
Nayantara Sahgal in her novels shows her deep interest in the treatment of man-woman relationship in Indian society. In any given society relationship between man and woman is very important because a society is made by both man and woman, and their relationship is mainly constructed through marriage. All her eight novels offer an extensive treatment of this subject. Truly speaking, good relationship of the man and woman plays an important role in the development of a family in the society. If their relationship is unwholesome, and when either of them is dishonest then there will not be a good family. This affects the family life. When the husband and wife in the family don't respect each other the family deteriorates and the children, who are dependents can't express their feelings freely and honestly since they are afraid of their parents.

On the other hand, the parents, too, can't give their parental love and care to their children in the family. As a result of this, no one in the family can find peace. In fact, the entire family life is affected. Family is an important unit of the society and when there is no peace in the family, the society will not be prosperous because all the happy families make a happy, wealthy and healthy society.

Since Nayantara Sahgal herself has suffered from some of the evil social practices and the physical and mental torture of her husband, she frequently becomes emotionally hurt and crippled. Her husband's arrogance and indifference produce an experience of pain and suffering leading her to a world of darkness. So, she starts criticizing men in Indian society, including her own husband. This chapter will discuss how she criticizes the social ills and the man-woman relationship.

Nayantara Sahgal in her novels tries to deal with the social evils and the man-woman relationship in Indian society. It is true that there are some practices and systems that are evil in Indian society, as for example, they may include the caste-system, the oppressive behaviour of the higher class people towards the lower class people and the higher castes people's act of looking down upon the people of the lower castes. While the Brahman and the Kshetriyas are fighting with each other for supremacy, they and the Vaishyas not only look down upon

the Sudras but also treat the Sudras as sub-human beings. In the meantime, the Hindus try to dominate the Muslims and the Christians, etc. Marriage across castes is extremely painful. In brief, these social evils are found in Nayantara Sahgal's novels, and they are being criticized by the people of the Indian society as well as by the novelist herself. They have affected the relationship between men and women. Besides this, she has known that the relationship between a husband and a wife is deteriorating gradually due to many factors, like women's consciousness of their rights and privileges and their higher position in the society as a result of education and their growing sense of individual self-respect. She has dealt with these issues in clear terms.

Here, it may be said that the novels of Nayantara Sahgal present women who are in an internal freedom and their complex relationships with men. Besides this, she displays her deep interest the man-woman relationship within or outside the marriage, and the husband-wife conflicts. As expressed by her in some of her novels, most of the Indian women are bound and so conditioned by the traditions and customs of their country. They consider marriage to be a social function and sanctimonious duty of life. Neena Arora says: "For centuries marriage was considered to be the destiny for a woman irrespective of the fact whether she was happily married or was miserable due to the constant oppression by man in the Patriarchal set-up" (Arora 89).

Since the fact is known to all the Indian wives, they strictly guard themselves against the messy and sacrilegious relationship, such as adultery because of the moral laxity of the women that is severely condemned. Most men in India consider and look at women as the other of man. To a man a woman is a sexual object. If marriages fail to be bound by social and moral considerations they tend to be confined to sex, which in turn will not keep both husband and wife together for a long time. For example, when the man is satisfied sexually he will forget his wife, neglect her, and then will go to find some other women, who can satisfy him. He will surely be overwhelmed by his lust for a new wife. As a consequence of this, his relationship with his former legitimate wife will automatically disappear. However, Nayantara Sahgal strongly and bitterly criticizes the meanness of such a husband since she is a kind of woman who deeply believes in 'new humanism' and a 'new morality'. She is of the opinion that a woman should not be taken as a 'sex object and glamour girl who is fed of fake dreams of perpetual youth and lulled into a passive role which needs no individual identity. Instead of it, she wants to regard a woman as 'a man's equal and respected partner (Anand, 157). The novelist vividly knows that the Indian traditions and customs have deprived the Indian women of their freedom. So, they can't disobey their husbands after their marriage. Such a tradition is branded social evil and to be discarded since this age is an age of science and

development that promotes the equality between men and women. Nayantara Sahgal is a woman who is for the unfettered freedom, she urges the Indian people to realize that human personality is a precious, hard-won thing, worthy of nurture, irrespective of sex. Briefly speaking, she is very disgraceful to know that the human relationship, mainly the man-woman relationship still seems largely undiscovered even if the monumental problems have been solved by science and research in this atomic age.

The first novel of Nayantara Sahgal, *A Time to be Happy*, (1958) gives us a story about people of the upper middle class in India who are struggling for achieving Indian independence. The novel, which has been divided into three parts, has used an unidentified first person narrator to narrate most of the important actions. The Narrator is a young middle-aged bachelor. The place of action differs in these different sections of the novel. It contains a large number of characters and the structure is thus a little unwieldy. Nayantara Sahgal has brought in almost all her favorite themes in *A Time to be Happy*. The novel has presented discussions on religion, marriage, freedom, politics, Hinduism, a conflict between the East and the West specially in the context of man-woman relationship. These themes emerge in her other novels as well. The novel shows the husband and wife relationship between Sanad and Kusum Sahai. Sanad is of an aristocratic family, the son of Govinda Narayan, a wealthy land owner of

Lucknow, and Lakshmi. The family of Govinda Narayan is a happy family with Harish his more modern brother. He has two sons Girish and Sanad and a daughter, Veena. Girish is married to Devaki and Sanad to Kusum. Maya is wife of Harish. Kusum Sahai is the daughter of Mandan Sahai, a university Professor in Sharanpur. And her mother is Savitri. Kusum has four brothers, they are Sahdev, Naresh, Karan, and Kumar in Sharanpur. Of other characters in the novel the following may be mentioned, Sir Harilal Mathur, a wealthy businessman, his first wife Prabha Mathur and second wife, Lady Mathur, Kunti Behen, a lady social worker and later a Member of the Legislative Assembly, Vir Das, a successful anglicized Indian, Sohan Bhai, who shares political imprisonment with the Narrator, Raghubir, a clerk in the Sharanpur office of Selkirk and Lowe, Mr. Trent, officer in the Calcutta Office of Selkirk and Lowe, Cyril Weatherby, a manager of the Sharanpur office of Selkirk and Lowe, Mark Mcivor, successor to Weatherby in Sharanpur, Tom Grange and his wife, Dora, social leaders of Sharanpur, Marion Finch, a visitor to Sharanpur.

The unidentified narrator is an omniscient and omnipresent person, a young middle-aged man. He is a beloved son of his father and mother. His parents had been married as children and had grown up together, never being separated except for his father's University education in England. His mother was devoted to his father. The parents wonderfully suited to each other. A

marriage that lasted fifty years is an example of perfectly harmonious marriage in full understanding and appreciation of each other's weaknesses. That is why the narrator enjoyed in his father's house and had the benefit of good education both at home and abroad. Because of education he had awareness of things around him and heightened his sensibility. This made him surrender forever his rightful claims to his inheritance. He admired Gandhiji's conception and ideas and followed the freedom movement. Why he got attracted: "Gandhiji made symbols of the lowliest commodities, salt and cloth, both vital necessities of life, and both heavily taxed. Make your own salt, he said, and spin your own cloth." (*A Time* 7). The commercial and materialistic atmosphere at home presented an unpleasant contrast indeed. His father was an unorthodox and daring man. On the other hand, he remained indifferent and unmaterialistic. The Narrator willingly followed and adapted the Gandhian way of life like the use of Khadi, without any resentment at his father's decision and agreement. His father never forgave him for this matter and the whole fortune of the family went to his cousin. The improper sensational condition of the workers, labourers, employers and the highly objectionable unpleasant difference between life of the workers and that of the mill-owners can be seen as given below.

Sharanpur – "City of Shelter" – a majestic name, but little more than a façade for many living within its bounds who know neither protection nor adequate sustenance all their days. Born amid grime,

breathing factory smoke and the treacherous fluff of the cloth mills, they cannot even look up to a clear sky. My father's millhands were among these, for, though my father was not an unjust employer, there was not at that time a proper appreciation of the worker's needs or any knowledge of the squalor of his working and living conditions. The fortunes founded in Sharanpur on cheap, plentiful labour were made not by unjust, but by unaware, men. The strata that divided society did not demand that the uppermost level be informed about the lower levels. Business enterprises prospered and money flowed in. There was no time to look beyond the accounts ledger. The millhands did their day's work for the meager wage that was the standard of the time – I cannot recall the amount – and went home to heaven knew what hovels for a night's mockery of rest. Children were born and died among them with a mushroom rapidity, both processes as lightning-swift as the city's growth to prosperity and its promotion to one of the important industrial towns of India. (*A Time* 4-5).

This has shown the writer's awareness of upper and lower class distinction and unpleasant social conditions in urban industrial areas. In the beginning of the novel the Narrator says that this novel is really Sanad's story. But he is known to almost all the characters and is a witness to all the major events. The Narrator narrates the story with forward and backward movements in time. Sanad is the protagonist of the novel, and through him it is easy to understand the contemporary situations. Sanad searches for his identity and reality in life. Being

the younger son of a wealthy land owner he has received good Western education, reading English literature and learning the use of the English language, good manners, playing tennis etc. He has been living a kind of life, for removal from the reality of life in the Indian context. He is working in the British firm, Selkirk and Lowe. Everything he does has a British Stamp on it. He becomes very confused and does not know whether or not he should work in Welton. To be or not to be that is question of Sanad. His dilemma has been depicted in the novel. This kind of dilemma and doubt continues for a long time. Many questions torment his mind and make confusions. Confusions and helplessness represent the feelings of several young men like him under similar historical conditions. That becomes the condition of Sanad who has received good Western education. He cannot express to his own confusion as he says:

I've studied English history and literature. I've read the English poets. It's all more real to me than the life I live every day. Don't you see, it has been burned into us, we're branded with it. My body is in India, but my brain doesn't belong here. I might as well be an Englishman except for the colour of my skin. (*A Time* 231-232).

Sanad has this kind of dilemma because he wants to achieve a kind of compromise or balance between the two civilizations or the ways of life and two cultures. The basic contrast between the cultures of the West and the East has

been depicted in the novel. As a sensitive young man with enhanced awareness he wants to become an individual identity. He expresses to the Narrator:

I don't want to forget anything I've been taught. I don't say there's anything wrong with it. I only want to redress the balance. I don't want to feel like a stranger among my own people. If I feel this way now, it'll be much worse in a few years' time. Do you think I want to become like Uncle Harish, forever reminiscing about the olive he ate in Monte Carlo and the temperature of the wine he drank in Madrid? (*A Time* 232).

But he thinks that he is a misfit in the Indian society of his time. The sense of alienation torments his sensitive mind. His elder brother Girish and his uncle Harish have also been brought up in the same manner but in thought and actions they are quite different from each other. They willingly and knowingly accept the British pattern of life and Western culture. And the Narrator helps with the problem of Sanad and brings solutions. The novelist clearly depicts the families of Sanad Shivpal and Kusum Sahai. Compared with the Shivpal family, the Sahai family seems to be free from conflict or tension. The Sahai family has been depicted as a happy family and Shivpal family is an aristocratic family. Sanad has already met Kusum in the English way of Western culture in the first part of the novel and Kusum did 'namaskar'. The relationship remains passive for a long time. Sanad takes interest in Kusum and wants to know about her and this gives

an occasion to the Narrator to speak of Kusum's family. The Narrator also initially feels that it is proper for him to tell Sanad of the difference between the world of Sanad and Kusum. He is quick to understand of pursuing Sanad to resume the relationship. The Narrator knows about the qualities of Kusum's family. While Kusum Sahai's professor father and four brothers are directly involved in the independence movement, Kusum Sahai's involvement is silent transformation from one world to another world. Even though he is aware of the qualities of Kusum's mother (Savitri), he is apprehensive of bringing Kusum, a young, typical Indian girl, shy of meeting strangers and visitors and who bursts into tears at the mention of the marriage world. Savitri is an Indian traditional mother and courageous woman. Savitri's inner strength is examined when news of the sudden killing of her son, Sahdev comes for not bowing his head to an English man and moving carelessly. Even in death the young man (Sahdev) refuses to acknowledge the supremacy of the Britishers. It is a cruel and tragic incident. To Savitri it is very tragic because the shocking news comes when she is collecting the ingredients for the "puja" for the celebration of his twenty-first birthday. The Narrator knows very well that Sahdev can never surrender to an alien race. To him Bharat Mata is both inspiration and a torment. Savitri has courage and dignity in trouble. She supports him in her prayers in whatever he does. Savitri has believed in her sons and has full confidence in them. She speaks

of Sahdev: “Sahdev is not a child, nor does he act on impulse. He is the most thoughtful of my sons. I respect his judgement”.(*A Time* 183).

But as a mother, Savitri is worried about her daughter Kusum. Sahdev is devoted to his sister Kusum. She is very close to Sahdev. He loves and cares for her future life and he continues to indulge Kusum. He has done everything. Savitri wants the Narrator to talk to Kusum and help her forget the tragedy. But the Narrator has a different opinion on this situation. However, the doubt relating to Sanad and Kusum has been removed to some extent after their discussion with Prabha Mathur, Harilal Mathur’s first wife. We can see, there is a difference between man and woman in the Indian society. They do not have the same kind of freedom to express themselves. Women are still greatly dominated by men and the society in general. Prabha is an example of Hindu traditional woman’s tolerance and self sacrifice

Prabha has a daughter but she has no son. Their daughter has brought them much joy. Her husband adores her and he is very fond of his daughter. However, he marries again, because he wants a son, Prabha has no objection and she is perfectly happy with her husband and lives in the same house with his new wife. Prabha Mathur thinks that love is important to a woman, and not to a man, who has other things to occupy him. A woman like Prabha Mathur leaves

everything to providence as the Indian traditional woman follows her husband's way of life in a docile manner. Nayantara Sahgal wants to reform this matter. Because of Harilal Mathur and Prabha, the Narrator has left Sanad and Kusum to find out the reality of their relationship by discovering themselves.

Prabha Mathur has an expensiveness of character, the tolerance and flexibility of the Indian traditional women. She requests her husband to marry again for a son. Nayantara Sahgal herself cannot be said to believe in this traditional image of Indian womanhood, an image built up on sacrifice, benevolence and understanding. Sahgal's female characters remain within their social circles and try to find fulfillment through love and friendship. Prabha cannot think of herself as a separate individual apart from her husband. There is a high degree of self denial and submission in her character and Nayantara Sahgal is against them. She portrays the marriage of Sanad and Kusum, "A year later in February 1947, Sanad and Kusum were married". (*A Time* 200). An interesting thing which is to be noted here is that six months after their marriage India becomes Independent. Since Sanad's marriage to Kusum Sahai coincides with the arrival of India's Independence, it also marks a total change in the pattern of human relationship. So, Sanad and his wife come to terms with life. At this stage, Sanad accepts the new change in the country with an unusual degree of understanding and developed sensibility while his wife gradually recovers from

the shock and trauma at the death of her elder brother Sahdev, who dies suddenly because of the Quit India Movement of 1942. It is a great loss to her because it is he who looks after her interest and takes care of her very affectionately. But, now she finds the needed comfort and solace in her husband. It is true that Sanad treats his wife very gently even though there exists a large abyss between Sanad's aristocratic family and Kusum's family. In fact, the husband-wife relationship between Sanad and Kusum is praiseworthy. Nayantara Sahgal criticizes her society and believes that a good society also can make its people good and respectable. Lakshmi Sinha observes that in "*A Time to be Happy* both Sanad and Kusum experience a new awakening in the new-found political independence" (Sinha 48).

Since the husband and the wife cannot get a happy life during the Indian Freedom Movement, they spend a happy life after they have got freedom. So, they develop their deep love and respect for each other by forgetting the sorrows and suffering caused during the Indian Freedom Movement. Although at first Sanad seems to be in a difficult position after his return from England and he gives up his job with the British firm called Selkirk and Lowe in Sharanpur. Partly he is an Anglicized Man, being himself exposed to England for his studies at Oxford. But his return to India is a turning point in his life, for he joins the freedom movement. After India gets Independence he feels he is free from the

British preoccupation in his mind. His marriage to Kusum helps him escape from the influence of England. Now he gets peace of mind. The sudden and unexpected treatment of independence of the country surprises almost everyone. The important thing to be noted is that the social change and development in the country have affected both the Indian life and European life in India. The important national event provides new opportunities for the Indians to be deeply rooted in their own culture and the anglicized Indians to make serious effort to adjust to the changing situation and join the mainstream Indian life. Each character reacts to the new development in her or his own way. Attempts are to be made for adjustment but adjustment is not easy. There is something a problematic condition in the family of Shivpal. Further, the relationship between Lakshmi and Kusum is not so harmonious. Lakshmi thinks her daughter in law to be unfeminine for lack of aesthetic sense. She feels that Kusum can not appreciate expensive and beautiful things. Lakshmi explains:

Only today I was going through all the things she has sent back there back here to me, things I gave her at her wedding – cloths, ornaments for her house, and one or two really lovely carpets. I cannot understand a young woman not being interested in beautiful things (*A Time* 245).

On the other hand, Kusum thinks that the things are expensive but not beautiful because her idea of beauty is different. She decorates her home with

brilliant cloth squares of bead and mirror work, striped straw matting for the floors, bright Gods and Goddesses. She prefers these materials too expensive and permanent things of long lasting value. In their makeshift home in the Club Kusum does not feel the need to display expensive and valuable materials. Kusum is not really happy in the way she lives with her husband. Life in the Club made her unhappiness. She tells the Narrator, "Sometimes I feel Sanad and I are so far apart," she said. "I'm so awkward in his world. We have talked about it," (240). Kusum tries to follow into Sanad's world. She cannot fit easily into Sanad's way of life. She tries to adopt the new modernist trades but fails. In the meantime, T. Ashoka Rani makes a remark about the marriage of Sanad and Kusum:

Kusum's marriage to Sanad is tense and unhappy initially but they manage to overcome the difficulties. It is half way between orthodoxy and freedom (Rani 125).

Truly, speaking, there is no conflict in her past life. Kusum Sahai's families are directly involved in the independence movement. Her involvement is a silent transformation from one world to another world. Again, there is no conflict, rebellion or bitterness in her former house. She is able to establish herself in the way she would have liked to, and is happy her own inexpensive and quiet world which is quite different from the aristocratic grandeur of her

husband's house with its valuable objects of art, and carpets and palatial buildings. Since Kusum and her husband have discovered the truth about themselves, they are able to discover each other finally.

In Kusum Sahai's relationship with Sanad, a young man Narrator helps her greatly. He knows that they have been living at the club for several months since they don't like to take their suite at the Royal Hotel. At that time, he might have stopped and talked with them but he doesn't stay since they look preoccupied and none too pleased each other. After sometime, Sanad and Kusum Sahai request the Narrator to join them on one Saturday evening. Although he thinks that they would prefer to be alone, he is pleased since they have insisted on his company. Briefly speaking, Vir, a successful Anglicized Indian greeted Kusum with his usual 'namaskar' since he knows her good relationship with her husband Sanad.

The novel deals with a post-Independence generation to whom freedom is no longer a dream but a reality. This generation lives side by side with an older generation which has struggled to bring about the new life, the new generations and the new India. Sanad has rejected both the real qualities and British worlds very consciously.

The novel also shows the relationship between Harish and Maya who are not in conflict but are contrasted in the one another. From the beginning of the

novel *A Time to be Happy* the Narrator is aware of the relationship between Maya and Harish. Narrator has been a witness to all that had happened in the world of Harish and Maya. Harish also receives western education. He has fully accepted the British way of life with his Anglicized life style, having unshakable faith in a foreign way of life. He has gone away far from his cultural root. Look at the couple; Maya comes from a happy joint family bound by a sense of emotional security, but Harish has no idea of the kind of life. Maya is very simple. She wears a plain sari of some nondescript colour and lack of ornaments and embellishment but Indian traditional women are used to heavy jewellery, ornaments and ornate saris. The Narrator explains it:

I remember my mother telling me that for the first few months of her marriage she had slept with all her bridal jewellery on – and it was a considerable amount – for fear of her mother-in-law’s disapproval had she removed it even at night. A married woman must never be un-adorned. I now realized how little this convention had suited Maya (*A Time*, 63).

On the contrary Harish accepts the English way of life and their fashion and European style.

Harish for all his gaiety, must be furious with her for coming to the party dressed in this fashion. The dining-room was almost empty except for our party. It looked as depressing as all the hotel dining-

rooms I have ever seen in India, and I was not surprised that Govind Narayan had turned down Harish's invitation to dine there. The dinner, I was sure, would be no improvement on the atmosphere. I was right. We began with a floury soup called Crème Something, followed by greasy fried fish. The menu informed us that there was chicken to follow, and I feared it would be one that had died a natural death after living to a ripe old age. It was no wonder that so few people in India ate at hotels and restaurants and so many were vegetarians. Eating out was at the best of times an ordeal, certainly in Lucknow, unless one went to an Indian restaurant and ate Indian food, and this Harish would never serve his European guests. That was the reason why he entertained outside instead of in his own home. Maya had no knowledge of European cooking, and the cook she employed could produce only Indian dishes. (*A Time* 63-64).

But Maya has no knowledge of British way and European style. Suddenly after India gets independence, the people of Indian find changeable political and social situation. Harish has changed in his way of life in the political and social situation. It is really depressive Harish is forced to remain in office for five days, and because of this he has to miss his regular game of billiards and going to the club. Harish, a secretary in Ministry of Food and Culture feels that he has lost the race and that he has achieved paradoxically nothing of his old life. But, Maya who is working on one of the Rehabilitation Committees is away all day in a

refugee camp. She goes about her work so cool and composed. On the contrary Harish has been suffered by social changes in post independence period in India. There is something difficult in his personal and family life.

From the beginning Harish and Maya are different in their life. Harish's relationship with his wife Maya has failed. There is an illness and disharmony in their family. The situation becomes worse because of Maya's childlessness. As a member of a typical Indian family, Amaji is unhappy and she makes no secret of her preference for Govind Narayan and his wife Lakshmi. It is true that their marriage is unhappy because of lack of understanding and communication. According to the Narrator, Harish and Maya are ill-matched from the very beginning. On the day of marriage Harish is in shervani and safa (Shervani is knee-long coat with a high Russian-type collar, buttoned all the way down. Safa is a headgear made of a long material wound around the head at an angle. It does not fit the head squarely, as the turban does,) On the other hand the sixteen year old Maya is shy, quite and withdrawn. She feels subdued. Her pathetic condition is enhanced because she is a childlessness woman. Maya is an unhappy and unfulfilled wife because Harish has no time for the gentle, tender and docile girl, he has married because of his involvement in his career, spiraling miniature success. As a result of it, he has no time and space for the tender feeling for his wife.

The novelist herself having much experiences about suffering, loneliness and complain of silences in marriage Maya in this novel, is capable of emotion. Lack of communication results in the emotional isolation of wife, what she wants is some kind of response. In a moment of emotionally changed scene in which her husband is present Maya asks innocently, “What is the most important thing in life?” (65). And without waiting for reply she answers the question herself.

“A response,” she said, and it sounded forlorn. “Not a good one or an approving one, necessarily, just a response of any kind. Even whether we live or die is not important unless it is important to someone”(A Time, 65-66).

What become important in man and woman relationship and human are communication, love and understanding. This hunger for response or communication is a common feature of Nayantara Sahgal’s women characters. Maya is also hungry for response and feelings of love. Harish has failed to see her as an individual, a person in her own right. Harish wants her to conform to his way of life but Maya is hungry for love and tender feelings. It is a really pathetic and tragic scene. He has already assumed that she is unapproachable and devoid of human emotions and feelings like ‘a man made of stone’. Seeing the helpless condition of Maya, the Narrator has lost control of himself, and he becomes involved in the intensely uncomfortable human situation. It is really, a

moment of truth for him. At the moment, the Narrator leaves the place and goes down to the river bank, thinking of really incident.

There I spent what remained of the night, going over and over every minute with Maya, the discovery and the loss of her, the beginning and the end. What should I have done? Begged her to go away with me? Continued to see her and love her, at no matter what cost? Such solutions are for fairy-tales. Reality is framed in another perspective altogether. She with her woman's vision had realized this even before I had, in the move she had made to free herself from my arms, in her mute appeal to me not to touch her. She had realized this and remained calm. I was broken by it, and all night I could not stop my tears. I had lived alone all my adult life and it had never mattered. Now the knowledge of my empty future overwhelmed me (*A Time*, 67).

The Narrator has his desire to help Maya in her emotional arises. He seems to understand the fact that the thing that happens between him and Maya really happens in real life. Actually and fortunately, the modern and re-surgng woman of India in the context of a country becoming independent from foreign rule for many years save the situation. It is a miserable though. She succumbs to passion for a moment but withdraw from further involvement very quietly.. She remains quiet calm and her silence appeals succeeded in making the Narrator realized that reality in life is framed in another perspective. Maya's childlessness is a symbol, not a cause of her unhappiness, the closeness, togetherness,

communication and understanding are necessary for happiness. The communication gap is ruinous in man-woman relationship with her husband. Nayantara Sahgal gives the true account of pitiable situation in Maya's life for she has no good relationship and good communication, the most important thing in her life. She also studies males as intelligent, responsible and courageous in a special and desirable way while women are weak and dependent. Even though she is a working woman, she quits her job to follow her husband when he is transferred to another posting as the husband's job is more important than the wife's. Wives are compelled only to look after the family needs annihilating their own skill and personality. In fact, even after the failure in husband-wife relationship, Maya's purity, fortitude and womanliness make her personal life, working with the refugees at the rehabilitation centre. Working with quiet efficiency for the programme Maya has achieved fulfillment in life not through marriage in the traditional Indian culture as in the case of Lakshmi but through social work. She wants to work in a village to get peace, happiness and a sense of fulfillment. But Nayantara Sahgal has emphasized on the need of communication and understanding as a basis of a happy and good relationship. She has made an attempt to keep a good relationship of husband and wife through the understanding communication and response which is most important necessity for keeping a good relationship.

This Time of Morning (1965) is Nayantara Sahgal's second novel that introduces a number of varied characters, politicians, bureaucrats, high placed influential artist, prominent parliamentarians, gossiping liberated and libidinous society ladies as well as traditional educated women and housewives. This novel's canvas is so large as to include the whole of the sophisticated urban culture in modern Delhi. The novelist portrays strong thoughtful women characters who are searching for freedom. Rashmi is the only daughter of Kailas and Mira. Her father is a Prime Minister's reliable assistant nurtured in the Gandhian congress movement. This novel is also set in post-Independence India. The personal life of Kailas has been quite happy and satisfactory, not because of his own efforts but mainly because of the efforts of his wife, Mira. Mira has loved him from the moment she first set her eyes on him in her parent's home in Allahabad. It is a chance meeting between them. Kailas is a very handsome young man although he has been attracted by Mira's voice and her best feature as a young woman. Mira's view to Kailas is based on the traditional and mythical character Rama-Sita, Savitri-Seitaban ideal and symbol of sacrifice, suffering, and true love for the spouse. They both belong to a singularly fortunate generation that "succumbed the magic of Gandhi" (*This Time*, 14). Thus, their marriage is not subject to any kind of pressure or tension like that in the other marriages portrayed in the novel. She is a loving and dutiful wife yet fiercely

individualistic in her belief and behaviour. She takes to share the ideals and concerns of her husband, and at times when her husband faces a problem she would gladly ask what they are going to do. This shows Mira's total sacrifice and identification with Kailas and dedication to him. As a result, they are laid in good position. Mira is an ideal Hindu traditional wife. She cannot think of herself as separate apart from her husband. Their daughter Rashmi is a sensitive and modern woman. She is married to Dalip, an I.F.S. officer against the willingness of her mother. As a result of that, Rashmi comes back to the residence of her parents by leaving her husband alone. In this way, some women of Nayantara Sahgal's novels regard marriage as something which may be bought and sold. If Rashmi has honoured the institution of marriage, she may have been staying with her husband. Since her relationship with her husband is not a true one, it turns out to be a "deadening trauma out of which it seemed no feeling could ever come again" (*This Time*, 12). In fact, Rashmi is a sensitive modern woman to whom marriage means an emotional involvement which is based on truth and equality but not on domination and self effacement. However, her marriage to Dalip makes her a moth trapped in cement. Even if she can never find togetherness with Dalip, she not only withdraws from the activity of life but also becomes wary and vulnerable the moment she realizes that "a wrong marriage can be a robbing luster defeating courage and will" (*This Time*, 12). Although she gets

divorced from her husband, she never hates and harms him. After the divorce she becomes alienated and distraught. Even if a woman can divorce her husband for any reason as a man does, the morals of these persons will become harmful to the people of the society the moment they remarry another men or women. Since Nayantara Sahgal regards 'adultery' as a social evil, she strongly criticizes the husband and the wife who have 'adultery'. The novelist knows that 'adultery' destroys the good relationship of a husband and a wife. Nayantara Sahgal regards Rashmi as she wants to be free from restraints in any deed. In this connection, Shyam M. Asnani also says:

She is another bird fluttering with "freedom of sex," finding no harm in extra marital relationship. We thus find her drinking and flirting at parties and even sharing "interludes of closeness," including sex with Neil. If Sahgal's women characters have any passion "it is the longing to be free, freedom from all the restraint in word and deed. They want to be fully alive and themselves. There is a touch of desperation in the way so many of them dress, talk and behave" (223).

Rakesh, also an IFS officer, has been in love with Rashmi, and it is through her that the novelist launches her theme of isolation of the individual and the need for human understanding. Rashmi cannot think of her past life and even tries to avoid her lover. Rakesh, a young unmarried IFS officer well finished product of

the American educated system, is a kind of her lover. Rakesh has imagination of love when he lives in post abroad. He thinks of all the letters that have never been sent, never even written except in his imagination.

Darling darling Rashmi, this during the first tormented days when he had walked the streets of Paris longing for her. 'This is a city for lovers and it is unbearable without you. If you should change your mind, come to me here. No one can ever love you as I do.' It had been impossible to imagine her married to someone else, lost to him forever. He had not accepted the fact. Rashmi had invaded his thoughts, his plans, his work. The conversations he had had with her in those days! The ones that began when he woke and resumed when he left the office, and continued all through the lonely evenings in a city where no one should be alone (*This Time*, 44).

Rakesh returns to Delhi after an absence of six years. He is telling Rashmi about his arrival and another welcome news that he has been posted to Delhi and is now waiting for a flat to be allotted to him. Rashmi, telling to her companion is conscious of Rakesh's views on her. She thinks that how satisfying to find him there. Rakesh has been closer than a brother, more than a friend. And through it all she is thinking she is lost. Something will work out and it is not the end of everything. And then, when Rakesh knows Rashmi's separation from her husband it re-kindles his personal interest in Rashmi which may mean the

beginning of a new mature relationship on the emotional plane. In the meantime, Neil Berensen, a divorced Danish architect is another relationship of Rashmi. He has reawakened her emotions for a brief period. But it is only a matter of happiness for a time for Neil is not deeply involved in it. Then, the novelist talks about the discordant relationship between Arjun Mitra and Uma. Uma's only objective is to reach a sexual satisfaction irrespective of any properties. There are also three women characters Nita, Celia, Barbara who are strength for identity but they fail marital to dreams. Through the character of Nita, the novelist shows the place of a woman in Indian society before marriage. Nita is the young beautiful daughter of Dr. Narang. He is a mixture of both Western and Eastern culture. Western life style is drink, dance, bridge and go to the club and hotel and when that becomes the life style of his daughter he acts in the most traditional manner imposing severe restrictions on the movement of his ambitious daughter. Nita is forced to marry her parent's choice. She feels unhappy and a sense of uneasiness overpower her father takes the decision to marry her to a stranger. She wants to get a job before marriage and looks for something for her life. She searches for her individual identity and for independence. She thinks "A job was never enough. A job led to money and freedom, and freedom demanded a flat of one's own, away from the prying eyes and inquisitive voices of the parade of coffee-drinking, canasta-playing women who streamed through the house. Nita

unlocked her cupboard and took out a cigarette” (205-207). An educated woman wants to get individual right, independence and good opportunities. Later her parents do allow her to take up a job but for a very different reason. Kalyan, the minister without portfolio is kind enough to offer her the job and she gets involved with him. She finds happiness and strange comfort in his company and visits his decorated drawing room. Her parents do not give any importance to the wishes of their daughter and to marry the man of their choice whom she neither loves nor admires. Nita parents think that they find a suitable match of their choice for their daughter and they also want to settle down their daughter in marriage and wash their hands. At a party in Rakesh’s house and the club Nita dances with her engaged Vijay. He has good manners and looking and he is rich man. She had nothing against him only she did not want to marry him. However she fails to arrest herself in refusing to marry a man of her parent’s choice. She agrees to become engaged to Vijay whom she knows regards her as a possession that he is lucky enough to have. She is withdrawn and unhappy with Vijay and dreads the time when she would be alone with him. Meanwhile Nita wants to meet Kalyan and comes to him. But Kalyan knows Nita’s wedding plan, but she refuses to go to home and frankly speaks of her love for Kalyan:

‘I don’t want to go to home.’ ‘What is it my dear?’ he tried to calm his own agitation avoiding the strained young face. ‘I don’t know,’ she said almost in a whisper. ‘But don’t make me go.’ He rose from

his chair, 'Nita...' She got up, too, and came like a sleepwalker into his arms, clinging to him. 'Don't make me go, please don't make me go.' He took her by the hand then to his room (211).

Nita's premarital in an affair is an attempt to fulfill her inner desire for love and communication. On the other hand there is prominent women characters, Leela and Uma who play vital roles while still establishing relation with both traditional and modern ways. Leela is a girl of Hindu family in Banaras and she studies in Redcliff. In America she gets every freedom with dancing, drinking, smoking and going out with young men. She gets her lovely long hair bob cut to mark her freedom in a new environment. On the contrary she realizes that she is pregnant and drowns herself in a river. "Her pregnancy had been no one too great emotional shock for her and she had no one to turn to in her distress. And since she could get no help in her shame and depression, she died of it"(103). She is in a difficult condition and takes this fatal decision.

Now, it may be said that not only have the women characters of the novelist been portrayed as the victims of the conjugal happiness or hankering after extra-marital freedom but the men characters are also portrayed as not better than them. Here is Kalyan who is conscious of his inability to communicate through personal love. He remains unmarried, unrelated and always obsessed with his 'terrifying anonymity'. Another man is Arjuna Mitra who is known for

his administrative efficiency. This man feels ashamed and embittered for his childless wife, Uma. Since Uma is bored with her fruitless marriage, she runs after physical pleasures freely. Here in this connection, Nayantara Sahgal gives her opinion. She says that the behavior of this woman is a social evil. Because Uma's deed will harm not only her but also the bad behavior of the men with whom she has enjoyed sexual intercourse frequently or repeatedly. That's why the novelist criticizes such behavior of the man-woman relationships that becomes disharmony in marriage, fractured in the family and the society.

Again, it may be said that the victims of the broken or fractured families, who feel a state of emptiness, fear, are the silent and sulky characters of *This Time of Morning*. And the novelist's answer to their ills is lack of communication, love, warmth, affection, and humanity. In this novel, Nayantara Sahgal observes that lack of communication and understanding is the main cause of the marital discord. She, furthermore, says that the said lack can easily be overcome in case the oxygen of understanding is produced in the atmosphere of freedom. Regarding this matter, the novelist lays her faith in the affirmation of human values. She also reveals her mature vision as an artist with a deep concern for these human values.

Her next novel, *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) deals with the problems of the partition of colonial India in two Independence countries, Indian and

Pakistan. It is re-division of Punjab and into two i.e. Punjab and Haryana. It is political setting and economic current through the story of love and complicated relationship and ideologies. Nayantara Sahgal presents a terrible picture of man-woman relationships in *Storm in Chandigarh*. The women are portrayed as strong thoughtful women as are some of the men. Since the novelist is born in a Brahmin family, she has a deep love for Hinduism and she is proud of 'her blue-blooded Brahminic decent' and she doesn't care for laying bare the tyranny of race and the hollowness of religion. Besides this, the novelist is deeply concerned with the failure in the marital relationships in this novel as it is done in her earlier novels. As suggested by the title of the novel, Chandigarh provides the scaffolding to erect the plot structure. But, the personal tension, which arises from the uncomfortable marriages of three young couples, namely the marriage of Vishal Dubey and Leela, Inder and Saroj and Jit and Mara, is reflected through this political drama. Vishal Dubey vacillates between his political mission and personal sympathies, and is importantly and unwillingly embroiled in the private lives of the estranged husbands and wives. In fact, his own marriage with Leela turns to be a loveless one, i.e. a vanishing search for communication. His affair with Gauri, wife of Nikhil Ray, grows thoughtlessly in turbulent years after the death of his wife, Leela. Regarding the love affair between Vishal Dubey and Gauri, Nayantara Sahgal observes:

During the four years since Dubey had known her, the urgency between him and Gauri had evaporated and they had settled into a friendly familiarity. But, he had not been able to bring to an end the affair so mindlessly begun. As she undressed in the half light of her bedroom and came, warm and pliant, into his arms, he realized he could have done without making love to her for sometime now and enjoyed just the sight of her (*Storm*, 13).

It is also allowed to discuss the two lovers' conversation when Gauri laying within the circle of Vishal Dubey asks:

‘Has any woman ever made a lasting impression on you?’

Vishal Dubey said to Gauri:

‘I had a teacher once who did —’

Gauri said to Vishal Dubey:

‘Not a teacher, Vishal. I’m talking of a woman. Someone you’ve held in your arms and made love to” (*Storm*, 14).

Within a short period, Gauri leaves the tumbled bed, switches on the light, and sits down at her dressing table, exquisitely reflecting above the jars of imported perfume and enamel-topped bottles, brushing her hair. At the same time, Vishal Dubey feasts on the curve of her back and the upward sweep of her naked arm. He wants to tell her that she has made a lasting impression of beauty on him, only that is not what she wants to know. At that time, she looks at him in the mirror.

Then, it may be certainly said that the truculent incompatibilities have learned the goodness and effect of the husband-wife harmony of Saroj and Inder contrary to the relationship between Vishal Dubey and Gauri. It is true that Inder's deep-rooted notion about women renders him incapable of genuine partnership with Saroj, such as her urgent desires. Even if Inder loves Saroj, his love for her seemed funny since he loves her as though she is his slave, his possession or commodity. Although they have lived, loved, produced and raised children, there has been no real happiness between them. Saroj confesses innocently that she has once enjoyed sexual intercourse with a boy during her college life. But, her luckless self-disclosure spells disaster for the callous, irascible and inhuman soul of her husband, Inder. Since he cannot believe it possible, he falls into a mighty fit of jealousy-cum-anger. So, he becomes a victim of his frequent anger and a permanent suspect in his eyes. On the other hand, the wife pays too heavily for her honesty. Since Nayantara Sahgal knows that he is maddened by jealousy, she sketches his character more out of pity rather than anger. As a result, Inder regards his wife as a used, soiled woman, unfit for marriage.

And in the relationship between Jit and Mara, it is found that Jit always tries to compromise with Mara even if there are some misgivings, estrangements and silences between them since he knows that there are two kinds of people in

the world, such as those who live by reason and those who don't, and he knows that he belongs to the first kind. Mara, who has been brought up in some foreign countries, does the same deed which her husband does. The predicament of the man-woman relationship facing disaster is conveyed symbolically through the cave theory of Vishal which stands for hypocrisy, darkness, ignorance and breach of communication. Vishal's plea for frank and friendly talk draws Jit and Mara closer together. However, the future of Inder and Saroj is sad and hopeless. While Inder trapped Mara into the soils of his imperious sex, he brutally tortured Saroj for her pre-marital error, reinforcing the novelist's appalling exclamation that even in the twentieth century, people like Inder believes in two codes of conduct, one of them is for men and the other is for women. Nayantara Sahgal lashes out vehemently and sarcastically that if chastity is very important and well-preserving, it will be easier to safeguard it by keeping men in seclusion instead of women since she holds the idea that the biological urge is supposed to be much more stronger in men, so it is men who should be kept under restraint and not allowed to roam freely to indulge their appetites. Besides this, she wishes the generation to come out of the shackles of bondage to the air of freedom and freshness in order to break off the rules, the regulations, and the laws that make people fear one another. In brief, Nayantara Sahgal handles the high-ups and their family life, their wives, and the feelings of frustration among the young

couples of this novel competently. She believes that the basis for happy marriage is the feeling of sharing, equality, sincerity, honesty and true partnership.

Nayantara Sahgal clearly depicts the man–woman relationship in her fourth very closely autobiographical novel *The Day in Shadow*. The husband–wife relationship is developed between Som, a wealthy business man and Simrit Raman, an educated woman and a writer. This couple goes on easily enough on the surface firstly after they get married. This makes a game of its own in which intensity, depth and devotion are brought into play at all, not the partnership. Indian women have been under the control of men. That is why Som wants to keep his wife Simrit under the control of him. She is an educated woman who wants a free communication of ideas with her husband and she is isolated and ignored but used only for physical comfort whenever needed by Som. Simrit wants freedom, love, warmth, affection, and understanding but Som never bothers about her feelings. During the course of conversation with his friend Lalli, she is however deliberately kept uninvolved. Som and Lalli will talk endlessly to each other in Punjabi in her presence, ignoring her. “But Som would squeeze and stroke her arm, rest his hands warmly, heavily, on her thigh, keep her physically in the room, mentally out. She stopped minding the isolation with this skin to skin seduction between them. He would lean over on kiss her cheek with relish as though he were testing a peach. Lallis’s presence made lingering

contact a pleasure for Som. She tried to imagine it continuing between her and Som without Lalli” (*The Day*, 27). Both the friends will share their memories of pre-partition days of India, how they are uprooted and so on, but they do not look at her during their discussion thus giving immense mental torture to Simrit who always wants to be a part of them and wants to keep sharing. They will never discuss business details in her presence as if it is something. Since Indian women have been under the control of her husband Simrit lives under the shadow of her husband. She is a very rich man’s wife who is happier in looking after her children and writing than in being proud of her husband’s growing wealth. She stands in total contrast to her husband who is materialistic, ambitious and without finer values and sentiments. As he is concerned with the growth of his business makes and breaks friendship. She finds it difficult to share his business practically, and materialism is something Simrit cannot digest. As a sensitive woman, Simrit longs for communication and understanding in her personal relationship. She wonders why a husband and wife cannot be friends. Som whom she marries against the will of her Brahmin parents, turns out to be a ruthless entrepreneur who is caught in a spiraling mania for affluence. The process of rift between wife and husband is imperceptible in the beginning, but it grows wider with Som’s success. Som, however, never tries to understand the reason for his sensitive, intelligent wife’s unhappiness, who only wants anything else which is

shared by her husband. Simrit is annoyed because of her husband pride, ego and ruthless attitude. She is crying in Som's world, but he cannot simply understand what for she is crying with her annoyance. He is a man who thinks that the woman should live under the control of man. Som says:

Stop crying, Simrit. What on earth is there to any about? I'm a damned good husband to you, aren't I? What you have you get to complain about? We are having a wonderful life and it's going to get better and better. He got up, hands thrust in his pockets, and talked vehemently, suppressed laughter in his voice. "Think it, we can go abroad any time we want any bloody time, buy anything we want. We can air condition this whole place, furnish it all over again, and Rudy's right. You ought to have something to mark the occasion. What do you like? You didn't say (*The Day*, 89).

But Simrit needs a world "I want a world whose texture is kindly, she thought. Surely there is such a world. When the whole world is dying it doesn't matter. You don't even notice it till you start dying. And now all she wanted was to get to a clean cold atmosphere where there was some goal beyond self advancement" (*The Day*, 89). She thinks that Som's world is so full of violence. There is no place for affection, warmth and commitment in his world He can easily discard friendship and joy, his only interest is to win the race at any cost. That is why the world of Som becomes suffocating for Simrit, she struggles to resist the gradual alienation from him. The physical relationship with him

becomes “A sex life with laws of its own kept apart from the rest of life, sex was no more just sex than food was just food, the fount within her” (*The Day*, 90). Som hates woman’s individuality and her freedom. He resolves that husband has to call it a day when woman freezes up every time her husband touches. He believes in male domination and gives least freedom to his wife. He expects Simrit to live according to his will and considers the inequality of their attitude to be a matter of fact attitude. He is shopping in Europe wearing in a royal blue jacket, a French silk tie and hand stitched Roman leather shoes. He even looks foreign. He wants to go with her at an expensive restaurant for a dinner. But she does not get any peace of mind because of his behavior. The moment Simrit wishes Som just to hold hands and live like loving friends so that something sweet might come into existence, Som replies in his detached tone that whatever she is trying to get is quite beyond him. She is humiliated by her husband. That indicates the beginning of the end of his relationship with her. At that stage, she is seriously frightened by the sudden expression of Som’s statement that he will go to Madras and stay there for a week in order to let her get enough time to decide what she wants to do. After Simrit has recovered from bewilderment and emotional shock, she struggles to build a new life for herself and her children. Because of all these reasons she seeks divorce from him. She appears as a free woman who has courage to break a long marital bond between husband and wife

as a person who makes choice, takes decision and becomes aware of herself. Simrit feels uprooted and abandoned in male dominated world as she finds that nobody is trying to see divorce from her point of view, for she is one who seeks freedom and fulfillment. She strongly leaves the shattered world of Som not to live a life of her own , but to lead a happy life under the shadow of another man. She is eternally in eternal quest of a meaningful life. She creates a world of her own which she fills up with extraordinarily sensitive beings. Within a short period, she meets Raj, a brilliant and rising member of the Parliament. The sympathetic and human attitude of this man attracts Simrit towards him steadily. After he has helped Simrit to regain her equilibrium, both emotional and intellectual, he requests her to marry him since he regards her as a woman of culture even if she has many children and a tax problem. At this stage, it may be certainly said that Nayantara Sahgal not only wishes to depict Raj and Simrit's personal world which is grounded in sympathy and understanding, human communication and friendship, rather than bestial sexuality and cruel insensibility but also prescribes as the only sane and sensible alternative to the mechanistic world of power, greed and atrocities. Shyam M. Asnani has observed that this novel derives directly from the personal experience of the novelist: "the study of the deathly struggle that accompanies the attempts of an Indian woman to liberate herself from the moral and social pressures which

combine with economic dependence to exercise a crippling power over the middle-class women and is marked with intense indignation as well as sensitivity and compassion” (Asnani, 230). In this novel, Simrit is sketched as a passive creature to which things happen. She can’t bring herself to believe the enormity of settlement and much less to fight it even when it is explained to her. The indignation of the novelist at her hopeless and appalling situation is clear the moment she says that divorce for woman-nature is like a sin, and in expiation of her share of guilt she stays mute and acquiescent over the settlement, willing to accept it as a part of her ‘Karma’. As expressed by Nayantara Sahgal, Simrit is a symbol of human race. Her observation becomes all the more pronounced and emphatic when it is viewed in the context of what Simrit speaks out so bitterly:

I am not that kind of writer. And I hate this century except for the freedom it’s brought for countries and people, especially for women. But it is barbaric otherwise, full of rotten, elastic standards and the worship of money. I hate the whole mess of human affairs” (*The Day*, 34-35).

It is a fact that the novelist considers the concept of individual freedom as the central concern in such novels as *This Time of Morning*, *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*. As a result of this, Nayantara Sahgal’s heroines are sketched to be struggling for freedom and trying to assert their individuality in

their own right. Regarding the Indian women and their organizations, the British Women Organizations declare the following verdict:

There is one thing these brilliant Indian women have done and that is to show in their own personalities how alert respective organizations are, and how little of substance there is in the English delusion that Indian life must continue on a Communal Basis, in fact, it was ever so ordered. Hindu, Muslim and Christian on the same platform, colleagues and comrades pleading the same cause, demanding a common citizenship so that a true national spirit may develop and woman may take her full share of civic responsibility, make a deep impression (Chattopadhyay, 103).

A Situation in New Delhi (1977) the fifth novel of Nayantara Sahgal is a political novel. It concentrates on a sense of disintegration giving way to mass confusion and disorder that engulfs the capital. The novel deals with the problem of alienation and frustration of the younger generation of the Indians in the context of opportunistic politics pursued in New Delhi. The first point of the novel begins with the news of the death of Shivraj, the Prime Minister of India and an idealistic leader of India. The novel brings out the important feature of man-woman relationship and social change during the post-war period. The English writer Michael Calvert's relationships with his two wives are not good and respectable. Although he has two wives he has divorced them. It is marvelous and extraordinary event. Michael Calvert, an English writer and a

biographer of Shivraj, spent his childhood life in India because he was born in India. His earlier experience with Shivraj's pleasant idealism brings him closer to his widow sister Devi, the Education Minister of India. Michael Calvert falls in love with Devi. However, Nell, one of his two divorced wives, comes to him sometimes since she is sticky about her relationship with Michael. At that time, Michael takes some of her parcels and they talk with each other. At that time, Nell says to Michael:

'You look funny, Michael'

Michael said to Nell:

'The Anglo-Saxon male is not permitted to cry. That is why I look funny' (*A Situation* 8).

Nell unloads herself on the hall table which she has designed, takes a comb out of her bag, draws it through her orange hair and joins him in the living room. The morning's papers are all over the floor. One lay spread on the table in the dining a hall. Then, Nell asks Michael:

'What have you been crying about?'

Michael replied:

A man who died'. In the meantime, he indicated the newspapers.

Nell said to Michael:

'O yes'. 'O yes' (*A Situation*. 8).

And regarding Michael's marital relationship with his divorced wife, Lydia, it may be said that it is not a good one. In fact, Lydia's marriage to Michael has disappointed her badly because she has expected publicity, prestige and a certain amount of well arranged culture when she marries Michael who is known author. She regards a writer as some kind of public exhibit surrounded by parties, sophisticated chatter with other writers. She has not understood the formidable reality of work, nor that Michael is not more selfish than most people, she only knows that he is a writer who becomes a medium drinker at the time of their marriage. When Lydia has been staying with him at his residence, his drinking has blossomed into epic proportion .Whenever she prepares to discuss things with him, she expresses everything in her dignified way in case she knows that he isn't drunk. On the other hand, Michael's vague hope that he may carry Lydia with him to some creative excess and his epic drinking fades out the moment they get divorced from each other. After sometime, Michael and Nell are talking to each other about their divorce and the latter's hair:

'I don't get through women. They get through me. Lydia walked out. So did you.'

Nell said to Michael good naturally;

'Because it's not self-respecting being married to you, Michael though you're nice to know otherwise.'

Michael said to Nell irrelevantly:

'I like your orange hair'.

Nell said to Michael:

‘It’s auburn, thank you very much.’

Michael insistently said to Nell:

‘The skin of a Spanish orange and you look delectable in those colours. How is the furniture business?’

Nell blushingly said to Michael :

‘It’s all right. Quite good, actually. I’m making money’ (*A Situation*, 10).

Then, it may be examined that the man–woman relationship between Michael and Devi is a bad and publicly unacceptable one. In fact, their relationship is adultery. Regarding their love affair, D. N. Bandyopadhyay observes that although they fall in love with each other, their man-woman relationship never materializes into a socially acceptable institutionalized form of marriage (Bandyopadhyay, 111). The moment he has been accompanying Devi, he enjoys sexual intercourse with her to his maximum satisfaction. It is true that sleeping with her is a quaint misnomer for the most acutely awake time of his life. They had not slept the first or any other time. At that time, Michael suffers complete physical strain which surrounds since they do not want their relation being seen by the people of the society. It has been that way until she has said softly one day as he lies beside her. Devi says to Michael: ‘Darling Michael, I’m sorry you have to work so hard. Is lovemaking always so hard on men?’ (*A Situation*, 53). On hearing that, Michael tells her that he isn’t one of the ‘men’. He is caught up in

an unbearable enchantment with a creature of the woods that has pine needles in her air and the breath of pines on her skin. At that time, Devi laughingly says to Michael: ‘But darling Michael, you’re not to work so hard. I’m not even very – ‘ept’ – is that a word. Whatever I have known, I’ve forgotten’ (*A Situation*, 54).

Since the man-woman relationship between her and Michael is an insincere one. Devi does not otherwise mention her widowhood. In the meantime, she knows that a woman like her must have some lovers. Since Nayantara Sahgal agrees that there should be equal rights between men and women, she criticizes the men who deprive women of their rights. What she wants to express here in this connection is that a woman also will be given the permission of enjoying a happy sexual intercourse with another man after the death or divorce of her legitimate husband as a man does. Since the novelist herself is a divorced woman, she strongly criticizes those men who mock her life. Even though she has criticized adultery, she favours the legitimate remarriage of a man or a woman after the death or divorce of his or her first married wife or husband if the couple doesn’t have any child. Regarding ‘divorce’ and ‘adultery’ Simone de Beauvoir observes: ‘..... adultery is for both a breach of contract; divorce is obtainable by the one or the other on the same conditions’ (445).

At this stage, it may be said that the man-woman relationship between Michael and Devi is somewhat different from Devi’s relationship with her

legitimate husband, Iswar, and her adulterous husband, Usman. During her stay with her first husband for a few years, he has treated her gently and lovingly. In fact, their husband-wife relationship is a good and respectable one. So, she cannot tolerate the sadness caused by the death of her first husband. Even if she falls in love with Usman at the time of the death of her husband, Usman's love for her could not lessen the degree of her sadness caused by the sight of her husband's pyre. On hearing the news about the death of Iswar, Usman comes to the residence of Devi in order to console her in her disappointment. At that stage, she has been laying face downward on her bed, one arm flung out on the bed next to hers. On seeing that, Usman gently lifts that arm, lay down and took Devi in his arms in order to comfort and protect her. He has often, disinterestedly, noted the loveliest line of her body, her slim intended waist, but he has not truly known her till that evening. So, he agrees that the act of love has never been so simple, fulfilling an unconscious yearning in himself to know her better, deeply, as above a man and a woman can know each other. And he rightly knows that the fact of her breasts under his hand and his seeking mouth is setting her face in some way. So, he helps her to restore that lovely pride, the assurance and aristocracy of hers. She has wept a little in his arms but then they have sat for a long time by talking without touching each other. Although Usman has made love to her in small, satisfying way and now for a long time not even that, their

lovmaking has rarely gone as far as that again. Since Usman wants to stay with Devi for a long time that night, he tells his legitimate wife on telephone that he will stop off at Dr. Jaipal's clinic before coming home. Briefly speaking, Usman does not like Nadira to know his secret relationship with Devi, so he tells her that 'Belive me, there is nothing for me to give up. I am not Devi's lover' (*A Situation*, 156). So there is no true bonding between the man and woman, most of the relationship seen to be temporary just for pleasure of sex. In spite of her political status Devi, a widow, seeks physical and emotional comfort from a variety of men and Michael also already has two wives. The novelist shows that women should not be deprived of their right to enjoy sexual freedom and there should be equal right between man and woman.

Rich Like Us (1985) is a political novel. It depicts the crisis of erosion of human values. The story is during the time of emergency in Delhi. When Indira Gandhi declared marital law, it was a time for promising wealth for the corruption, profit and power for some, jail for others. As an analysis of the man-woman relationships the Rose and Ram and Sonali and Ravi Kachru relationships may be mentioned in the novel. Man-woman relationship has been a very different thing for a man and a woman in the society. Truly speaking, Rose, a twenty one year old, lower class, cockney English girl had a deep love

for Ram than the love that her husband, Ram, has for her since she is able to marry him with full knowledge of his first marriage and the existence of a son. Besides that, she is able to abandon her family members, her native country England, and even the familiar structure of love and marriage for the sake of her Indian husband, Ram. Indu Swami passes a good remark on the women character of Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*. She says that "Nayantara Sahgal brings forward the role of the women in stabilizing relationships and making for a better society in this novel" (Swamy, 143). In a talk, after their falling in love with each other, Rose asks Ram in a crushed voice:

‘How can we get married when you’re married?’

On hearing that, Ram said to Rose:

‘My religion lets a man have more than one wife (*Rich*, 42).

After sometime, they have sailed for India, and spend the first few days quarrelling the moment Ram tries to make love to her. In fact, he is moody and bad-tempered, staring out at ocean for hours until one night he has taken her face in his hands as he leaves her at the door of her cabin. At that time, Ram says to Rose:

I do understand, Rose, I do.’

On hearing that, Rose cried:

‘Oh darling, do you?’(43).

After asking that question to Ram, Rose flings herself gratefully, passionately into his arms and then draws hastily back, because two bodies are two bodies and warmth is warmth, and she loves him very much. Thus, they have enjoyed their first sexual intercourse before marriage. Truly speaking, Nayantara Sahgal hates such deed of adultery even if she herself is a divorced wife from her husband, Gautam. So, she criticizes the uncontrollable lust for a man or a woman in her society with the help of her novels. Even if Ram knows that Rose cannot live without him, he always respects her for her honesty and patience. It can be said that their man-woman relationship is a true one although their adultery is a bad one.

It is a fact that Rose can sacrifice her own life for the betterment of her husband, Ram, since she firmly believes that her life will be useless without the love of her husband. Since she can't help being attracted to her husband, S. Varalakshmi expresses the remark that Nayantara Sahgal passes on Rose in her interview with her:

Rose keeps thinking that it is her destiny that Ram walked in one day and captivated her and she had no option but to follow him whenever ... Across the seas or over the mountains or wherever he would have taken her. It is the destiny of anyone who is struck like that by lightning to behave in this way (Varalakshmi, 33).

Since her relationship with her husband, Ram, is true one, she can even die so that her foster son, Devikins, may live. In fact, her death is very pathetic like that of a beggar whom she has always cared for. She fails to fight for her legitimate rights since she has been betrayed by her lover – husband, Ram, by her foster son, Devikins, and by law.

On the other hand man-woman relationship is developed between Sonali and Ravi Kachru. They start their lives as school-mates who always play and eat together. But, they grow into adult lovers. Their ideational commitment and idealism strength is bond of love. And their life at Oxford is marked by intellectual companionship even if it is not devoid of emotion and passion. It is true that Sonali never takes care of the marital disharmony or male domination. The moment she falls in love with Ravi Kachru soon after independence, she realizes that what they share as lovers is a common dream of a free India. They believe that they will make a difference to the system. However, Sonali is more pragmatic while Ravi Kachru is constantly and fanatically drawn by the tidal waves of change. Sonali sees the impossible functional realities which come with the change and which will surely endanger democracy.

Since Sonali falls in love with Ravi Kachru soon after independence, she feels the freedom of spirit and a sense of goodwill spreading out and developing

all. In the wake of it there comes Marxism and watching Ravi Kachru fall a prey to the romantic vision of a new ideology, she begins to have reservations about what the world has in store for the common man. That greatly affects her relationship with Ravi Kachru. At that time, she firmly believes that the natural course of independence will result in freeing the general people, giving them their share of bread whereas Ravi Kachru always appears caught up in political intrigue. So, Sonali knows that she cannot love the man that he has become. There are some changes in Ravi Kachru. And Sonali highly appreciates those changes. So, she cherishes the belief that there will be something in life still worth holding on to.

After the death of Sonali's father, Sonali knows that Dev is withdrawing his father's money with forged cheques. Even though the manager of the nationalized bank knows about it he needs permission from a higher authority to take action. At that time, Sonali requests Ravi Kachru to make Dev stop from doing so since she has a good relationship with him. Sonali says to Ravi Kachru: 'You're the only one who can put a stop to it' (*Rich*, 257).

Dev's forgery brings light on account of the interception of Sonali on behalf of Rose. It is a symbol of the transgressed code. It is one more instance of the naked abuse of authority. The consequence of Ravi Kachru's attempt to save

Rose by preventing further forgery is forsaken. Ravi Kachru's final disillusionment characterizes a state of things that fall apart. The blaze, insufferably bright, is a blink glare which puts him off. At that time, he discovers in Sonali, the courage to be which he cannot attain. Sonali unmarried woman proud of her senior ranking in the civil service, finds herself denoted and humiliated through corrupt deal at government level. It is her story really at some point, it also becomes Sonali's situation against the background during the emergency in India. She wants to bring truth and reality. Though, truth and reality are a lot different things. 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 (1986) is the seventh novel of Nayantara Sahgal. She won the Commonwealth Prize (Eurasia) in 1986 for *Plans for Departure*. It is objective presentation of the colonial past of the world with main focus on India. It is set in the hill station of Himapur in India, in a country poised for revolution and on the eve of the World War II. This place is isolated from other power centers and brings together people of different kinds. It is replete with mystery, intrigue, love story and human relationships. It also describes that the man-woman relationships between Anna Hansen, a feminist Danish woman living in London, and Nicholas Wyatt, an English Diplomat. The novel opens with Anna

Hansen landing up as a secretary to Sir Nitin Basu's household. On her arrival as a single Danish woman she is hired by Didi, the sister of Sir Nitin Basu. He is the eminent scientist, Botanist working on the psychology of plants. Despite his western education, study of science and knighthood, he has long Hindu habits. She puzzles him and appears to be of indeterminate age and an indeterminate religion. He wonders why she has come to India. She falls in love with Nicholas Wyatt. On the eve of her getting married to Nicholas Wyatt, she wants to travel abroad and discover her own identity. That is why she comes to India. She sets out on a travel for enjoying one year in Copenhagen, London, Madras, Calcutta and finally Himapur. There is a small European community in Himapur of where people like Marlow Croft, American Christian missionary, obsessive man determined at all cost to build a Christian church in the hills, his wife Lulu, the chief obstacle to his mission, and Henry Brewster, the District Magistrate live. Henry is an enigmatic figure ill at ease with the imperial authority. He has been posted to Himapur but he has annoying tendency in his mind because his wife, Stella's affair with Robert Pryor, the Home secretary. He is deserted by his wife Stella, and gives up his dreams of a new political life in England. He still continues to love her. He is left all alone and becomes desperate. On the other hand Anna Hansen comes to Henry's office everyday to collect mail and borrow books from his library. She shares and contacts him. Their relationship develops

and comes dangerously close to loving each other. Thus Anna Hansen becomes a close friend of Henry before her short stay in Himapur is over. She even begins to reconsider her future. But at this point she stumbles on vague evidences of mysterious deaths on a far away hillside and imagining them to be associated with a secret crime. She understands events and historical happenings of this place and life. She believes in a secret crime and is shaken by a violence and mysterious deaths. She makes her plans for departure as the tragedies of Himapur are swept away by the political violence and social war. But she still loves Nicholas Wyatt and wants to marry him. Both of them want to get married. Finally, they are married, and their marriage is one of mutual respect and understanding. Regarding their marriage, S. Varalakshmi observes:

Though Sahgal may have neglected dealing with the aspect of womanhood, she deals sensitively with man-woman relationships. She obviously feels that things other than love, e.g. companionship and mutual respect, are important for any marriage to succeed. Anna stays married to Nicholas even though she believes that in spirit she is closer to Henry (103).

The novel, *Mistaken Identity* covers the period of British rule over India, in particular the year is 1929. It seems that Nayantara Sahgal 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. She examines a special man-woman relationship between Sylla, the Parsi girl and Bhushan Singh, the son of Raja of Vijaygarh, the relationship between Bhushan Singh's mother and father, the Bhushan-Razia relationship, etc. Bhushan Singh is the main protagonist, son of the Raja of Vijayagarh. There is terrifying the riots in Vijaygarh. Many people are killed and mutilated but Bhushan is saved from it all. After this riot for a long time Bhushan was not allowed to move around freely in the streets and there were some restrictions. He is kept at home and then sent first to Bombay and then to America. In America he studies for some time but he shares a purely sexual relationship with another girl friend, Willie May. He always wanted to come back to India because he can not forget about his first lady love Rajia, the Muslim girl. Finally his father agrees for his coming back to India. Before he comes back to his own city Bijaygarh, he stays at hotel Taj in Bombay where he meets Sylla, the Parsee girl and he shares a tender close relationship with her. In the relationship between Bhushan and Sylla, Bhushan says that "Sylla's Bombay is not Bombay. There waws a regular rash of strikes last year, steel, jute, the East India and South India Railways. The government had to call out troops and armed police. The strike leaders got ten years with hard labour" (*Mistaken*, 41). He spend a lot of time in Bombay." He has even been totally unaware of the textile workers' strike which

has gone on for a period of six months since he is moving in the charmed circle of his wife.

Since Sylla can have definite opinions on all subjects being a straightforward woman, she tries to know her husband's obsession with Razia without rancour. With genuine goodness of heart, she tries to let him know the fertility of his wandering lust. At that time, Sylla says to him, "You're obsessed with your obsession, not with her"(121). Bhushan also agrees that every word she has spoken is true. Although they are lovers who have an insoluble problem between them, they can talk about it constantly, coolly and rationally. So, Sylla further says to her husband, "You can't make a profession of being in love"(121). Then, she frankly expresses her dispassionate opinion.

It is true that Sylla also has the time and the perspective to see why she can't commit herself forever to Bhushan while she has kindly provided him with a good lawyer during his three years' confinement in a jail. Even if she finds his vacuous life endearing, she admits that every woman is looking for a man with an ambition in life. A man obsesses with his past life with no dreams of future is not fit for her. Then, we may say that to Bhushan Razia is like a chimera, a wild fantasy which is forbidden to him, and it seems more endearing because of this. On the other hand, Razia has no special feelings for Bhushan. Regarding this

matter, Nayantara Sahgal says to S. Varalakshmi at her interview with her: “She was not in love with Bhushan Singh. This is clear from the beginning. You read that she is anxious to get back to her class. She enjoys herself, but she is not besotted. He is besotted” (Varalakshmi, 17-18).

It is true that Nayantara Sahgal makes the strength of Razia’s will absolutely clear. Besides this, she says that the relationship between Bhushan and Razia sparks off the Hindu-Muslim riots at Vijaygarh, and her father who is a poor inspector of schools requests Bhushan’s father to get him condemned to live as the second wife of an imbecile. After knowing the relationship between Bhushan and Razia, Sylla believes that she can never cleanse and heal the wound inflicted on Bhushan by Razia. Even if she realizes that she will at best be only a scab, she wants to cure him and make him ‘her kind normal person’ (*Mistaken*, 121).

It is a fact that ‘love’ is the essential need for Nayantara Sahgal’s women. Most of the women in her novels marry and remarry not because they want to gratify their sexual urges but because they struggle for love in the form of understanding, sharing and participation. But, in a male-dominated society, Betty Friedan observes:

Love has customarily been defined, at least for women, as a complete merging of egos and a loss of separateness –

togetherness, a giving up of individuality rather than a strengthening of it (Arora, 75).

As a woman is supposed to give up her individuality in love and marriage Nayantara Sahgal has shown a total sympathy with the woman who lives through her husband's callous neglect of her in the relationship between Bhushan's mother and father. Although Bhushan's father is a married man, he marries another woman as his second wife apparently to please his friend, Raja Wali Khan, who has recommended it. Besides that, he marries another woman also as his third wife since his elder brother has insisted on it. Since these marriages have the consent of the society, blessings and approval are given to Bhushan's father without a single thought for the feelings of Bhushan's mother. Completely, they become means of self-gratifications on all fronts for a man. Nayantara Sahgal ridicules the husband-wife relationship of Bhushan's 'love-mad', illiterate mother and his polygamous father the moment the mother elopes with Yusuf by deserting the father (Rao, 39).

In the novels of Nayantara Sahgal most of the relationships, be it husband-wife or lovers, end in separation or divorce in the Indian society. She makes a deep analysis of the root-cause of this divorce and separation in man-woman relationship. Marriage is the most complex human relationship and it cannot stand its success or failure by observing its outer appearance. In all her

novels, Nayantara Sahgal tries to project love and failed marriage and divorce which are becoming a true picture of the current social milieu. Her protagonist's viz. Kusum Sahai, Rashmi, Simrit, Saroj, Devi project women's problems and predicaments under the male-oriented society. Nayantara Sahgal unfolds the underlying hurt and pain of women caused by men's insensitive and unemotional ways in dealing with a relationship. It is also clear that man paves the way for woman to indulge in extra marital relations. Nayantara Sahgal has criticized all the men who have broken their relationships with their legitimate wives. In the mean time, she does not criticize the women who have broken their good relationships with their husbands. This shows her favoritism towards the woman of her society. Even though she favours some women characters of her novels, she expresses her criticism of the bad women in some of her novels. Then, it may be said that adultery is committed by the legitimate husbands and wives in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal. Besides this 'divorce' is also committed in the novels of the novelist. Even if these deeds are expressed in some of the novels of this novelist, the superiority of caste is revealed in the man-woman relationships in some novels of Nayantara Sahgal. The long period of living under patriarchal society with its socially, culturally and religiously defined roles they realize that they need themselves to come together and confront existing structures for a just society. The novelist gives especial importance to woman portraying women's

problems in the Indian society. She does not want the old tradition and male's domination but she wants to get new treatment in the society. The novelist realizes that when man brings equal right in the society which can be made good relationship. Nayantara tends to remind everybody of the balance between the sexes, man and woman in the Indian society.

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