

## Feminist Consciousness In Nayantara Sahgal's Novels

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### **Abstract**

*Indian society has practiced an extreme form of patriarchy since the beginning of known history, though the relics of matriarchy were found as late as the nineteenth century in certain regions. It is based on male predominance and female subordination. It praises the wife-mother role of women but treats her as no better than the legal, economic and sexual property of her husband. Women have no liberty, identity and recognition of her own and she faces identity crises as a small thing. This is sanctified by socio-legal treatises. It has always been discussed that woman has suffered a lot from the very beginning of the age. She share a enormous position in all age, in every society and today even in every region conditions it may be the field of defence, civil, sports or households. We all are agree on the point that woman has passed a very critical time in past and even today also she is rebellious to keep up her survival in the world. It is said that literature is the reflect of society and it consists all the situation of ancient times. Some literary figures are there who time and again anticipated women in every field of society e.g. struggling, surviving and belligerent. With the passage of time she got direction and stimulation from her hardships of her destiny.*

### **Keywords:**

Patriarchy, matriarchy, recognition, identity, treatise, rebellion, survival, destiny.

Current literary figures helped women a lot during exciting communication in literary texts. We will consider and evaluate in the forward coming pages concerning the place and arrangement of women from the very beginning of society and along with this we will discuss about their upliftment and about how today she is competent in every pasture. Literature was participated a great role in this so called change in life style of modern women. With the passage of time they made changes in their life styles and in this change some of literary personalities among them Nayantara Sahgal, participated a lot through her novels.

In her first novels extravagance and flamboyance can be observed in her style. Her style, which is urbane and sophisticated, is distinguished because of her discipline and professional touch. Her language can be succulent or supple or crisp as the situation demands; and her style is facile but flawless, fluent and intensely vivid. She is a great creative writer. She promptly expresses her views and revelation in her fiction and non-fiction writings. But at the same time, she does not air her views throughout any straight authorial invasion. She has no prefaces, no prologues and no epilogues. She allows all her characters to have their say and it is the whole work, and not she, that speaks for her. In influential her views we will surely have to consider the characters who have been compassionately drained and who lean to become her spine persons. The characters who voice her views take lively part in disentangle the skein of theme and constitution of the novels.

*A Time to be Happy* (1957), her first novel, depicts the expedition for individuality of a young, prosperous and westernized Indian for the period of the preceding point of the freedom movement and the establishment years of Independent India. *A Time to be Happy* is a submerge narrative of Indian national movement under the direction of Gandhiji, whose approach is powerfully impractical and whose social and political ideas are extremely charged with morals. Gandhiji is not considering a mere politician as he is also a religious man in personal life. Sahgal's major accomplishment lies in her achievement as a political novelist who combines her metaphors of precise and sensible happenings in the access strip of power with intense predictive insight to create outstanding works. It becomes a choice of not only political beliefs and ideologies but of moral values as well. Her novels present obviously a

sequential version of Indian politics from the last phase of freedom struggle to the breakdown of equality in mid-seventies. She is worried with the conjugal dissonance caused by the difference and conflict among couples. This is mainly because of colliding of ethics and thoughts of the couples. The inhibition and suppression of Indian women is a theme of sorrow to Nayantara Sahgal and is a habitual idea in her novels. She is a supporter of the freedom of Indian women.

A woman has changed her life style in current perspective. Even though their lives do not appear so simple because the whole progression of is intricate as Nayantara Sahgal seems to consent with it. In *Storm in Chandigarh*, Mrs. Sahgal points out that the twin moral code of the patriarchal society is the reason for the incongruity among the wife and the husband. Saroj is dependable to her husband following the marriage. But Inder, for whom the moral lapse in a man is taken for arranged, thinks that he is deceived by his wife as she had a premarital situation, where she is not responsible as she has exposed it even before the marriage. This is since of the transform of approach to the complete concern of marriage and chastity. Through the interpretation of three immature couples, Saroj-Inder, Jit-Mira and Vishal-Leela, Sahgal proves that life becomes stiffened and it turns out into a declining seek for announcement when the oxygen of sympathetic is not there. A girl has to show her skills and below go a long test and interrogation by parents and guardians of the probable tidy. The boy is infrequently asked a question or mandatory to confirm his abilities. The traumatic experience is worsened when the girl is rejected for some reason or other and has to tackle interrogation teams before selection. Even then the question of dowry remains. The girls who do not have parents or guardians to organize and pay a dowry hardly get married.

Educated people are allowing some freedom to their daughters and delaying their marriages but considerations of caste, society, and religion are infrequently brushed apart even there. All these malpractices are responsible for the pathetic situation of women. *The Day in Shadow* throws light on the new crop of confrontational politicians who best the past production of sincere politicians. Sahgal makes it obvious that the elder generation of politicians who have purposely let in the here invention of self-seeking politicians have proved themselves that they are weak and gullible and that they have failed the nation. In *A Situation in New Delhi*, she portrays the emptiness fashioned by the death

of Jawaharlal Nehru and asserts that the Indians have to re-dedicate themselves to the values for which he stands for. In it, while making an objective study of Naxalism she points out that good cannot be created by destroying and asserts that the mass movements aiming at the good of the people should have love and non-violence as its bases. *Rich Like Us*, the fictional performance of the terrible crimes devoted in the name of Emergency, traces out the additional corrosion in the assessment method. They have no freedom to chose their life partner and remain confined to homes even after marriage. Though some changes have come in the lives of women, yet most of them still face personality crises during their lives.

Woman forever claims for lack of prejudice of importance with man. She claims for her personality distinctiveness. In spite of the fact that our constitution has approved different rights to all and accepts women's detachment with men, in real life the equality of importance does not survive. In *Rich Like Us*, Sahgal exposes individuals Indians who respect the conviction that marriage is a reparation more in violation than in celebration. Sahgal points out that the marital world of the West has also become confused and exposed. For her, the affiliation among Nicholas and Anna in *Plans for Departure* is the ideal one. Nicholas gives his wife the freedom even to disagree with him. They live like sovereign individuals and friends respecting each other and loving each other, rather than like the master and the chattel. She makes it clear that the sexual relationship is only a portion of the total obligation between the husband and the wife. Sahgal reiterates her father's view that the marital concord depends on a high degree of empire on the part of the husband and the wife. *Rich Like Us* is fanatical by the author to the Indo British Experience and what its sharers have learned from each other. The novel presents in general different perception from that of the previous novels. It reveals the disgraceful depths of despair of poverty to which the character of the post-Independent India has fallen by the time the Emergency was forced almost three decades after Independence. The impracticality, honesty and human formality of the period of freedom effort evaporated and it is replaced by covetousness, opportunism and sensuality. The ethical, moral and political disapproval backed by human rights gave way to the hostility of political gonads. . Either she is somebody's daughter or somebody's wife or somebody's mistress. She cannot exist in her own right. She does not

have a right to her perceptions. Nayantara Sahgal is in favour of woman's rights in all the fields. She is in support of her freedom of choice.

The political perception which dominates her literary creations definitely is indivisible from herself and her environment. Sahgal is being the first Indian woman novelist, wrote novels and political commentaries in English with modern Indian political themes. Nayantara Sahgal portrays the conflict between man and woman, conflict between their values, their approaches and their perceptions. Most of her women protagonists are in conflict with orthodoxy, which represents male values and patriarchal norms. In *A Time to Be Happy* the marriage of Kusum and Sandad is full of tension because of the conflict between orthodoxy and freedom. So is the case of Maya and her Deputy Collector husband. The conflict, however, is resolved within the bonds of marriage though the values of the male dominated world are not much damaged. Rashmi in *This Time of Morning* takes her conflict with her husband to a logical conclusion and seeks divorce, something not easily imaginable in a typical Indian society. Saroj in *Storm in Chandigarh* offers a variation on the theme of conflict between women's longing for full life and male chauvinism. She suffers at the hands of her husband Inder, but finally she rebels against him and like Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* slams the door of the house on the face of her husband and takes refuge in freedom. All the novels of Sahgal reflect the current Indian political themes and depict the different social and cultural changes that take place in India. Her work has a strong practical base and reflects not only her personal values but also the changing values of a society.

Others are unhappy in marriage but seek different kind of resolution without violating the bonds of marriage. She uses the influence of fiction to communicate to the forefront a story of the socio personal humiliation. Though, the behaviour in which the mould of her narration treats a assortment of themes counting the life of the present day sophisticated woman speaks significantly other than that. The endeavour of the woman central character of her tale is equal to the circumstances she is in, in her capable life troubled by the immensity of her consequence. Sahgal had first-hand acquaintance of politics and political facts in India, for she had spent most of her childhood and youth in Anand Bhawan, the inherited home of the Nehru's in Allahabad. It is outside hesitation that politics is in her blood as Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was her

maternal uncle and her cousin Mrs. Gandhi. His father, being a veteran freedom fighter who had joined hands with the Nehru's family and others suffered very much and died in the Indian prisons for the noble cause. It is no doubt that the important political events that had taken place during her life time form the conditions for her literary works. The portrayer of imperfect truth that she is often responsible as comes with the possessions of her corporeal a woman.

In other conflicts too especially between tradition and modernity, the old and the new, individual and society, which can be easily found in her novels and which are related to political and gender conflicts, her basic urge is to move towards a balance. There is much which is dead wood about the old, the tradition and orthodoxy. She would like people to cast off this dead wood. And yet she does not favour total demolition of the past. The narratives get caught up in the thought by continuing to tell tales of female characters recurring to once rejected roles. Narrative designate unequal relationships of power; the expose artifice of the natural man oeuvre of power and space. In their capacity a completed texts, the narratives are proficient of enlightening the gaps in philosophy in the progression of enacting. As literary representation of Sahgal's narratives is thus the distortion thought. The ideological fields that reflect the real and yet are not real on account of their own status as friction.

The novel *A Time to Be Happy*, in spite of its political nature, deals with the tensions of the married life of Kusum and Sanad. It exposes hypocrisy in public life and the personal ambitions of the bureaucrats in New Delhi. *This Time of Morning*, her second novel, is much more than a political novel. It is the story of Nita's quest for identity. It is the story of Rashmi's unhappiness in her marriage and her quest for communication and commitment in interpersonal relationship. Similarly *Storm in Chandigarh* is not merely a story of the division of Punjab and confrontation between Gyan Singh and Harpal. Interwoven in this story is the story of love and passion of Inder and Saroj and casual betrayals occasional but significant involvement. In spite of the above, one can evidently see that Sahgal's early novels are manifest with concentration of her individual opinion and resentment when compared to her later works in which she focuses more on historical upheaval of political and social activities and autobiographical fundamentals stay put only concealed agenda.

Nayantara Sahgal is manifestly a novelist of human concerns. Her human concerns are part of her essential humanism, her faith in individualism. She is the supreme example of an individualist. Two things which are essential for the attainment of individuality are freedom and self-fulfilment. Nayantara Sahgal prizes freedom for the individual above everything. She is an ardent advocate of democracy and democratic values. On the one hand she is profoundly aware of the perils of democracy, on the other she fully realizes the dangers that lie before the individual in quest of self-fulfilment. They are orthodox society, conventional morality, fears and superstitions, and inequality before law and so on. Most of the women characters in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal suffer because of social prejudices, prejudicial conventions, superstitions and baseless fears. Mira in *This Time of Morning* cannot understand why her daughter should even think of divorce. Because of her orthodox attitude she makes herself as well as her daughter suffer. Mona in *Rich Like Us* and Prabha in *A Time to Be Happy* are not happy in their marriage. Madhu in *A Situation in New Delhi* commits suicide because she carries the stigma of rape for no fault of hers. There is a deep social and religious prejudice against divorce. Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* is a divorcee and has to work against odds in quest of her identity which is usually denied to women in our society. Bhushan Singh in *Mistaken Identity* cannot marry Razia, the girl he is in love with, because of deep religious prejudice. Nayantara Sahgal novels at this point it portrays the immutable right of the characters in her novels. A political theme is often collective to the theme of man-woman connection their matrimonial trouble, their unpredictable contrary and the problems arising out of their timidity and finally the position of a woman in Indian society when she opts to dissolve a seventeen years old marriage.

Nayantara Sahgal believes in growth but not at the cost of human standards. For her society is significant but individual is more important. Her novels are the novels in which human concerns, human feelings and emotions, human misery and happiness dictate. Our conventional morality asks the woman to worship her husband and there are women who believe in this dictum with all their heart. Prabha Mathur in *A Time to Be Happy* and Mona in *Rich Like Us* accept bigamy though they suffer because of it. The concept of a girl being chastity before marriage has led many a defaulting woman to feel shame and

guilt throughout her life. Her novels may be political in environment but comparable to the political theme runs the theme of human love, hate, jealousy, greed and other questions dealing with man's life on this earth and is not less imperative and prevailing than the former. At numerous spaces Sahgal's text implies that in India woman is treated like man's oldest colony, broken, ill-treated and petite changed.

Nayantara Sahgal believes in reality not in illusion. She thinks that we are more inclined towards illusion than towards reality because of our cultural and religious background. Most of the women characters of Nayantara Sahgal, however, are willing to face reality and to cope with it. Some of them may take long to come out of the web of unreality but finally they come out of it. Nayantara Sahgal is, thus, one of the most ardent advocates of woman's self-fulfilment but in the context of Indian culture and traditions. And her vision of balance and harmony is powerful enough to leave a lasting impact on her creative works especially novels. A girl child is often precise a dependability and after her marriage she is cautious to be the belongings of man she is married to. She cannot pursue a profession of her preference, she cannot convey up her children in the way she likes and she cannot practise her security without the consent of either her parents or her husband. Her uniqueness is always linked to somebody.

The novels of Nayantara Sahgal deliberate the sufferings of women in the society before and after independence. Sahgal wants to bring out the real situation and freedom of woman. In India, arrange marriage is quite common. In this regard, Parents has select suitor for their daughters. At this point, the view and vision of woman's marriage life has been killed by the name of custom. In childhood a female should be dependent relative on her father and in childhood on her husband and after the death of her husband on her children. If she has no sons or the near the kinsmen of her husband. The world has developed up in many ways. However, it lacks few things like impartiality of women and a woman cannot go out even in the day time. Because many brutal tortures for women happen in the world. She precisely observes that religion plays a central role in the decisive of the character of the personality as well as the posture of the country. It is at once encumber and a foundation of improvement.

Literature is the mirror of life as a statement which reflects of the society and the characters are the images of writers. She achieves this motivation by using the assortment of narrative techniques and operation and puts them side by side with the official communication. Sahgal's fiction also centres on the political history of India and how it has concealed the perceptions of everyday men and women. Her main interest, however, residue to raise the questions of women and so the basic idea of envisioning India's history in her fiction rests on her concerns with the social and entity problems of women and their search for identity. Sahgal herself has overcome her problem of identity-crisis through her writing.

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