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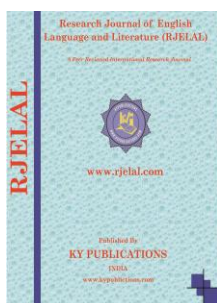
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WOMEN LIBERATION AND MARCH TOWARDS EMANCIPATION- THEIR STRUGGLE AND LIMITATIONS- A FOCUS ON NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S A DAY IN SHADOW AND A SITUATION IN DELHI

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ABSTRACT

Nayanthara Sahgal career occupies more than thirty years in literature. She has a note worthy place in the history of Indo-English novel. Having eight novels to her credit, she personally believes the power of the pen. She takes special care to keep the track of national consciousness as a writer. Her characters are often entrapped in situations but they emerge out as honest, victorious and morally upright and take revolutionary decisions. Sahgal's novels can be roughly viewed into two halves, the first five arise out of 'situations' more than characters while the later are strongly character oriented. She portrays the struggle and emancipation of woman through her characters. Her women characters struggle hard and fight for their rights as a human being and as an individual. India has a different picture before and after independence. Nayanthara sahgal's novels are set against the socio-political backdrop of the country. Her brought up in a political family does not make her a good political writer, her success is not as a daughter of Vijayalaxmi pandit but her deep insight into the inner most thoughts of human mind. The form and technique adopted by her in developing the plots add glory to her art as a novelist. Her linguistic competence, stylistic devices and gradual development of characters are the essential qualities of her novels. Her men and women behave as normal human beings, who fall into their egos, commit errors, take wrong decisions and expose their weakness. 'The day in shadow' Published in 1973 depicts the journey of Simrit-how she marries Som, how that marriage leads to a broken marriage, how she solves her problems after divorce with the help of Raj, an M.P and how she becomes a responsible mother. 'The Situation in Delhi' published in 1977 talks about the pre and post Emergency political scene and about Devi, the cabinet Minister.

KEY WORDS: National consciousness, Revolutionary decisions, Emancipation of woman, Socio-political backdrop, Linguistic competence, Stylistic devices.

Simrit is a scholarly woman in Nayanthara Sahgal's Novel "A Day in Shadow". Through Simrit Sahgal portrays her personal life. Though Simrit is a scholarly woman she selects a husband of her own choice who does not match with her ideals. She is not prepared to face the challenges from her

adolescence. Her 'scholarly' father and 'unworldly' mother who have a tendency to withdraw from anything outside the orthodox Brahmanical fold do help her to develop her individuality. When she hardly attains adulthood she is attracted by the ways of Som. His commercial flash makes her to

admire him. Som appears to be everything for her, more than her parents and her childhood. He gives color, life and action to the life of Simrit. They lead a beautiful life in the beginning but later life makes them to play the game of marriage. Love is just like electricity. When time passes one comes to know that necessity of electricity is at night not at day. Simrit slowly realizes the fact and wishes to fulfill her childhood dreams. Her scholarly interest and her love towards intellectual life do not develop any interest in Som. She wants to live a meaningful life but his outlook is totally different which always confuses her. Simrit is so sensitive but Som never understands her. For him she is an object of pity and tenderness and a 'poor little thing'. He never understands why she is always confused and wretched though she has everything in the world. Money plays an important role in their lives. Som, who is emotional towards money gets tied to it. He never sticks to one business, changes accordingly. Dialogue is the missing link between them and their worlds. She wants to talk desperately about books, events, ideas and people but he cuts her off. Gradually they started living like strangers under the same roof which lead them to take divorce.

After divorce she shifts to a small flat in Defence colony with her children. She has to get adjusted with little furniture, with no telephone, no ration card and even a milk card. It needed a special temperament to live in such conditions. She does not like the way of living as her own ideas about life were quite different. She remembers Som but he never thinks of her and her problems. He could have forgiven her if she is dependent but Simrit starts fighting for her identity. She starts motivating herself and her crying sense of loss is replaced by a new attentiveness. After she divorces Som, she wants to keep children with herself though he wants to keep children with him but children do not want to live with their mother. Their eldest daughter wants beautiful clothes and luxury items which come in advertisements and magazines. She always feels sorry about her mother's financial status and regrets for not living with her father. Brij leaves her mother and prefers to stay with his father as there are so many possibilities. He believes that his future will be better only in the custody of his father. Brij's

betrayal is interpreted as the victory of "active evil" over "passive good". Som leaves all his shares of six lakh worth on Simrit's name and she is forced to pay the taxes. The amount will be inherited by Brij when he attains maturity. The cruel nature of Som is shown in the form of consent terms as he does not want to see her happy. Simrit has to pay seventy-two percent taxes on her own earnings apart from deposits like annuity. She refuses to accept the terms and in this connection she takes the help of Raj, an M.P.

Raj has no family. His parents died in an accident soon after his completion of university education. He was born in Pakistan and was thrown out of his home at the age of nineteen as he adopted Christianity. He has to change his name in the world to show his brevity on the rough emotional weather of his own soil. He was ruthless about life. He stood as an independent candidate and elected for the parliament. Simrit discusses her problem with Raj. Raj starts taking too much interest in the problems of Simrit. He takes her to Ramakrishnan, an advocate, to solve her tax problem. The consulted lawyer asks her to make a trust for the children for whom she needs the help of Som. Som refuses his help as a husband then Raj reveals his decision to marry her. Raj's proposal shocks and confuses her but later she accepts with a thought that this new relation will bring light in her dark life. Thus Simrit is free from all her past problems and feels that her soul is at liberty in the loving shadow of Raj.

Simrit continues her professional career. She is a writer who writes a book by name 'A River'. She hates writing about people and country. In her opinion, the people in the country are barbaric, full of elastic standards and worship money. The only thing which is not polluted is Nature. Most of the writers write about historical romances but she writes about romantic geography. She believes that our country has a great objective in heritage with cycles of steady passions. The peninsula stretching endless miles is the source of culture which needs to be focused through language. Her nature outlook makes her career successful.

LACK OF COMMUNICATION IN CHANGED ENVIRONMENT

There are a few writers who talked about politics in their writings. Nayantara Sahgal's concern with the political themes and issues of current importance has been readily recognized. Her novels talk about the personal lives of the characters with political environment around them. Her novels show the humanitarian perspective along with the political structure. She always tries to project the relentless exploitation of the people in the political process. Enriched with the first-hand knowledge of Indian politics she became a novelist and a political journalist and all her writings, fiction and non-fiction, dealt with contemporary India. The Novel Situation in Delhi is about changing situations in India and about lack of communication between individuals.

In a traditional society a girl is always a burden to her parents. They want to get rid of her by marriage. Money matters a lot in marriage. If a girl is married to a millionaire she is considered to be lucky. Modern girl views on marriage are different. They consider it as an escape from parent's house and take hasty decisions in selecting their husbands but slowly they realize their mistake. Marriage appears as a cage, they like birds waiting for their freedom. Devi, the protagonist had lot of dreams about her married life but she lost her husband when she was at the age of forty-four. Left with her son Rishad she took shelter at her brother's house. Unfortunately she lost her brother Shivaraj, the Prime Minister. Devi was made Education Minister after his death as an emotional aftermath. She is too attached to her brother that she had no other life than his. His life, needs are all hers. His death is a personal loss to her and she is left alone in political world. She lived long in the glory of her brother's fame and continues to keep her brother's fame alive. With her dissatisfaction in marriage and busy schedule in politics she finds her fulfillment with her brother's friends Michael and Usman.

Though Devi is a politician, she is unable to control her only son Rishad at home. She is doubled with the ideas of her son but is unable to reform him. She is busy with politics and never gets time to do justice to domestic life. She has to suffer the

consequences of breakdown communication within the family. Rishad is a boy of nineteen who is an outstanding student in the university. He is a cool, sure, quite, courteous and an intelligent boy who loves his work and does everything perfectly. He gets attracted with Naxalists views and joins the party. Rishad works against the government with his active involvement in Group activities. Devi never takes interest in his ideas and does not know that he works for a party. He struggles for the people but in short he ends his life in a bomb blast at a theatre. Rishad's life had grown in beauty, unnoticed and perished quickly. He voices the disappointed directionless youth of his times. Thus Devi is neither a successful politician nor a successful mother.

CONCLUSION

The concept of freedom is the central concern in the novel. Simrit's freedom in selecting her husband disturbs her. Not only her intellectual needs but her emotional needs are not fulfilled in her married life. She never gets any status as a woman but she never tries to stop her wishes and strives hard to fulfill them. Her freedom in taking divorce creates many problems but she overcomes them with her patience. Her freedom in keeping children with her after divorce portrays her as a lovable mother but children turn out just like their father. When her son Brij wants to live with his father she never objects but packs his things. She gives importance to the decisions of children. Her freedom in accepting Raj's proposal brings day in her shadow life. Her freedom to become a nature writer gives her a successful career.

Its other side of a coin Sahgal portrays through Devi's character. A woman born with all choices in an aristocratic family fails to balance her personal and public life. Her inefficiency leads to the death of her son. Women are victims of many social practices in the society. In a male-dominated society women are created and given an image of ideal wife in the society. Most of the Women still believe and get trapped in the old customs and traditions. Instead of fighting against the discrimination they easily accept their traditional role and remain silent or prefer death. Nayantara Sahgal raises her voice of protest against the discrimination between men and women. Women should move out from the four

walls of their house in order to fight for their self-respect. In this struggle, women sometimes do not establish any self-hood of their own individuality and may not be committed to emerge as an individual as Devi in *A Situation in Delhi* and may not lead a blameless life as Simrit in *A Day in Shadow* but still they gain strength and remain uncrushed. Let women identify her strength and March towards emancipation. It's a strong appeal by Sahgal through her novels that let women be regarded as an individual but not as a mere dependent.

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