

Multiple Facets of Human Behavior: An Analysis of Contemporary Author

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ABSTRACT

In the modern era, human beings have excelled in all areas of life and have been proving their excellence over all other living beings. They have used their quest for learning to the best of utilization by creating a life full of comfort and luxuries. Man has even ventured into the arenas which were earlier considered to be associated with cosmic powers. This pace of development has brought its share of challenges and complexities as well. With a spurt in pollution, to health hazard to psychological challenges, life has become too complex. Amongst these challenges, the one challenge that is posing a great threat to the survival of fellow beings and is causing nuisances and disturbances in society are behavioral challenges. Human behavior has undergone such a drastic change that it has emerged as a major area for psychologists to research upon. With time, human behavior has become irrational, lacks vision, and self afflicting etc. Society is witnessing the co-existence of emotions of love-hatred, optimism-passivism, anxiety-depression, and responsibility-recklessness etc. In the broader sense, there is presence of aggression, passiveness, and assertiveness amongst individuals at large. This complexity is not only being explored by medical world at large but is also depicted in the world of literature by authors of eminence. Many contemporary authors have witnessed the waves of changes in the society and have been inspired to incorporate those in their writings. One such author is Chetan Bhagat who has remarkably showcased these diverse behaviors in the portrayal of his characters in his work. In this paper, researcher is identifying the existence of various characters with the kind of behavior they are exhibiting along with the possible causes and remedies if any for it. Researcher has restricted work to one novel "Half Girlfriend."

1. Introduction

With the advent of researches in diverse fields like science and technology, sociology, and anthropology etc. there have been several discoveries and findings in almost all aspects of human lives. Numerous unsolved mysteries have been solved, solution has been provided to different complexities, but still the quest is on to answer the unanswered. One area that is still under scrutiny and posing a challenge is to understand complex human behavior. It has almost become impossible to read or judge or understand the behavior of an individual in its totality. Various ongoing studies have credited cultural, genetics and age as the primary reason for variation in human behavior. These researches have broadly classified behavior into major categories as Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, Alternator, and Assertive.

2. Passive Behavior

Oxford Dictionary defines passive behavior as "Accepting or allowing what happens or what others do, without active response or resistance, a passive person fears being "rejected or failing others."¹ Another definition is "self denying; inhabited; hurt, anxious; allows others to choose; [and] does not achieve desired goals."² As per Lange and Jakubowski the goal of passive behavior "is to appease others and avoid conflict at any cost."³ This behavior becomes apparent when individuals avoid any kind of confrontation with others around even in the

scenario when their own values or beliefs system do not match with them. Individuals possessing passive behavior are 'everybody's friend' and enemy to no one. They make sure to remain in good books of others and would not get involved in any kind of argument or discord of any type. This behavior is very well apparent in Chetan Bhagat's male protagonist Madhav Jha. He gets admitted to prestigious St. Stephen's college of Delhi university through sports quota and happens to meet another student Riya Somani also selected on the same bases. He develops instant liking for her and start taking her casual behavior as her approval for the same. When he shares his feelings for Riya with his boys' gang, they provoke him to get intimate with her and prove his relationship. Here, we find it is his passive behavior that he does not deny them to their advice and agrees to impose himself upon Riya without the realization that he may hurt the sentiments of a girl i.e. more of his friend followed by serious repercussion. His passiveness comes to fore when he soon executes their advice.

"Say no. No half-girlfriend. All or nothing," Shailesh said
'All means what?' I said
'All means she is your girlfriend, in private and in public,'
Raman said
... 'What do I do? She asked if we were cool and I nodded,'
I said
'This stuff is not discussed. This stuff is done,' Shailesh said
'How?'
'Call her to your room.'
'And then?' I said...

1 <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passive>

2 (Jeanine Cannon Bozeman, 2004)

3 (Jeanine Cannon Bozeman, 2004)

'Make Bihar proud,' Raman said and squeezed my shoulder.⁴

After this episode, she boycotts from him completely, leaves the college, and gets married as per her family decision. Madhav being completely tormented passes college and leaves for his native place to help his mother run their school. Here his passiveness come to fore again while handling MLA Ojha of his village whom he approaches for some aid for his dilapidated and worn-out school. MLA makes excuses and denies any sort of aid but Madhav maintains his calm thus avoiding any confrontation.

'I need help for my school. And some hand pumps for the nearby villages.'

'Your school I can understand,' Ojha said as he raised his eyebrows just a little,' but hand pumps for villages?'

'Yes. In Aamva.'

'You're turning into a social worker? Or entering politics?'

'None of those. The kids are not allowed to go to school. They have to walk two kilometres to fill water. More hand pumps in villages, more enrolment in school.'

'Ah', the MLA said as he finished his glass of orange juice. 'Thank God.'

...'If you join politics, my job is in danger,' he guffawed.

'Don't worry, I will not. Also, my school needs help.'

'I know. Your mother told me. It needs repairs worth lakhs. Unfortunately, it is not a government-run school.'

...'Madhav ji, see, my MLA funds are limited. I have to repair roads, fix power and install hand pumps. In fact, I have already run out.'

'How about the state education ministry?'

Ojha laughed. His laugh gave away the answer.

...'So you can't do anything?'

'You want a personal donation from me? I am a humble government servant,' he said.

I stood up to leave.⁵

According to Nisbett and Cohen⁶, cultural differences and economic histories are the key factor in the development of a particular behavior. Madhav being from a very conservative and traditional background has grown up with passive behavior. His academic, social, environmental, and cultural background never provided him an opportunity to argue, confront, or get indulged in any sort of rift or argument which resulted in development of such behavior.

3. Aggressive Behavior

Gestalt Psychologist's 'Kurt Lewin's' Field Theory⁷ emphasizes that factors like situational variables of the personality, any sort of internal conflict, and surroundings tend to later the behavior of an individual. He insisted upon the coexistence of 'Psychological Field' in which a behavior is exhibited. According to him, behavior is a function of the life

space which is the result of interaction of the person (P) and the environment (E). Thus behavior is: $B=f(LS) = F(P, E)$.⁸ The theory summarizes that any alteration in a person's body or image further results in change in life's space as well as environment adding to instability in his behavior. The theory further supports the fact that there may be situational as well as distant factors which are causing behavioral changes. For instance the different phases of a child's growth create uncertainty in the mind of the child and may create difficulty in adjusting to that phase thus causing behavioral modification.

One such behavior that is heavily environmental, situational, and other variable oriented is Aggressive behavior. There are many instances of this behavior around us. An instance of road rage when a vehicle brushed along another vehicle, or a sabotage due to annoyance to a government policies, an argument or clash with people around leading to the loss of life etc. in spurt now a days. All these display the aggressive behavior of the people involved in it. There are numerous definitions of Aggressive behavior with Oxford dictionary defining it as "Feelings of anger or antipathy resulting in hostile or violent behavior; readiness to attack or confront."⁹ Merriam Webster defines aggression as, "A forceful action or procedure (such as an unprovoked attack) especially when intended to dominate or master; the practice of making attacks or encroachments and especially unprovoked violation by one country of the territorial integrity of another warned that any act of aggression could start a war; hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior or outlook especially when caused by frustration; Aggression is often the expression of pent-up rage."¹⁰ Another popular definition is "Behavior that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed."¹¹ This behavior has been marvelously portrayed in Chetan Bhagat's character portrayal of Madhav in "Half Girlfriend". He gets into a prestigious Delhi college on the basis of sports quota and happens to meet a fellow girl student admitted through same. Unaware of city life style and people, he starts developing a liking for her and on provocation from his friend, tries to prove himself as the man and lover of the girl, he tries to force himself upon her thus causing immense damage to her integrity and their friendship.

"Mr. Jha,' she said

'Yes, Miss Somani.'

'This is not called sleeping.'

'You can sleep.'

'Oh, really? How do you expect me to with you all over me?'

I laughed. I brought her closer and lifted her face. I tried to kiss her but she turned away.

'Control yourself, Madhav,' she said.

She tried to extricate herself. I didn't let go.

...'What is your problem?' I said.

'What is your problem? I'm not a release for your horniness.'

4 Bhagat, C. (2014). Half girlfriend (2nd ed., p. 69-70). delhi, IN: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd.

5 (Bhagat, Half Girlfriend, 2014)

6 Culture Of Honor: The Psychology Of Violence In The South By Richard E Nisbett, Dov Cohen

7 Deutsch, Morton (1954). "Field Theory in Social Psychology" (PDF).

In Lindzey, G.; Aronson, E, The Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol.

1 (2nd ed.). pp. 412-487

8 Deutsch, Morton (1954). "Field Theory in Social Psychology" (PDF). In Lindzey, G.; Aronson, E, The Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol.

1 (2nd ed.). pp. 412-487

9 <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/aggression>

10 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aggression>

11 Robert A. Baron, D. R. (1994). Human Aggression. New York: Plenum Publishing Corporation.

'I didn't say you were.'

*'So why can't you just stick to what we discussed? Nothing physical. Just close friends.'*¹²

When she resists, he expresses his aggression by seeking sexual favors directly. Madhav vents out his aggression towards the person he loves the most thus validating 'drive' as well as 'social learning' theories of aggression. "Famous theories on aggression i.e. "Field Theory" by "Kurt Lewin" and "Drive Theory" by "John Dollard" contribute immensely in understanding the convoluted characters of Bhagat's novels. The protagonists are exposed to varied environmental, professional, and personal challenges where they fail to perform as per their own expectations thus developing frustration, feeling of bitterness, revenge, and extreme aggression. In fact they lose sense of balance, ability to judge and take wise decisions as well."¹³ These theories rightly points out that higher the frustration, higher the aggression. Riya's indifference towards Madhav's love proposal and his friend's provocation results in this act of aggression i.e. causing loss to both.

4. Assertive Behavior

One of the most sought after and to be appreciated behavior is 'Assertive behavior'. It refers to the behavior where individual possessing this gives due respect to not only their own ideas and beliefs but also the same to others. However, on facing differences and conflict of any sort, they prefer to part ways and maintain distance. People with this behavior are very balanced, rational, and systematic. Dorland's Medical Dictionary defines it as, "A form of behavior characterized by a confident declaration or affirmation of a statement without need of proof; this affirms the person's rights or point of view without either aggressively threatening the rights of another (assuming a position of dominance) or submissively permitting another to ignore or deny one's rights or point of view."¹⁴ Oxford dictionary defines it as, "the quality of expressing opinions or desires in a strong and confident way, so that people take notice."¹⁵ Assertive behavior may be apparent in one's opinion, requirements, preferences, and needs. A very apt portrayal of this behavior is seen in Chetan Bhagat's character Riya Somani. She is selected in a prestigious college of Delhi through sports quota where she befriends Madhav. He develops secret liking for her and tries to come closer to which she protests. "I am sorry, okay?" I said and blocked her way. "I thought you like me.' Madhav, please understand, I'm not comfortable with all this.' 'So appreciate what we have. Don't spoil it."¹⁶ Once he happens to get closer to her, "I couldn't answer. I bent forward and gave her a light peck on her lips. She didn't protest, but didn't join in either. Her lips felt soft and

warm. I gave her another peck."¹⁷ It is due to her assertive behavior that she gives due respect to the feeling of Madhav but is unable to take it when he forces himself upon her.

...'Control yourself, Madhav,' she said.

She tried to extricate herself. I didn't let go.

...'I want you.'

'No.'

'Please let me.'

'No.'

'You have to.'

'What do you mean I have to?' she said.

...'What is your problem? I'm not a release for your horniness.'

*...'Madhav, I haven't seen this side of you. You are using physical force on me.'*¹⁸

After this episode, she leaves college, gets married, and moves overseas. It clearly shows her character in assertive light as she understand the emotion of fellow being for her but clearly demarcate line as to what she would allow and what she does not approve of other behavior. She does go to the extent of boycotting and completely getting over this relationship and moving on.

5. Conclusion

In this fast paced world, there have already been many disturbances and rifts amongst relationships thus leading to breakups, divorces, fights, and crimes of high intensity. A rat race to climb success ladder, amass world wealth, and be at the top has been extremely strenuous for people's mental well-being. People have become so competitive that they have developed a subjective view towards life and do not appreciate or like anything that they may consider as something not in sync with their thought process or acting as a hurdle in their journey towards success. Out of these mindsets, they are judging not only the situations but also the people around them. Thus if they come across any individual with a different behaviors as theirs, they don't mind developing an indifferent or derogatory behavior against them. People have become so engrossed in their challenging and competitive spirit that they have gone beyond humane level to give any leverage or consideration to individuals or their behavior. Behavioral diversity in the work of Chetan Bhagat shows such individuals. In his work varied shades of behavior and their similarity or differences in the portrayal of characters can be easily seen. Reading of his work not only provides readers an insight into the causes of diverse human behavior but also helps to strike a balance of emotions in real world scenario. Readers emerge more mature, rational, balances with sound wisdom while judging individuals and relationships around. This reading is not only initiating a change in the thought process of readers but also contributing in enhancing their understanding of intricate human behavior. This work rightly describes diversity in behavior due to innate, situational, and environmental reasons and helps in clearing the clouds of uncertainty and confusion in the lives of reader. To certain extent, reader not only enjoys reading the story of the author but also start relating the blue print of his or her own lives with those of the

12 Bhagat, C. (2014). Half girlfriend (2nd ed., p. 74-75). delhi, IN: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd.

13 Sandhya Sharma, Dr. Shailendra Kumar Singh, "Aggressive Behavior in 'Revolution 2020' And '2 States' of the Chetan Bhagat", IJRAR - International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR), E-ISSN 2348-1269, P- ISSN 2349-5138, Volume.6, Issue 1, Page No pp.411-414, January 2019

14 (Dorland, 1890)

15

(<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/assertiveness>)

16 (Bhagat, Half Girlfriend, 2014)

17 (Bhagat, Half Girlfriend, 2014)

18 (Bhagat, Half Girlfriend, 2014)

characters of the novel. Upon completion of Bhagat's work, readers are able to understand intricacies and challenges of

human behavior to a greater extent.

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