

Indian Chick Lit: A Study of the Dilemma of Modern Women

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Abstract :

In India, Chick lit became popular in the first decade of 21st century. These novels portray, in general, a young woman in search of professional success and of personal happiness in her own terms. These popular romances reflect the conflicting relationship between the agency of these new Indian women and their socio-cultural rootedness in gender stereotypes. The present article is going to focus on this dilemma as represented in select novels and also to explore the nuances of gender, tradition and modernity in this context. The female protagonists of these narratives are financially independent, assertive and, mostly, live alone in the city. They smoke and drink, frequent night clubs, intent on choosing their own partner; simultaneously, they are obsessed with the romantic ideals of love and a convenient marriage, regularly insisted upon by their family. Instead of being cultural revolutionaries these women thrive by choice. Their consumerist outlook towards life is a reflection of the socio-economic changes brought about by the liberalization of Indian economy towards the end of twentieth century. This consumerism has been critiqued by feminists as it leads to no social change. Chick lit heroines rather consider consumerism as a celebration of femininity and they attain a postfeminist position in their negation of radical tenets of feminism. Caught between two worldviews—the urban cosmopolitan outlook of life and the traditional value-system, the consumerist approach towards life and the hard-core feminist principles, these women are a fascinating study from the postfeminist perspective.

Keywords: Chick lit, consumerism, gender, dilemma, marriage.