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Sahgal's Radical Views of the Modern Women in *Rich Like Us*

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ABSTRACT

Sahgal's radical views of the modern women in *In Rich Like Us* tries to bring the views and opinions of Sahgal in a connected whole in order to facilitate a comprehensive view of the subject. Most of feminism views were the causes for the problem faced by the women are dealt with details. But this paper exhibits that Sahgal approaches the problem of women with responsibility, maturity and understanding. Even now the old goblins of oppression, sex discrimination, and exploitation of woman are not completely wiped off.

Keywords: Sahgals radical, modern women, Feminism.

The present study aims at undertaking a critical study of the novels of Nayantara Sahgal towards arrive at some valid conclusions about her attitude towards women's problems and how she envisages the emergence of Modern Women in India. The present study deals with Sahgal's novel and published in reputed magazines all over the world.

What the writer feels is that the political themes have been interwoven as just a backdrop for her more serious subject, that is, the liberation of women from serfdom and suffocating 'tradition'. She has taken up a rapid survey of the novels touching upon purple patches, which have a bearing upon women's issues.

Sahgal's main concern in her novels is perfection, which she says, is possible only through freedom of expression. Her concern as a woman is to fight for

freedom against meaningless traditional practices and against chauvinistic oppressions addressed by centuries of unreasonable thinking. Sahgal was married to a wealthy businessman Gautam Sahgal with whom she found, that she could not find self-expression. Marriage had been an indissoluble bond for her parents. Perhaps, in future, the question of divorce would be flexible.

Sahgal says about sonali mother: "She worked tirelessly. There was never a moment when I saw her doing nothing. And each of her acts was as essential household act that meant food, clothing, succour for us all, family, servants and animals" (RLU 143). She describes the inhuman acts of kindness, which had taken place in her own family. Her grandmother suffered such brutal atrocities at the hands of her own relatives.

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The writer has taken up a historical perspective of woman's problems in India through the ages so that it might throw light on the approach and treatment of those problems by Nayantara Sahgal. This paper gives a comprehensive assessment of the highlights of the problems.

Through centuries the concept of ideal womanhood has been based on mythical personages like Sita, Nalayani and others. Woman is expected to be a silent sufferer like Sita; or a slavish devotee like Radha, a toy in the hands of Krishna. A woman is expected to be passive and accept the dynamic role of men in her life.

Sahgal is one such fighter who does so within certain self-imposed boundaries. That is why some critics consider Sahgal as a feminist, of course, with a conservative veneer. Sahgal confines herself in her fight against the crusty tradition to a limited sphere. Women are becoming aware of their needs of self-fulfilment and find out that the way of progress lies in rejecting the existing social set up, the established social order. The sufferings, mental and physical they undergo in their struggle form the main thematic concern of Sahgal's novels.

Women are subjected for their utility. They work day and night for the welfare of the family. But they are not allowed to enjoy any rights or privileges. They are only a toy, or a rattle and they are supposed to satisfy man's happiness, whereas women are expected to preserve their chastity as a treasure to be offered at the altar on the nuptial day. But it's not applicable for men.

Mona is confined to the Hindu traditional constraints, fretting and fuming over her unfortunate condition, but instead of taking any concrete steps to set it right she just blames the Almighty or fate, because of her husband. In the area where woman's personality is directly concerned, such as sex, maternity, work ethics, upbringing of children, family, a woman has as much share as a man. She is not to be considered as a baby-producing machine, or a toy or convenience always ready at hand to cater to the needs of man.

Sahgal is bold enough to criticize the age-old traditions, dogmatized and cherished by the so-called spiritual leaders. She exhorts the people to make a dispassionate analysis of the old traditional values, take up a re-examination and to take what is relevant

and reasonable to the modern conditions and throw away what is completely irrelevant and unjustifiable. As a feminist writer she finds that religion has a strong and unreasonable hold over people, especially against women.

She wants the people of India to have verve to fight against evil, as Christian's and Muslims have. But she is aggrieved to find the Hindu spiritual leaders fighting against unimportant, orthodox issues.

Sahgal is bold enough to find fault with the views of even Gandhi and Tagore. Gandhi, of course, did a great service to women, calling them to take part in India's struggle for independence. Sahgal thinks that the inclusion of women in the struggle was perhaps a strategic move, only to create a semblance of balance or to put forth a moral facade.

Even sixty years after Independence the condition of women has not been improved satisfactorily. Even sixty years after Independence the condition of women has not been improved satisfactorily. Find it hard to come out of the familial circle and fight for own rights and privileges.

Sahgal is a feminist writer and an artist with responsibility exhorting women to break away from the unreasonable, oppressive tradition. She was born in an aristocratic family, closely connected with Indian politics during the cataclysmic period, which brought about a world of new ideas of independence and social values.

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