



**Contextualizing Indian Chick Lit:
Neoliberal India and the Single Girl in the City**

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Bio-note: Dr. Srijanee Roy is currently employed at Rishi Bankim Chandra College, Naihati, West Bengal in the capacity of Assistant Professor of English. She has obtained her PhD degree in English literature from Jadavpur University. She was awarded the prestigious Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Fellowship for visiting University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA in 2016. She has co-edited the book *Women's Empowerment: A Challenge in the 21st Century* (2018).

Abstract

Following the unprecedented hype in the international market, chick lit as a genre of popular literature was quick to capture the interest of Indian readership at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The present paper intends to look at the 'single girl in the city' narratives (which is one of the most prolific subcategories of chick lit), dealing with young women negotiating with work and love in the urban space, focusing both on the content and the context of these narratives. Post independence in India there has been a simultaneous development of the canonical and popular writing in English by Indian women, with the literary texts undoubtedly claiming all the critical attention. Popular literature, which is often relegated to the realm of the unliterary, can offer an elaborate social documentation if the production history and intended readership is looked at. Late capitalism and globalization were instrumental in opening up the Indian market in the latter half of the twentieth century, which brought about a significant change in the educational and professional scenario of the urban and semi-urban young women: the rise of Indian chick lit is studied against this backdrop of a country in a state of flux leading to a significant conflict between the traditional and the modern. Elements of consumption and consumerism not only reflect a direct legacy of the Western genre of chick lit, but also provide an interesting scope of study when it comes to a 'developing nation' like India. The upheaval caused by neoliberalisation, market politics and urbanisation in terms of personal relationships, family structure and body image of Indian women would be looked at in context of these 'workplace-tell-all' narratives.

Keywords: Chick lit, globalization, neoliberalisation, consumerism.

