



PORTRAYAL OF FEMINISM NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S THE DAY IN SHADOW

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ABSTRACT

Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow* is considering almost autobiographical in nature. The present study deal with the motive of feminist movement strives towards the aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. Though feminism is not a relatively new concept, and has always formed part of the women's liberation movement, it has been changing, in form and content with gender equality being one of the aspects. There is no doubt that feminism is today a major accepted fact of modern life with women competing with men in all walks of life.

It is deals with the feminist movement in the West and East, the condition of women in the past and the present and finally novelist said the issues on Sahgal novels's *The Day in Shadow*. The heroines such as **Simrit Devi, Rose and Sonali** grew bold enough, as Nayantara did in her own life, to throw away societal shackles. They began to feel oppressive need that the duty of 'self' weights greater than the duty to the family or society. Women should be prepared to lead an independent life rather than submitting herself to the unjust demands of the society. The study deals with historical perspective of women's problem in India through the ages so that it might throw light on the approach and treatment of those problems by Nayantara Sahgal.

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is an aspect which expresses women's right in all walks of life. Nayanthara Sahgal novels are primarily deals with feminism. She is a writer of feminist perspective nayanthara's heroines are dibber from other women. Sahgal imposed her personal emotions on the characters she created in her novels. *The Day in Shadow* there is a change in the character and attitude of Sahgal's heroines in these novels. The heroines such as Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* grow bold enough, as Nayantara did in her own life. A reform is felt necessary in the code bill conferring some basic rights to women.

Sahgal says through Simrit in *the Day in Shadow*, "The Hindu Code Bill had jumper two thousand years of tradition to confer that particular

twentieth century blessing. And here we are, she thought, the females among us in a state of revolutionary emancipation out on our ears in the street" (*TDS5*). Simrit is different from other women. Som knows that she was not the kind of woman who would wait for men to do things, a passive creature. She never belonged to the type of woman in the traditional sense. Yet what were exactly her views on emancipation of women, he did not know. Simrit says that she wants permanence that gives a sense of security in life.

A lot of emotional burden is attached not only to persons but to the life when there is a contact with them. Any change, minor or major, produces a disagreement note.

She brings out contrasting quality in Som who interested in change, in finding new things, new toys. Raj could not understand how Simrit could be so unrealistic, being not aware of the punishment imposed upon her by her husband, Som. He wishes he could jolt her into some response about practical matters. The divorce terms dictated by Som are nothing but an outrage on the submissive, unsuspecting innocent victim. He finds that her heartless husband has treated her in every other little thing in the same way. He could not comprehend how an educated woman like her allows such injustices heaped upon her. Raj, as a Christian, has looked at the Hindu way of life as an outsider, and analyzed dispassionately. He thinks: "The Hindu race!-mute, acquiescent, letting things happen to it, from a country to the mind and body of a woman"(TDS37).

The Hindu codes relating to woman, marriage formulated by chauvinistic men for their own advantage continued to suppress women since long time past, grow around women like encrustations restricting their freedom gradually. Women have been conditioned to think that this is normal life for them. The woman is looked down always as a dependent, first upon her parents, then to husband, later to her children. Women have been subjected to suffering for their utility.

Trapped and maimed even after her divorce because of the settlement terms Som imposes such cruel penalties on her to save taxation. He could have done it by some other humane ways. It is sheer butchering. It is malicious, ego like malevolence, with Shylock's temper of revenge. When Som explains the betrayal, Simrit could not understand why Som should be so cruel and revengeful upon her. Som says it is more than a life sentence. Life sentence ends after a period of time. Hers is a real life sentence and it would be upon her until she dies. Sahgal graphically describes how Simrit feels when Som methodically begins to torture her, mentally. At night she dreams the incredible cliffs are leaning lower and lower over her car, preparing casually to crush it. Simrit has been dreaming with a frightening clarity since her divorce. She is clinging to a balustrade at the very top of the building, within reach of the sky, when her fingers

are wrenched loose, one by one, and she is hurled to the pavement below.

Sahgal seems to be very much concerned about the general passivity of the Hindus. They do not seem to be so much concerned about the immediate problems of the society. Inequality, oppression, and injustice prevailing in the society do not prompt them to action. Their fatalistic attitude passed on from generation to generation makes them resigned to their lot. A Christian convert Raj critically observes their apathy or passivity. Simrit, in *The Day in Shadow*, though educated, endowed with liberal thinking and feminist views, is not able to come out of the age-old rut of traditional views and fight on her own against the injustices meted to her personally in the name of Divorce Settlement imposed upon her by her husband. She requires a male, sympathetic and understanding. Sahgal yearns that Hindu religion should come down from its pristine theological speculations to face the realities of life and imbue spirit of action, fighting in *The Day in Shadow*. Som's and Simrit were seems happy during the few year's marriage life. Later the evilness of domination comes in som. He never understand Simirt and though her as object of physical attraction. Som is a great Business man. He is wealthy and riches but he never consider Simrit as a person who has individuality and identity. She never gets any respect from her husband. As like Devi, Simrit also console herself by saying "Hope, it's going to be all right", (A Situation in New Delhi 41) but nothing has changed. For Simrit physical intimacy should envelope every act in the relation between husband and wife but to Som sex is a thing by itself, a physical satiety. Som would have forgiven Simrit if she had crumbled against his attack. Her calm almost frightens him and his cruelty doubles in an effort to bring her to her knees. Simrit with her innate basic strength resists his man oeuvres. Sahgal perhaps wants to emphasize that male cruelty is the outcome of their inner weakness. Simrit finds that she cannot have physical union unless fortified with emotional union. Som do not comprehend that language. In the marriage life of Simrit she was happy for few years only. After that only she realizes that she folly and treated as servant or cook selecting curtains or sofa covers. Simrit fade away of

her seventeen year old married life Evilness of male dominating society makes Simrit shut out of Som's World because he never share any matter to Simrit that makes her feel tired of marriage relationship and som's ambitious nature. Simrit get isolated because som's character som's become ferocious toward Simrit and asked her whether she will be a tame wife or got divorce. She chosen second one. To live with self-respect is a capital rights Simrit rick her life with courage and confidence. She thought that her individuality is more important that should not be compromised or compressed for anyone. Simrit broke out the patriarchy for her identity. So according to Sahgal there is nothing wrong if women seek companionship outside marriage bonds to fill the void in communication. Simrit seek a meaningful relationship based on confidence, trust, understanding, companionship and stability, seeking development and fulfillment of their individual selves. The path Simrit have chosen is unorthodox, against the dictates of tradition, but they would not budge in, though they bleed and suffer. Women are still considering as submissive by evil people like som them as belonging to the sphere of sex and procreation. Men like som expect women should live under their control. As educated women Simrit yearns for a bee communication of idea with her husband. She feels of that som's used her for physical. Simrit wants love, identity, freedom, affection and understanding. Som's never realize that money can't gibe what Simrit needs. She fed-up with this life and she take divorce from her husband. In India it willknow factor that a women has to struggle a lot to live her husband life because its bond of traditional social set-up. So India women need excess courage to break the bond (i.e) marriage. After her divorce she thinks as a divorce she have more responsible role to play. She feels abandoned in the society as a woman she faces many by physically and mentally and economically. She lived a luxurious life when she lived with her husband but how Simrit find her more difficult to lead a life without money, food, and daily needs. She has taken "All the living wealth" and has left behind the crockery and furniture and liven and jewels and sliver som got all thing, the cars, the bank accounts"(Sahgal, The Day in Shadow: 58) Som live

in richness, Simrit in poverty. In spite of problem Simrit of her children, she never lost her courage her husband som's is aware of her strength. "Som could have forgiven her if she had been a weaker being, unsure, dependent and even deceiving, but beneath her docility she was none of these things unpardonable" (Sahgal, The Day in Shadow: 53) For Simrit divorce didn't give freedom it not easier for women to survive in husband centered world. Simrit feel isolated and abandoned in the society. Simrit feels that "a part of her would always be married to som" (Sahgal, The Day in Shadow: 220) Simrit meets any problem in financial away Divorce is way for her to being a new life but for other who belong orthodox society is a sin. After many attempt of divorce settlement process Simrit Achieve and feels herself as a person. Simrit open up herself. Simrit thinks "After all attraction had start somewhere and what better starting point that the mind?" (sahgal The Day in Shadow :160) Simrit was struggling to find her individuality and identity in the material life of som. Som feel in the physical relationship but now Simrit emerge out as new women in the relationship of Raj where she fined her love respect, equality, identity and individuality. Raj shows his love towards Simrit without any expectation they made their bond together. Every women can fulfill herself wholly in the loving and harmonious with a man. The novel The Day in Shadow female protagonist seeks for women hood freedom in all respect the ultimate goal of feminism is to make women have identity, freedom, and live a life of her own. Nayanthara wants to bring out the rule that manwomen relationship with perfectly equality. it essential for a women to lead honorable and dignified life Sahgal portrait Simrit as up her unbearable compliant role .

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