

## ILL EFFECTS OF BIPOLAR DEPRESSION: A SCRUTINY OF PREETI SHENOY'S FICTIONAL CHRONICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Life is all about meeting new people and new challenges. Like that of different colours of a rainbow, life comprises of different emotions at different situations. The biggest challenge is to manage various situation for the smooth flow of human life. Meeting the challenges while handling people in different situation becomes a great Himalayan task in this modern world. Maintaining a smooth flow of relationship has become a big question mark in this contemporary milieu. At a point of time depression encircle us like a whirlpool. As a result of this manic depression, victims tend to face so many life challenges, in order to survive. This paper tries to explore the ill effects of bipolar disorder, by analyzing the fictional character of Preeti Shenoy's Ankita Sharma — a talented juvenile.

**Keywords:** Bipolar disorder, Mania, Ill effects, Determination.

### Introduction

Being a social animal, one cannot escape from relationship — which indeed forms the basis of human existence. Fostering a healthy relationship will lead to a healthy life style, whereas, failure in maintaining it may trigger emotional trauma. In a long run, it may end up in developing a psychological anguish. Depression in a real world sucks the soul out from a person. *Life Is What You Make It* is a fictional narration of Preeti Shenoy, in which she exquisitely knits the story of Ankita Sharma — a young talented beautiful girl of an adolescent age.

*Life Is What You Make It*, is from the hit list of the jubilant budding writer Preeti Shenoy, who has been nominated constantly for the Forbes list of the 100 most influential celebrities in India since 2013. Through her excellent story telling art, she tries to capture the attention of the readers by her heart touching narration of the protagonist Ankita Sharma in the novel *Life is What You Make It*. This narration beautifully captures the intense depth of pain and suffering which the protagonist experiences as a result of bipolar depression in her stage of adolescence. Perhaps, it becomes the problem of majority in recent days.

Asma Tabassum (2020, p. 1) evinces bipolar syndrome as, “It is a kind of mood disorder, characterized by fluctuations in a person's emotions, energy, and the ability to function throughout the day”. Bipolar depression is a kind of mental ailment which results in shifting of the mood of a person. Manic depression may lead to a life-threatening elevation of moods, which makes life even more difficult to survive. This mental depression is a result of mania due to which one encounters drastic shift of temperament. The elevation of mood leads to abnormal behavior, which hinders the enthusiasm of life. When the zeal for life is disturbed, destiny becomes a big question in one’s life. Despite all the comforts, life becomes a challenging task to move forward. Preeti Shenoy puts forth the consequence in life as, “Life was indeed unpredictable and it was true that it could take a sudden unexpected turn” (p.192). Preeti Shenoy fictionalizes the character of Ankita Sharma with the bipolar syndrome and proves that only hope and determination can overcome such kind of mental depression through her narration by spreading a ray of hope in the minds of the readers.

Bipolar disorder has end number of ill effects. It may lead to life long struggle in controlling the emotions at different stages of life. One may experience copious ill effects. Ankita Sharma — a young, good looking, talented personality — experiences bipolar syndrome during her stage of adolescent. This research article explores the ill effects faced by Ankita Sharma during her stage of bipolar depression.

Ankita Sharma is a young, good looking, talented girl who grows up in the state of Kerala. She proves to be an extremely talented girl both in academics as well as arts. She has contested as an Arts Secretary during her bachelor degree programme. She has proved her talent by getting admission into a premier management school in Bombay for her MBA. At a point of time, she undergoes a great depression during her stage of adolescent and everything in her life becomes a topsy-turvy. She has to face so many hurdles in order to overcome her problem. The title ‘*Life is what you make it*’ is proved through Preeti Shenoy’s fictional narration, in which Ankita Sharma fights against the destiny at various stages of life cycle.

### **Greater Energy**

Caterina del Mar Bonnín and et al., (2019, p. 467) quoted in (Merikangas et al., 2011 “Bipolar disorder (BD) is a recurrent and chronic disorder characterized by fluctuations in mood state and energy that affects around 2.4% of the global population”. At the outset, Ankita Sharma feels extremely energetic and used to sleep very less. “I began sleeping very less and less” (85). She feels like a whole new door is opened to explore numerous things. She has an effervescent energy towards her MBA course. She decodes everything using different colour pens and develops a great enthusiasm towards studies as a result she spends so many sleepless nights with vigorous interest towards studies, “I felt like a monster devouring books. I was always hungry. I wanted more and more... I was so exhilarated with the discovery of this ‘power’ that I did not want to stop” (86). This line exactly pictures her zeal and energy towards her studies which is in fact a symptom of mania.

### **Extravagant self-esteem**

Ankita Sharma reflects an extravagant self-esteem at a point in her life. She develops a great interest towards jogging and as a result of it she proves to jog a great distances without going out of breath. Despite that she practices sprints. To her astonishments, “I could run 100 meters in about 13.8 seconds” (87). She could discover inflated self-esteem in her as a result she feels,

I was filled with so much of energy that I did not know what to do with it. Running around on my morning jogs, studying, devouring books, making huge amounts of detailed notes—I continued doing all of it with a burning frenzy. (106)

### **Engaging In Risky Behaviors**

Caterina del Mar Bonnín and et al., quote as (2019, p. 467) “People with bipolar disorder frequently experience persistent residual symptoms, problems in psychosocial functioning, cognitive impairment, and poor quality of life”. People with bipolar syndrome involve in risky behaviors. The protagonist Ankita Sharma is also no longer an exception in doing this. As a result of this syndrome, she attempts to kill herself which is clearly evident in many situation of the novel. At a point of time, she feels really frustrated when she finds difficult in decoding the written message, so she tries to commit suicide. In order to escape from the world of darkness and void she tries to end her life,

I remember the paper cutting knife again. I take it and this time I want to hurt myself really bad. I want to kill this pain inside me which refuses to go away. I want to feel better. I want to give this pain a physical form. (135)

Yet, another situation in her life exemplifies her involvement in risky behavior. After the demolition of the hidden letters by her parents, Ankita could not tolerate the phantom pain which she is undergoing in her mind. She intends to end her pain by involving herself in yet another risky behavior.

I did not know what to do to relieve the pain. I felt trapped in it. I wanted it to stop. I wanted no more of this agony. I curled up my fist as tightly as I could and the finger nails dug deep into the flesh of my palm. I did it again and again. The deeper my nails dug, the better I felt. (120)

As she could not tolerate the inward pain, she indulges in hurting herself to find a redemption for her mental depression “Then I saw the paper cutting knife which I had bought some time back. I took it and made a small cut on the side of my wrist” (120).

Ankita Sharma behaved impulsively by involving in many risky behavior. Azra Tabassum (2020) defines as, “Bipolar Disorder is mainly a mood disorder which is characterized by fluctuations in a person's emotions, energy, and the ability to function” (p. 1). Ankita Sharma experiences exactly the same as a result of her depression. When she feels that her existence becomes pointless, she too tries various clinically sounding methods to end her life. For instance,

I had been contemplating various method of suicide quite clinically. I had thought about it for a weeks. I thought of slashing my wrists and then submerging them in a bucket of water which would ensure that I beld to death. (150)

Further, she resists herself in involving with a conversation, developing relationship with others, etc. Thus she avoids complete human interactions to the core.

Finally, she could come out from her mountain sense of despair and solitude under the able guidance of her parents, doctors and friends. After her treatment in National Mental Health Institute, she could find her new self. She could win her destiny with her indomitable spirit and determination. She could out shine in her life journey — which would almost take her life force, destroy her life completely, throw her away as an empty shell — through her will power and strength of her mind.

### Conclusion

Thus, the title *Life Is What You Make It* signifies the power of one’s inner strength. “Mental health issues are still a big taboo especially in India” (205) says Preeti Shenoy. Through this fictional narration the author intends to prove that people with bipolar disorder can face life with positivity and they can lead a complete life with strong determination and spirit. Thus, life is indeed all about what we make it!

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