIII. VOICE AS THE HIGHEST FORM OF AGENCY?

The title of this paper deliberately uses the movement from "place" to "voice."

"Place" represents a socially assigned position.

"Voice" represents the ability to articulate one's own identity, desires and interpretation of experience.

This distinction is especially useful when comparing the three novels.

Ananya has a voice, but that voice primarily operates within a negotiation involving family and marriage.

Riya has a voice, but her story is strongly embedded within a male-centred narrative and complicated by emotional and social circumstances.

Radhika receives the strongest narrative voice because the novel is constructed around her consciousness.

This suggests an important development in Bhagat's narrative strategy:

The female character moves from being primarily an object of romantic interpretation toward becoming a subject of narrative self-definition.

However, even this development must be approached critically.

A female character having a voice does not automatically mean that the narrative has escaped patriarchy. What matters is what the voice is permitted to say, what choices it can make, and whether those choices have meaningful consequences.

Thus, voice is a necessary but not sufficient condition of autonomy.

XIV. DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis supports the proposition that Bhagat's representation of women demonstrates a gradual expansion of female agency.

However, the progression is neither linear nor absolute.

First, agency becomes increasingly explicit.

Ananya exercises agency primarily through negotiation. Riya exercises agency through boundaries and personal decisions. Radhika possesses professional, financial and narrative independence.

Second, the sources of constraint change.

Ananya encounters cultural and familial constraints.

Riya encounters class, language and emotional constraints.

Radhika encounters gendered expectations surrounding career, relationships, marriage and femininity.

Third, female agency becomes increasingly internal and self-reflexive.

Ananya asks how she can obtain acceptance for her choice.

Riya struggles with what kind of relationship she wants.

Radhika asks who she is beyond the expectations imposed upon her.

This represents a significant transformation.

Fourth, patriarchy does not disappear.

Instead, it changes form.

It may appear through family authority, cultural expectations, romantic assumptions, judgments about female sexuality or expectations of appropriate femininity.

This is why the term negotiated agency is more useful than simply "female empowerment."

XV. FINDINGS

The study produces the following major findings.

Finding 1: Bhagat's female characters possess meaningful agency.

Ananya, Riya and Radhika are not passive figures whose identities are determined entirely by male characters. They make decisions, establish boundaries and express personal aspirations.

Finding 2: Female agency is socially conditioned.

The women's choices are shaped by family, culture, class, language, marriage and gender expectations.

Finding 3: The representation of agency becomes increasingly explicit.

The movement from Ananya through Riya to Radhika suggests a gradual expansion from negotiated participation toward stronger self-definition.

Finding 4: Narrative voice matters.

One Indian Girl represents an important shift because the woman becomes the primary narrative voice. This distinguishes Radhika from the earlier protagonists and strengthens the movement from representation toward self-representation.

Finding 5: Empowerment does not eliminate patriarchy.

Radhika's professional and financial independence demonstrates that material success does not automatically eliminate cultural expectations.

Finding 6: Bhagat's women occupy an intermediate space between tradition and modernity.

They are neither simply traditional nor completely liberated. They negotiate competing demands.

Finding 7: Class and gender intersect.

Riya's experience demonstrates that female agency cannot be separated from class and language, while Radhika demonstrates the contradictory experience of an economically successful woman who nevertheless faces gendered judgment.

XVI. CONCLUSION

This study has examined female agency in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl* through the characters of Ananya Swaminathan, Riya Somani and Radhika Mehta.

The analysis demonstrates that Bhagat's representation of women cannot be adequately understood through a simple distinction between traditional and modern women. His female characters occupy complex social positions in which individual aspirations interact with family, culture, class, language, marriage and patriarchy.

Ananya represents the woman negotiating her place. Her agency emerges through her determination to participate in decisions concerning love and marriage while simultaneously negotiating family and cultural expectations.

Riya represents the woman negotiating identity and boundaries. Her agency is more complicated because class, language, emotional vulnerability and social circumstances shape the choices available to her.

Radhika represents the woman claiming her voice. Her professional success, economic independence and narrative centrality mark a significant expansion of female agency. Yet her experience also demonstrates that professional empowerment does not automatically free women from patriarchal expectations.

The progression from Ananya to Riya to Radhika therefore suggests a movement:

from place to participation,
from participation to negotiation,
from negotiation to voice,
and from voice toward autonomy.

Yet the final destination is not complete liberation. The women remain situated within social structures that influence their choices. Their agency is therefore best understood as negotiated agency—the capacity to make meaningful choices while operating within structures that continue to constrain and shape those choices.

The significance of Bhagat's fiction lies precisely in this contradiction. His novels do not present a world in which patriarchy has disappeared. Instead, they depict a society in transition, where educated and economically ambitious women increasingly demand the right to define their own lives while continuing to encounter expectations rooted in family, marriage and conventional femininity.

Thus, the movement represented by the three protagonists is not simply:

Tradition → Modernity

but:

Assigned Place → Negotiated Choice → Individual Voice → Conditional Autonomy

The title “From Her Place to Her Voice” therefore captures not a completed journey but an ongoing one. Bhagat's contribution to contemporary Indian popular fiction can consequently be read as a representation of this transitional moment. His women increasingly speak, choose, negotiate and resist. Whether that voice achieves complete autonomy remains unresolved. That unresolved tension, rather than a straightforward declaration of feminist success or failure, is what makes Ananya, Riya and Radhika valuable subjects for literary inquiry.

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