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Nayantara Sahgal as a Woman novelist understands the plight of Indian women, and writes about them realistically and faithfully representing their authentic voice and genuine concerns. She projects women's lives and problems from the perspective of a woman. Being an educated person she consciously writes from the point of view of a woman who understands the problems and predicaments of women, their hopes and aspirations, their feelings and sentiments. Her novels deal with needs, wishes and longings of women. Her writing reflects delicate issues like marriage, divorce, alienation, gender disparities and various problems faced by women as individuals and as a group in a male dominated society. The problems of unhappy marriage, marital disharmony, husband-wife conflict, failure in love marriage and arranged

marriage pervades all through the major novels of Nayantara Sahgal. As a woman novelist she writes about the women's experiences and conditions of the society where women are subjected to hardships and suffering. Such realistic representation of women helps us to study and analyze women's genuine problems, causes of their suffering and remedies thereof. This is one very significant achievement and contribution of Nayantara Sahgal as an Indian woman novelist. She is a female who quests for female identity and, makes an effort to understand the inner dimension of the female characters. She presents an insider's view of female psyche, inner aspirations of women and their strange response to men and matters. She has her own way of thinking and looking at things and her own way of portraying character. Her heroines echo the feeling of loss and dissatisfaction in their lives. Even her marriage, divorce and her responsibilities have an indirect impact on her writing. Her experiences in terms of man woman relationship and marriage become rich sources for her writings and fictional world. Her traumatic experiences are voiced through her characters in her novels.

Nayantara Sahgal is an exponent of the political novel in India and she has established herself both as a creative writer and political columnist. Aspects of history, politics, autobiography, and personal elements intermingle in her novels. Her fiction is preoccupied with the search for self realization and sexual freedom.

Problems like unconventional relation, divorce and remarriage capture her novels. Her women characters are politicians, high ranking civil servants and writers in Indian society.

This thesis is a study of man-woman relationship, woman and marriage institution, conflict between tradition and modernity and the feminist consciousness of Nayantara Sahgal in her novels. She shows the problems of husband wife relationship, and how marriage and remarriage, the heaven of conjugal relationship, have become a battleground of desperate personalities, mainly caused by sexual politics, traditional outlook versus modern enlightenment, the tendency to change and challenge the oppressive marriage institution. An examination of this situation in which women are entangled in difficulty is revealed that it is the domination of the male over the female, the rigid gender male and female politics of the patriarchy that empower men to enslave women. Behind all these women's sexual liberation is justified. In all her novels Nayantara Sahgal attempts to deal with the disharmony of man-woman relationship, lack of communication and understanding, unfulfilled love and failure in marriage, divorce and remarriage. She understands that it is not the woman only that troubles and disturbs the stable relationship between a husband and a wife or between two lovers. Nayantara Sahgal exposes these issues as

responsible for a woman's unspoken and entrenched pain and suffering in Indian society.

Nayantara Sahgal belongs to the group of female novelists like, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhubavala, Atiya Hussain, Anita Desai, Dina Maheta, Namita Gokhale, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De whose works have all depicted a distinct female sensibility in the perception as well as the representation of reality. They want to live in full freedom as individuals with minds and hearts as to determine what they are going to do with their self justification. Being a woman novelist, Nayantara Sahgal analyses the true reality of human relationship in which women are the sufferer. A more pitiable and resentful phase of a woman's marginalization begins after her marriage. She is usually seen as an object providing sexual pleasure to man. She is treated as a decoration piece and household. Her feelings and desires are completely ignored once she is married, while for man marriage means complete gratification in every respect. She portrays the suffering of women which results from uneven power division in marriage, privileging male sex all the time and marginalizing the other. After having suffered in marriage which denies them any right to be an equal, independent individual many women decide to break the bond of marriage. They decide to live on their own to fulfill the needs of their own self.

As has been shown the first chapter has dealt with the life and works of Nayantara Sahgal as is necessary for a better understanding of the writer's life, her characters, comprehensive picture and setting in her novels, in short her world. It has

included her family history, her student career, the various challenges and traces of her eventual literary career and works.

From the study of the novels of Nayantara Sahgal it can be concluded that the novelist has focused her attention to the man and woman relationship in her novels. In *A Time to be Happy* she has touched upon the Indian political scenario, freedom movement, marriage, religion, conflicts between the East and the West. The novelist portrays the marriage of Sanad and Kusum, whose marriage coincides with the attainment of India's independence. It also marks a change in the pattern of human relationships, so they come to terms with life. As individuals they did not get a happy life during the Indian Freedom Movement, but they spent a happy life after they had got freedom, so they develop their deep love and respect for each other by forgetting the sorrow and suffering during the Indian Freedom movement. On the other hand Maya's relationship with her husband Harish is not a comfortable one. She tries to suppress her unhappiness by devoting herself to reformative work, and to the removal of gender disparities in Indian / her society. In actuality she suffers from loneliness because of lack of communication with her husband Her husband does not know the female needs of emotional satisfaction of his wife. He always demands that a wife should be meek and submissive and be dependent on man. In this way Maya has lost her individual freedom as woman and lost her identity when her husband fails to

recognize her as a woman. Nayantara Sahgal sees that in order to live happily man and woman need to understand each other. Man enjoys social life while woman lives at home, confining herself to domestic world. This makes her life very lonely. She suffers isolation, neglect which greatly affects her life and existence.

In her next novel *This Time of Morning* the prominent women characters are Leela and Uma who play vital multi dimensional roles while still establishing relations with both traditional and modern ways of life.. They are restlessly in search of freedom at the cost of man. But at last they do not succeed and harm themselves. There are also three women characters Celia, Barbara and Nita who are struggling for their identity but they too fail marital fulfillment, their dreams are not realized. All women characters in this novel also fail to have good relationship with man. Nita has affair with different men without the consent of her father. On the other hand she is very ambitious as a modern girl who wants to smoke, drink and dance. But she is forced to marry the man chosen by her father. Another girl, Rashmi the only daughter of Kailash and Mira, is married to Dalip, an IFS officer. But these also she finds that it is not a marriage of true minds. As a result of that Rashmi comes back to her parents by leaving her husband alone. She is a sensitive modern woman to whom marriage means an emotional

involvement, based on understanding and equality not on domination and self effacement. K. Meera Bai writes:

Modern women find no sense in being an acquiescent, suffering and sacrificing lot. As they feel the need fore self-expression and individual fulfillment, they have begun to question the conventions and defy traditions. This craving for individual freedom naturally results in the breaking up of family and relationships (61).

Nayantara sahgai shows that husband-wife alienation is the result of lack of mutual trust, respect and consideration between the couple. Many of the problems seen in the mental life of man and woman are caused by lack of communication, and lack of space for such a communication especially when both one guided by their ego and presumptions. Without speaking out one's problems they cannot be understood by others. This is a dilemma from which modern man and woman suffer much resulting in separation and divorce. .

Nayantara Sahgal depicts the personal tension which arises from the uncomfortable relationship of married men and women in all her novels. This is true of *Storm in Chandigarh* women mainly suffer as a result of the neglect of husband, who does not appreciate their wives, their feelings. Despite difficulties in the married life, after all marriage is a bond between husband and wife, which

can not be easily broken. Realization of that helps both man and woman in living together overcoming many of their egocentric concerns. That is a very important factor for making personalities in married life for living together. This we can see in Nayantara Sahgal's autobiographical novel *The Day in Shadow*. The novelist believes that the basis for a happy and harmonious relationship between husband and wife is the feeling of sharing, equality, sincerity, honesty and true partnership. On the other hand to treat women as men's dependents in the patriarchal set up where all institutions oppose women's free life, it is almost impossible for to live happily. About this what Simone de Beauvoir says may be seen:

Now, woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage (*The Second Sex*, 20).

That is why they become alienated and get divorced. For example in Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow* Simrit gets remarriage as she can resume a new life with Raj, a brilliant Member of Parliament and she struggles for a new life. The acceptance of remarriage is a good way and the beginning of another phase of new life.

*A Situation in New Delhi* brings out the effect of the post war period as man and woman relationship. Through the portrayal of the character in this novel the novelist shows that there should be equal rights between men and women. Women should not be deprived of their rights to enjoy sexual freedom. She favours the legitimacy remarriage of a man a woman after the death or divorce of his or her first marriage. There is no family in life. Man and woman can live with various partners, changing them to suit the time and place. Nothing is permanent and all seems temporary, even sexual life of men and women. There is no true bonding between the man and woman, most of the relationship seem to be temporary just for pleasure of sex.

*Rich Like Us*, a political novel no doubt depicts the crisis of erosion of human value during the time of emergency in Delhi. The novel expresses Indira Gandhi's misrule, amassing of wealth, corruption, atrocities, punishment of her political rivals and so on. Through the characters of Sonali, unmarried woman and civil service officer one finds high corruption in the governments. She wants to bring out truth and reality, but the more she tries the lesser she succeeds. Another side of the novel is the treatment of man and woman relationship. One can see the relationships of Rose and Ram, and Sonali and Ravi Kachru. Man and woman relationship is not marked by true love, but is based on lust and many pronged affaires of infidelity and sexual corruption. Look at Rose's love for

Ram, her love is sincere but Ram has affair with another woman, Marcella, besides his first wife Mona. Nayantara Sahgal's men and women do not have to follow the bond of marriage. They are all seekers of pleasure in the sex game. Sonali and Ravi Kachru also spend a happy time together at Oxford showing their love and intellectual companionship for each other. But they never think of their marriage even after they have physical consummation. Even though she has given her virginity to Ram, Sonali remains single all her life just to live a life free from subjugation and subordination.

*Plans for Departure* is an objective presentation of the colonial past with a focus on India. The novelist tries to seek objectivity by selecting Anna Hansen, a feminist Danish woman. She wants to travel before marriage with Nicholas Wyatt because she wants to search for freedom. She sets out on a travel for enjoying one year to Copenhagen, London, Madras, Calcutta, and finally Himapur. When she arrives at Himapur she meets Sir Nitin Basu, the eminent scientist spending the summer of 1914 at a remote hill station in Himapur. She is hired as his secretary by Didi, the sister of Sir Nitin Basu . There is small European community in Himapur who are Marlowe Croft, the Christian missionary, obsessive man determined at all costs to build a Christian church in the hills, his wife Lulu, the chief obstacle to his mission and Henry Brewster, the District Magistrate, an enigmatic figure ill at ease with the imperial authority he

presents. He is deserted by his wife Stella she falls in love with Robert Pryor, the Home secretary. He gives up his dreams of a new political life in England he still consumes with love for her. Besides, Henry is closed to Anna Hansen. In spite of she thinks of future, she can see mysterious deaths, secret crime and intrigue in Himapur. She makes her plans for departure as the tragedies of Himapur are swept away by the political violence and social war. But after one year she returns to England she meets Nicholas Wyatt and getting married due to some combination of events. Their relationship is one of mutual respect and understanding.

*Mistaken Identity* reflects the period of British rule over India and the year is 1929. It seems that the novelist has seen the beginning of the process of change taking place around her starting from pre independence period. This novel is a richly historical novel, a romance and exploration of the Hindu-Muslims relations during the Indian national movement. Bhushan Singh is the main protagonist, son of the Raja of Vijaygarh. He is charged with treason and thrown into jail. He has various remarkable relationships with women, which bring about a change in his views and perception. He is obsessed with his first lady love Razia, the Muslim girl. Their affair is terrifying the riots in Vijaygargh. Many people are killed and mutilated but Bhushan is saved from it all. He is kept at home and then sent first to Bombay and then to America. But he cannot escape

the clutches of Razia's infatuation. On the other hand Razia has no special feelings for Bhushan. She gives attention to a man, the Turkish diplomat. In America he studies for some time but he shares a purely sexual relationship with another girl friend, Willie May. Before he comes back to his own city of Vijaygarh, he stays at hotel Taj in Bombay where he meets Sylla, the Parsee girl and he shares a tender close relationship with her. And in the end he marries his friend prisoner cell-mate comrade Yusuf's daughter whose name is not mentioned in the novel. The novelist shows the significance of a man's influence on a woman's life and confined Bhushan's mother Ranee is seen to be silent. However, she has secret happiness kept for her. She chooses to elope with a man, Yusuf in whose company she spends the rest of her life and makes relationships. The unfulfilled love relations of Sylla and Bhushan, Razia and Bhushan show how the marriage is practiced in the Indian society which is made of different religious communities. The novelist depicts the character of Sylla and Razia as women who think of their convenience in matters of love and marriage. In spite of her love for Bhushan, Sylla chooses Nauzer as her husband. Bhushan is a man with no dreams for future also. The novelist shows that man-woman relationship is based on mutual love and understanding that ensures happiness in life.

The third chapter is devoted to the study of woman and the institution of marriage as reflected in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal. In her novels women are

treated as the victim of the male domination. But for woman there is an endless search for identity. In fact marriage is a religious necessity for both man and woman, but neither can reach heaven without being accompanied by his or her duty as married spouse. Sahgal's world consists of two types women characters. The first group comprises women who are happy in the confines of Hindu orthodoxy and other group projects women who are strong with a sense of individuality and an analytical mind but shuttling between traditional and modern values. In the first group women like Lakshmi, Devika and the narrator's mother in *A Time to be Happy*, Mira in *This Time of Morning* and Gauri in *Strom in Chandigarh* are included. These women are perfectly happy in their position and their roles which they accept liberally. Prabha in *A Time to be Happy* and Mona in *Rich Like Us* are victims of bigamy but they conform to ideals of subdued womanhood. The second groups of women are Rashmi, Saroj, Simrit, Devi, Sonali and Anna Hansen. They have strong sense of individuality and modern value.

In *A Time to be Happy* the marriage of Kusum Sahai, the central female, character of the novel, to Sanad is halfway between the two worlds of orthodoxy and freedom. In the early parts of their marriage they are anxious and nervous. The marriage of Rashmi and Dalip is a failure in *This Time of Morning*. Simrit has, after many years of married life, decided to put an end to her unhappy

marriage by getting divorce in *The Day in Shadow*. Saroj in *Storm in Chandigarh* longs for friendship, tenderness and frankness from Inder. He has a firm belief that his wife should be under his full control physically and mentally. Saroj's loss of virginity before marriage becomes the cause of failure of their marriage. Vishal in *Storm in Chandigarh*, Raj in *The Day in Shadow* and Rakesh in *This Time of Morning* are helping and instrumental in giving new direction to Saroj, Simrit and Rashmi respectively and showing them the way to live a meaningful life. Nicholas Wyatt and Anna Hansen in *Plan for Departure* bring harmony through love relationship because of their sincerity, honesty and true partnership. *Mistaken Identity* shows the possible married life even for people belonging to different religious communities. *Rich like Us* adopts a different marriage mode. Ram marries Mona but he falls in love with Rose and finally falls into the clutches of Marcella. Ram inflicts great emotional violence on the woman he marries. He sees every relationship in life in terms of his own advantage and gratification. The novelist deals with the question of bigamy which entails suffering and sacrifices for the co-wives. Bigamy by no means is a healthy practice, for it makes trouble and danger in social and domestic life.

The marriage of two women Nell and Lydia to Michael Calvert in *A Situation in New Delhi* is an extraordinary event. Their marriage is without respectable religious ceremonies. The novelist presents two views on the

marriage institution as marriage is very important central issue in every Indian family. The Traditional and religious marriages are based on various factors which affect women's life, honour and prestige...

The fourth chapter is devoted to the study of the conflict between tradition and modernity in the two novels of Nayantara Sahgal *This Time of Morning* and *The Day in Shadow*. Nayantara Sahgal divides the women characters into two categories, those who are traditional and those who are modern. Indian Society has strong traditional rules and norms. Most of the Indian women are so conditioned and bound by traditional rules and norms in general. The untraditional modern women have much power of mind. They want to project their minds as individuals free from all kinds of conservative thinking which they seek to overthrow. They are ready to fight their way in fulfilling aspirations. This is seen in the novel *This Time of Morning* where Nayantara Sahgal depicts Nita and her father Dr. Narang. Nita is a young beautiful modern girl, her father is desirous of the Eastern and Western cultures. In the traditional Indian society, a marriage is usually arranged by the parents of the bride and bridegroom and after marriage the husband and wife have to live together in all circumstances. In Nita's opinion man and woman must get married after testing themselves intellectually and morally instead of performing the marriage hastily at first sight.

She declares that marriage should be the result of personal relationship and the choice of life partner is a very difficult task for both the man and woman.

*The Day in Shadow* is a mixture of tradition and modernity. It observes their attitudes towards morality, education, food habits, love and architecture. The novelist believes that though India has got freedom it is only on the surface level still since people are the slaves of western people in their attitudes towards love, marriage, sex, morality, education and religion. So, Raj, Simrit, Summer Singh, Brij and Ram Krishan who are the major characters of this novel behave like modern but at the same time find it difficult to isolate themselves completely from the age-old tradition of their own country. The novelist has exposed defects of age old traditions. She has strong dislike for the age-old tradition of Indian society.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the study of the feminist consciousness of Nayantara Sahgal in her novels. She represents the creative release of the feminine sensibility in all her novels. Being an Indian female novelist in English she is a woman who searches for identity and makes an effort to understand the inner dimension of the female character. She always tries to present an insider's view of female psyche, inner aspiration and their strange response to man and matters. Being a feminist she wants to express a feminist's consciousness. She expresses the image of woman to be an active person. In a sense the Indian society has been continuously changing due to the

development of women's working. Women are trying to get a small space in their worked. They try to show their own identity and potential. All the women need to be conscious of their own role and responsibility in the society. Women are to be reformed themselves as much as men are to be reformed. Looking from this angle what Nayantara Sahgal argues is in favour of a balanced society where man and woman share equally, understand each other on equal footing. Perhaps this will remove sexual, gender disparity and male domination in the society because everybody has the same right to enjoy an individual life. Women should fight for their own cause as feminist critics like Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir who write about women's right. Nayantara also demands equal right in the Indian society, no sexual difference and equal opportunities. She takes up her pen with the women issues that reveal her own experience as a woman. She is strongly against patriarchal sexual construct in Indian society and fearlessly portrays taboo issues. The play of sexual domination is harmful especially in the relationship between man and woman, husband and wife. In order to challenge sexual monopoly of men women should be educated so that they are aware of their rights, and they can earn an independent living and a life of their own. Women in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal speak of these feminist issued breaking their silence against sexual politics and patriarchal sexual oppression.

## Works Cited

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