

## **“Portrayal of Madhav Jha Unyielding Will in the Novel of Chetan Bhagat ‘Half Girlfriend’**

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Chetan Bhagat is a conventional Indian English Writer and is regarded as a youth Icon, who shaped many Indians to develop reading habits. He has penned down novel on diverse themes concerning the Socio –Economic-love problem. The Caption of this Novel Half Girlfriend to me is a fabulous phrase, which is used to express that Love is literally a half – fairy - tale as it has a cloudy beginning, a grubby midway and a dodgy ending. A few people, somewhere, somehow, have a well-defined relationship. The remaining generally has countless degrees of different relationship. The Half Girlfriend synopsis read: A Hindi – speaking Bihari boy, English –Speaking Lutyens’ Delhi girl. He loves her, but she’s willing only to be his Half – Girlfriend. Bilious ringlets of uncertainty initiate to slink around my heart.

This research paper takes exposition the novel Half Girlfriend, written on the essence of Unyielding Will. The question of Unyielding Will has drilled innumerable minds and has been debated for millennia. The universal meaning of Unyielding will is ‘The potential to choose their actions without making it mandatory to trail a certain progression either by the stimulus of others or by the natural commandments/law.’<sup>1</sup> The Unyielding Will is vital for the perception of personal responsibility.

Diverse novelist and authors have labelled this word in their works. William Shakespeare in his Novel “Macbeth” has portrayed an illustration of Unyielding Will, where Macbeth exercise his own free will, which is obsessed by his “vaulting ambition”(I.Vii.27) or whether he is controlled by fate on such “foul and fair a day”(I.iii.38) receiving information from the witches that make him to trust that it is his destiny to be king and he must commit odious crimes in order to ensure his fate.<sup>2</sup> In the same way, an example of Unyielding Will

implies to Oedipus - a mythical Greek king and a tragic hero in Greek mythology. He fulfilled the prophecy, bringing disaster to his city and family but on the other hand his adventures in Thebes were controlled by his own free will<sup>3</sup>. In the same fashion, Santiago, an old Cuban fisherman is a character from the Ernest M Hemingway's, noble prize winner 1954 - The old man and the sea portrays a character of epic struggle, fight, backlash doesn't leave any hope even after eighty four day. And thus, substantiating an Unyielding will.

In the same way, Chetan Bhagat's protagonists – The eager Madhav Jha is abounding with unyielding will. Indeed, Life for him is full of challenges, he struggle, fight, face family backlash, yet didn't comply before circumstances. The way person faces challenges reflect much about the character, what they are on the inside

Madhav Jha, Hindi speaking- Bihari boy, is the chief eccentric in the present novel. He is Six feet tall, black hair and eyes with intense looks, having large hands. He belongs to royal family of Sumraon – the oldest princely state in British India. He is considered as a prince by her mother Rani Sahiba Durga Jha and people there .But as per the Government of India, the remuneration and privileges of the princess are abolished and official titles ended. Hence Madhav, Bankrupt prince of Sumraon lives in a so called Haveli which need renovation at any cost. In words of Madhav, 'Raja Ki Haveli' had a beautiful garden prior but now it looks like a desert. Rani Sabiha runs a Sumraon Royal School having seven hundred students working in three shifts. The Royal school is correspondingly not in good state as it lacks teaching staff – three in all, no classroom, no games facility and above all the no toilets for the Girl learners. This introduction of Madhav doesn't flabbergast the reader that he can accomplish what no one else can ever fantasy of.

Madhav's unyielding will, makes him Alumni of one of the putative college of India – St. Stephen's College, New Delhi. A person, who belongs to such a contextual, cannot ever visualize the name St. Stephen's College. Madhav's journey to St Stephen College was not a piece of cake, he applied for admission under the sports quota. According to Professor Pereira, the head of Sociology remarked '*sports quota, eh?*' (9). Madhav's is a good basketball player and that even a State Level Player for Six years (11). Finally, after showing his Basketball Skill on the court, the coach came running to him and said '*You scored 17 out of 28. Well done, Bihari (20)*'. Madhav wanted to get an admission in the college irrespective of his poor English speaking skills; he played well with an unyielding will without knowing whether he will make it out or not. Finally after a month, Madhav Jha got an admission.

Things seem difficult for him in the beginning but he is determined to join a prestigious college for pursuing his higher education.

One of the barriers that Madhav faced throughout in his personality development was the lack of speaking skills in English. His communication skill was pitiable but he tried to overcome it through his Unyielding Will for English. Actually, Chetan Bhagat novel is a tripartite dedication:

For my mother

For rural India

For the non-English types

This Non –English Types caught my sight, why English novel is dedicated to the “non-English types”. Does he want to position himself as – the carrier of English for the non – English speaker? This was justified when Madhav in Chetan Bhagat’s prologue recall Riya ‘She used to like your books. We used to read them together,’ he said in soft voice.’ For me to learn English’ (3)

Even during his admission cum Interview instance, Professor Fernandez remarked that, ‘English is no longer a foreign language. Mr Jha. It’s a global language I suggest you learn it.’ (13) At some stage in the Interview, frustration of English speaking was evident on the face of Madhav; he does something heroic, as he started replying them in Hindi language which was objected by Prof.Gupta. He even revolted and said ‘I really wanted to know why they had to interview me in English when I was more comfortable in Hindi’ (10). He realised that English was an important tool for surviving in St Stephen College. Madhav’s thought, ‘Without English, I felt naked’ and ‘if I would stay here – theses English –speaking monsters would eat me alive’ (10). Bhagat in his interview once said ‘English and Hindi are the new caste system’.<sup>5</sup> In other instance, Madhav wanted to speak to Riya on the basketball court to give some tips for winning the match, but he was afraid as his English would not go beyond five words (16) .All these incident and many more, reflect the poor state of English.

Madhav didn’t lose any hope, infact he tried hard to learn English from day one. A student who is pursuing his Bachelor degree from St Stephen College, New Delhi is expected to be having excellent communication skills. During his College time, he developed habits of reading English book, listening English songs. After his Graduation, he got an offer from a well renowned Multinational Bank –HSBC for six lakhs a year. This show how much hard

work Madhav must have done to get interviewed and selected for the Job. This shows his desire for English Speaking.

But, he refuses the offer and opted to go back to his own village Sumraon in order to help her mother in her school. This made her mother feel proud. Madhav recalled her mother word ‘Live with dignity. Live for others, that is how one earns respect,’ (96). Madhav wanted funds for his school, but it was a difficult task, but he got an opportunity from an MLA who told that Mr Bill Gates – entrepreneur and philanthropist will be visiting Bihar. He wanted that Madhav Jha should organise a school function and Mr Bill Gates should be the chief guest. Everything was planned, but again his English Speaking Skills were put to test, because he had to deliver a speech in English only and if delegation likes his dialogue, then they may grant something on the spot. The main aim was to get funds for the school and for that he will go to any extent. He joined a weekend class at Patna’s Pride English Learning Centre. A student who has completed his Bachelor degree from St Stephens College, New Delhi, refused an offer from a multinational bank –HSBC to join an English speaking course in order to achieve his endeavour. And at this crucial point, right on cue, tall Riya appeared in fact she helped Madhav in giving tips how to learn and prepare a speech.

After six weeks, a time came for the speech to be delivered, Madhav’s speech was a perfect example of hard work. Actually whatever was decided was said, he also included unrehearsed and impromptu speech. His unyielding Will for Spoken English helped him for the necessary funds needed for the school. It was Madhav’s Unyielding Will which transformed his rural school into one of the best rural schools in Bihar. A school once without any whitewash, plaster coming out, broken wall, no blackboard Classroom, teacher, playground and above all no toilet facility for girls students, today had everything which a modern school has. Admirable portrayal of an Unyielding Will.

“Deti hai to de, varna Kat le”(75). Uncouth expression for fulfilling sexual urge for biological need. Madhav spoke these words to his sophisticated “Girl Friend”, Riya. Is this the end of Madhav Jha’s so called Love story? A Love story laced with heavy-breathing sexuality.

In a flashback, both of them got admission on basis of Sports quota – basketball. Soon they befriended each other. Riya, a nice heart girl, soon got connected with Madhav Jha. Riya is too reserved yet she adores Madhav a lot (63). For Madhav, it was love at first sight. Correspondingly, in Bhagat’s other novel too, the combatant, a man, endures from paucity of

self-esteem. Like in most other novels, the girl he chases is alluring, talented and most importantly, an imprint is generated that she is too virtuous for him. For Madhav, Riya is most beautiful girl on the planet, owner of extraordinary eyebrows, having long fingers, ace basketball player, speaker of wonderful lines and principally English Literature Student .On two different occasions, Madhav have smuggled Riya into his hostel –Rudra.

In the first occasion, they both were alone, with hardly anything happening –light peck on her lips .This instance was the happiest day of his life remarked Madhav. But for Riya it wasn't a pleasant one. Madhav relationship with Riya advances with a sweet, hopeful sanguine but doesn't go beyond a certain impediment –halting at half-girlfriend level. Madhav persuaded her to be his Girlfriend, but she rejects it. On the second occasion, when they both were alone in Rudra, Madhav makes a physical maneuver, she extricate ,he utter out a unpolished remark, she gets offended, break the accord –Half girlfriend relationship and after six month get nuptial to Rohan and later got divorced. This rare love story is beyond Live in relationship and Love at first sight. From here, the unfamiliar modern love anecdote commence, having lot to answer - how they go, how this connection moves from good, bad and exited thing. Will Madhav succeed to make Riya fall in love with him? Will Riya accept him or not?

To be honest, Madhav left no stone unturned in order to get back his lady love .Infact he portrays an unyielding will, making impossible possible. The journey after 'Break-up, or Half –Break' with his love shattered, he plan to go back and focus on Sumraon Royal School. Here, he has to fight for school fund, infrastructure and whitewash and chiefly for constructing Toilet for Girls. Indeed, it was Madhav Svacchhata Abhiyan. I feel gratified, that after so much happening, he is still being Decisive, not picking the path of roses but opting for a path less travelled – path full of thorns.

Beyond his expectation, he crosses his Lady Love Riya at a hotel in Patna. Love once again bloom for Madhav, even shared a passionate kiss at Madhav place. Riya disappear after couple of months with a confession note for Madhav that she has Lung Cancer.

Madhav won the fight for Svacchhata Abhiyan but again lost his love - Riya. He tried to trace Riya everywhere. He even approached Riya family doctor, visited Riya Home, made contact with her friends, searched on internet –Face book or other social sites, called major yoga ashrams but all resulted in big disappointment . He searched Riya for three month continuously. After a gap of two year, he came to know through the Riya Journal, that she

planted a fake illness. The purpose for that lie forms the crux of the story. She loved him but her mother didn't approve the so called relationship and she didn't want to be the reason of separation of Madhav from his mother. He comes to know through Riya bank account about Foreign Exchange conversion in US dollar which was strongly evident through a US Visa copy.

He lands in New York to trace his lady love, with limited day, race to find Riya had begun, his purpose is to visit all the Live music Venues, gigs in Manhattan, as Riya has a dream that she wanted to 'play music and sing ....in a bar in New York'. Luck didn't favour Madhav at all, it made him pooped, and leaving his contact details at every place he visited. Madhav struggle for Riya remind me about a quote "when the world say give up. Hope whispers... try it one more time". It was a farewell party, as planned by Jyoti and Shailesh on weekend, as he has to fly back on Monday. He lost all the faith, enthusiasm, thought, philosophies which he intended to say to Riya. Madhav appears less absorbed, hardly a matter of few hours and then the hunt for Riya ends so also his so alleged Love story. He took out Brochures from his pocket, to read, while flipping the names he came across a name Ray, called the café .Ray of hope for Madhav.

He stepped out; cold winds slicing his face with, no train tonight uttered the customer services counter due to heavy snow. Gosh! What a luck, consulted an old friend Google Maps, with no cabs, Madhav ran, legs began to hurt, checked the street signs, Indian flag unleashed a fresh wave of energy, nasty cramp in stomach, ,legs and abdomen screamed with pain, reached the café. It was her...Riya.

Finally, they both got married, had a son – Shyam, stay in Dumroan, look after the school which is now the best rural school in Bihar with his mother- Rani Sahiba, and keep on juggling to US for three month in a year.

**A Half Girlfriend became Full Girlfriend – Wife – Mother - Daughter –in-laws.**  
Indeed, What a perfect example of unyielding will displayed by Madhav Jha.

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