Chapter II

Gender Discrimination

The patriarchal system has been a part of Indian Society. Women had always been the less important human being. When a woman lives in a male dominated society, she undergoes many hardships and humiliations. It is a pathetic condition of woman in our society when she has no husband in her life she is considered as useless one. Society finds fault with anyone who opposes its laws, in other words, they are transgressors of society. In a patriarchal society, women’s role is hence viewed through a magnifying glass and she is always watched by others especially if she does not follow the rules established by the males.

In India gender discrimination towards women has existed for generation and it affects women and their lives. Although India has granted women equal rights but nowadays, the patriarchal society practices their gender discrimination.

There are limited opportunities given for women to access resources such as education and employment services. It is very important to provide equal opportunities to women if they are considered the future of India. Women are under estimated to
inefficient for their work. This has prevented woman from achieving anything in their lives. Women are important for producing child. Sex is very important between man and woman to produce a child. The patriarchal system of Indian society which practices the gender discrimination against women and it has led to the continuation of Indian’s strong preference of male children. Female infanticide abortion is a inhuman activity adopted in the custom of society and it strongly reflects low status of Indian women.

A decline in the sex ratio was observed with India’s 2011 census reporting that it stands at 914 females against 1,000 males, a drop from 927 in 2001 the lowest since post-independence period. Education is not mostly attained by the Indian women. Although Literacy rates are increasing, female education are considered to less important.

Discrimination against women has contributed in fixing the salary for women, with Indian women on average earning 64 percentage of what their male race earn for the same profession, and the level of qualification.

Gender Discrimination against women is started by men from their lack of autonomy and authority. Although equal rights are given to
women it may not be well recognized by others. In practice, land and property rights are weakly recognized and followed by men. Women have no social rights to own property. Under their own names they do not have any inheritance rights to obtain a share of parental property.

Thus patriarchal system reduces women’s status to inferior position and it perpetuated its system through myths and traditions, which unfortunately have been a part of Society. Indian feminists and feminist novelists also have fought against gender discrimination and feminist issues with Indian patriarchal society, such as inheritance of laws and the practice of Sati. Despite the protest voice against patriarchal society made by some Indian feminist novelists, women living in modern India still face many problems of discrimination. India’s patriarchal culture has made the process of gaining land ownership rights and the system of gender discrimination on women servants. In past two decades, there has also emerged a trend of female infanticide abortion. To Indian feminists, they are seen as injustice.

As in the Indian feminist movement, there has some criticism of Indian feminist writings, in India. They have especially been criticized for focusing too much on women already investigated, and
neglecting the needs and representation of poorer in lower caste women.

The concept of women as subordinate position to man as man’s sexual property is deeply rooted in tradition bound Indian society. The husband feels that he has rights to treat her as his puppet and possession. Nayantara Sahgal severely opposes the attitude which makes women to a subordinate position. Her confession of the feminist awareness in her novels reveals her feminist ideology as quoted by Neena Arora in her book, “I have come to this awakening rather late, although I have personally been always Independent minded” (Nayantara and Doris Lessing 115).

Sahgal’s views on gender discrimination are portrayed through her women characters. She wishes to combine marriage and individuality. She has her own visions of marriage as a pleasant and harmony of the human relationship based on marital understandings and faith. Women are persons not possession is repeatedly heard voice of Sahgal in her novels.

Germaine Greer defines the nature of man- woman relationship and calls women “Life contracted unpaid workers” (The Female Eunuch 329). In Patriarchal society, husband feels privileged to take
his wife, for granted. A woman’s lot from her birth is to belong to man. Before marriage she is considered to be the property of her father and brother and after marriage husband gets the individual authority to use his will over his wife.

In Manusmriti, the quoted lines are very clear to describe the position of women:

In childhood must a female be Independent on her father; in youth on her husband, her lord being dead, on her sons; If she has no sons, on the near kinsmen; if she be left to kinsmen on those of her father; If she has not Paternal kinsmen; on the sovereign, a women must never seek independence (148).

Nayantara Sahgal has strong ideas against gender discrimination. She could never understand the patriarchal system which believed in damaging the potentials of women and treating them as if they were things and not human beings. In Storm in Chandigarh Inder is a typical male character who feels his wife as slave. He has clear and strong features of manliness and behaves with pre-dominant male ego. Though a father of two children and soon to be blessed with one more children, he believes that child rearing is women’s job. He boldly says:
A thousand years from now a woman will still want and need a master, the man who will own and command her and that is the man she will respect (Storm in Chandigarh 108).

Saroj, in Storm in Chandigarh, is not able to find a reciprocal involvement in her marriage. Inder, her husband is not only from a different cultural background but he is a different kind of person altogether, Saroj has been brought up in an atmosphere of freedom and she has grown up to expect equality. But she is suffered by Inder’s cruel reaction to an affair she has had before her marriage. She tells him about it in all her innocence but this is for him the beginning of a nagging suspicion. He considers it to be a serious moral lapse. Inder believes himself to have wronged.

In an order that clearly demarcated the roles of men and women, unless that venerable order was breached, trampled and mocked, He was maddened by it. When it came over him, he sat looking at Saroj with a revulsion that had ancient, tribal male roots (Storm in Chandigarh 36).

When she marries Inder, she has the previous experience in pre-marital relationship. It is a different situation that society which lives by double moral standards. Saroj, however, is not really guilty. She is not dishonest and for her it is a part of her life and she is
warmly and fully involved in her marriage but her husband is afraid by this activity. For that he uses to humble her and to destroy her sense of innocence. Inder’s attitude is secret in keeping the cruel behaviour with the rest of his character. He has no time for emotional involvements or tenderness, his whole nature is ruthless and aggressive.

While Saroj longs to penetrate his inflexibility, Inder persists in raking up the past and withdraws into his own self, leaning her outside, isolated and unhappy beating against, numbness like a bird against a window pane, trapped in a futile frenzy (Storm in Chandigarh 97).

The couples in Sahgal’s Storm in Chandigarh live together under the same roof but they are separated by loneliness and emptiness. Sahgal believes that sexual pleasure may not always lead to mental and spiritual oneness. Her characters have an ‘empty shell marriage’ defined by sociologists as a marriage, “When the spouses live together, remain legally married but their marriage exists in name only” (Sociology: Terms and Perspectives 360).

Saroj and Inder are like two different islands floating in the same sea but never getting close. Saroj feels about her loneliness, “It’s not being alone, I mind….I enjoy that, it’s the loneliness. I’m alone even
when Inder is here” (Storm in Chandigarh 25). Inder has this strange relation with Saroj where he can stand aloof, indifferent even in the most intimate moments. Saroj wants to share everything like Rashmi but Inder feels sharing a bed is more than enough. Saroj wants to share all her experiences with him. She is particularly excited about child birth. Inder wants only one relation with her that based on the physical togetherness:

Sex with her came easily and satisfactorily to him. It was an act with a beginning and an end, a need never put into words, neatly enacted and dispensed with in darkness (Storm in Chandigarh 55).

He could be her husband but not companion. Sharing a walk by moon-light was considered wastage of time.

That kind of accompaniment has always been difficult for him, just as to take a walk with her became a meaningless expenditure of time, when a restlessness took hold of him to get back to whatever work he had to do. With Inder Saroj is confused. She wants to share everything but whenever she dares to open her mouth, Inder suppresses her and replies cruelly in such a manner that she is unable to understand which topics to discuss with him and which to avoid.
Inder makes her aware of all her shortcomings and she starts feeling different and nervous.

We must talk, but what about, she wondered nervously. Which, after all these years, were the safe, unguarded topics between them, those without consequence? *(Storm in Chandigarh 93).*

Saroj feels easily with Vishal, with him she can communicate with him on one to one basis. She is not attracted to Vishal for sexual satisfaction; she needs to satisfy her soul, to talk freely and frankly as Saroj and nothing else. Together Vishal and Saroj are themselves. This togetherness gives her energy and strength. She tells him, “I was just thinking there is no real rest except with someone of whom one is not afraid” *(Storm in Chandigarh 91).* Vishal also feels this ‘we-ness’ and reflects. “Much that went wrong between men and women, between people, lay in what they withheld from one another” *(Storm in Chandigarh 90).*

Inder does not feel the need for companionship. He searches for it outside his marriage. He finds Mara friendlier and shares his intimate thoughts with her. It is her loneliness which pushes Saroj towards Vishal. Male ego and sense of superiority stand in the way of complete oneness of spouses. As Jasbir Jain writes, “There is
something within him (Inder) which shuts her out and is impervious to her affections” (Nayantara Sahgal 45).

Even such simple pleasures like enjoying the rain are not possible with Inder but it comes naturally with Vishal. There is a perfect union of minds and Vishal is her soul-mate in the truest sense of the word. The recognition of this perfect compatibility and understanding is mutual. Vishal is aware that:

Though he might not have the curve of her arms, here within his reach was the rest of her, the shine and shadow of an entire person...his, if he had the grace to understand her (Storm in Chandigarh 89).

There is another couple Jit and Mara, in search of sharing and involvement. Mara is a strong, Westernized, independent-minded woman. She is full of life and ideas but Jit is quite passive. Jit and Mara’s story is quite different. Jit has no skeletons in his cupboard. He is an affectionate, understanding and caring man, but Mara is not satisfied. She wants someone to exercise authority over her. Jit’s passivity is killing her and she is losing her energy. Inder comes as a life force and she feels more youthful. She is a childless woman; Jit’s passivity had made her life dull and monotonous. Inder’s strong presence shakes her back to life and she likes it. Though Inder is at
times insensitive to her, she likes him. It is as if with Jit, she was lacking something and Inder fills that empty space. With Jit as husband and Inder as a friend, her life reaches its fulfillment:

She wanted all the worlds, she could lay hands on and the best of each…the softness of Jit and the hardness of Inder….Was it wrong to fulfill and integrate oneself through fragments of other natures (Storm in Chandigarh 57).

Perhaps Mara’s problem depends on the fact that she has outgrown Jit. Her marriage to Jit had been a decision taken in haste only to repent at leisure:

If you were nearly thirty, you wondered at such times what had become of your life, why the man you had met at a party and married eight years had not, after all been your destination (Storm in Chandigarh 56).

Jit is soft and sweet- tempered but he fails to make an impact, which Inder does. She wants Jit to be more human with all human weakness. That Jit gives into all her whims, that he never seems to mind anything and that even when hurt, he does not show signs of anger are the facts which Mara hates. She shakes Jit to wake him. Compared to Jit’s passivity, Inder impertinence is welcome.
She disliked his (Inder’s) manners, but she remembered that she had good manners at home and that they were no substitute for what she craved (Storm in Chandigarh 102).

It seems she feels angry at Jit’s refined ways and Inder’s uncivilized and cruel behaviour has an appeal for her. It is later only that she is disillusioned with Inder. Jit also realizes that there is something lacking in their relationship and makes an attempt to come closer to her. On the Christmas night, a moment of sudden radiance and revelation come to Mara and she decides to begin her new life with Jit:

Strength that was almost physical in its impact reached out to her in his words, the kind of strength she had never thought she would need as she went her proud way alone. She said what she had never been able to say. I need your help (Storm in Chandigarh 235).

In fact Saroj’s premarital relationship is only an outward symbol of the difference in their attitudes. She wants to be recognized as an individual and wants to accept a relationship on the basis where wife as possession not a person. Women have been used as puppets in those days. They have been resenting it because nobody wants to be
used. Therefore marriage has become the meaningless word in her novels.

Inder feels ill with her failure to have emotional fulfillment. He is unable to understand why she cannot have a baby like other women did. To him, a wife was one half of an enterprise meant to preside over her husband’s home and children and also her husband’s career development. Inder fails to view any other kind of relationship with Saroj or for that matter even with Nara. Individually of women strongly opposes him. Inder believes that even after a thousand years women will still need a master.

Inder treats Saroj merely as a possession, not a person. There is no question of friendship between them. Inder loves, Saroj, no doubt but he loves her if she were his slave or his possession. They have lived together even produced children but there is no happiness between them. To such a callous, in human husband, she wants the emotional fulfillment in everyday life but Inder is unable to correspond.

Thus the relationship between Inder and Saroj exposes the cruel face of patriarchal society where a women lives in a pathetic condition and faces sufferings and harassment because of strong
social taboos, she cannot escape herself from society therefore she accepts these things as the part of her destiny.

_The Day in Shadow_ also exposes the cruel patriarchal system of the society. It reveals the male chauvinism in the modern male who believes himself to be liberal-minded, but he considers wife as his possession. Her husband Som is also a cruel face of male domination in our society. He tries to be modern in each and every activity and imitates the western life style. He speaks their language, learns their mannerisms and follows their fashions.

Som is money-minded person. He gives more importance to money and power than human values. For men like Som, money is the most important thing in life and this love for money becomes the root cause of his separation from his wife. Simrit feels:

Money has been part of the texture of her relationship with Som, on emotional forceful ingredient of it, intimately tied to his self-esteem. Money was, after all a form of pride, even of violence (_The Day in Shadow_ 38).

Thus Som wants Simrit to act as a traditional wife and the ideal wife of subdued womanhood. Som believes the tradition that women should live under the control of man. Simrit finds it a sorrowful
experience. She has no voice in the ordinary decisions of everyday life and not even in the choice of curtains or chair covers. Simirit’s life with Som fails to continue longer and she feels isolated. There is nothing happened in their life. Sex is a part of life not a separate relationship which can be isolated from the rest of life. Sex is no more just sex that food is just food.

Som’s cruel activity to his wife proves that cruelty to a woman is an eternal manifestation in man’s life and woman is still in the modern world a symbol of Indian modern woman - an embodiment of service, slavery and sacrifice. Simrit feels uprooted in a husband centered world in the time of divorce. It is difficult to begin a new life when she is unable to forget the memories of past life. She finds her life disrupted and herself in the midst of a peculiar financial problem. The heavy payments are an attempt to enslave her in every way.

The divorce is a new beginning of risk to face the problems after the divorce settlement. She feels her position to that of an over loaded donkey whose burden attracts notice. There is no pity for her. Her divorce does not convey the meaning that marriage had failed as social institution. Marriage is neither a system nor an escape route. But it exposes the cruel faces of patriarchal system. Som takes pride in showing his wife as his property. He often shows his wife before
his friends. “Look what is I’ve got. Good enough to keep under lock and key” *(The Day in Shadow 27).*

When Simrit is sitting near him, he is interested in what Lalli has to say; only occasionally he keeps squeezing her hand or patting her back. This type of ill-treatment if given to one’s pet would be a correct way, but to a wife is simply suffering. His aggressive harassment can be seen in his pleading in favour of Lalli’s murder. Through his possessiveness she is humiliated by her husband. This attitude takes birth from the ritual of Kanyadaan, where wife is given to the husband unconditionally. This ritual gives husband unending powers and privilege over her.

Som’s control over his wife is so overpowering that Simrit cannot break the bondage of his husband. Simrit is imposed by her husband to analyze her children’s affinity and his family. She thinks, “It was part of the imbalance of her marriage, leaving her unassertive even in reproducing her Kind” *(The Day in Shadow 32).* It is his powerful influence causing disgust that makes her dream, “the incredible cliffs were learning lower and lower over their car, preparing casually to crush it” *(The Day in Shadow 49).*
Under the burden of Som’s powerful personality, Simrit’s freedom is crushed. The sufferings she has, gives immense pain and also it gives courage to oppose her husband’s male ego. The problem between Som and Simrit is not the absence of love but the lack of understanding between them. Som has no symptoms for his love. In fact it may be the reason why he is over possessive about Simrit. Simrit is his gifted thing, which he may not need for many days, but he would not agree to part with it.

The women cannot go to her struggle without the help of a friend. She seeks Raj Garg’s assistance to get out the legal divorce settlement. The document of divorce is described as ‘butchery’ which would make the divorced Simrit, another ‘Sati’. It gives a challenge to Raj’s moral conscience. Though he is not personally involved in the matter, the document is a moral outrage. Simrit has put her signature to its consent Terms and become legally vulnerable. The duplicity by which her signature has been obtained and burn into her brain. He considers man such as Som as

Isolated forcefulness, isolated currents of energy in directed by vision or compassion, petered out and at worst became aggression on their environment (The Day in Shadow 44).
There is no doubt that the consent terms have been signed by Simrit either through innocence or through helplessness. Som’s company lawyer Moolchand is invited to a meeting at Simrit’s home to convey to Som that shares are put into a trust and the gifts tax be paid by Som himself. But Moolchand refuses to be convinced. She is afraid by Moolchand’s indifference.

Simrit does not feel about her responsibility of looking after her children even in this trying situation. She keeps her possession of motherhood though she had the burdens of family on her shoulder. She has stress psychologically which Som puts on her by giving Brij and glimpses of his bright future which awaits him after his visit to Europe and the payment of the shared money in his name.

He might be accepted to follow the life of his father but he remembered that his fatherhood is the problem in promoting business “his expensive soft leather briefcase hardly event put down” (The Day in Shadow 80).

His German friend Rudy Vetter persuades Simrit to reconcile with Som but in vain. Drinking vodka or smoking can bring her the relief, if she desires from the resultant tension in her mind. After all Simrit could not be merely sexual puppet for her husband. Her Som’s
sensual advancement brings about the crisis in their married life. As an intellectual being, she proposes Som that they would be only intellectual companions in their married life. They may show mutual respect from one another as friends and not as husband and wife.

Simrit’s friend Raj is found to be an alternative to Som. With his Christian background he at least, knows her pathetic condition and expectations but Som did not know his wife’s sufferings and tolerance. His love affair had come to an end as soon as her parents decided in favour of another boy for her lover had been so cheapened that it lost all the significance it previously had for the lovers. But the true women had easily accepted the forces of society or her family to renounce what she had cherished. In this way she had allowed herself to be humiliated by men and society.

The novel asserts the state of subjection of women to injustice of various kinds and the need of women’s struggle for liberation. As Raj converses, “the women angle makes about as much dent as an insect on a laser beam” (The Day in Shadow 146).

*The Day is Shadow* is the good example for the struggle of women for freedom. The Western literary culture of stream of consciousness technique affected the writings of Nayantara Sahgal
are deeply involved in to the inner world of her characters. The novel is basically concerned with the emotional reflection of divorce settlement on a woman. It has a theme of survival of a sensitive woman in the male dominated society.

Simrit survives in a different world and she came out from the shadows to find happiness with Raj. The novel reveals that what it is like to be a divorced woman in a nation in which woman for use is the system of patriarchal society. Her vision on women is varied through the awareness of life in this novel and recognizes the human beings as remarkable one in the modern world.

This novel is merely suggestive of the need for freedom. The novelist combines the political and social issues that express a threat to our country. The central theme of Sahgal’s novel is the suffering caused to women in the prison-house of loveless marriage and her suffering when she makes a break way. The crisis is clearly known when the story opens. Simrit and Som are divorced and she is trying to adjust after the divorce settlement.

In the novels of Nayantara Sahgal, the protagonists seek to establish a new order which changed standards of the society, where there is no need for hypocrisy of women and the character is judged
by the purity of heart and chastity of body. Simrit decides to marry Som. But Sahgal portrays the lack of proper companionship, understanding and equality between Simrit and Som caused failure in marital relationship resulting in divorce.

The gender discrimination is revealed through the marital relationship and the understandings of the husbands and wives. *Time to be happy* is set in the background of quit India movements. There are some couples belonging older generations and modern generation. Most of the couples like Sanad’s parents, Girish and Devaki, Mr.and Mrs.Sahai, Harilal and his two wives, Prabha and Lady Mathur are perfectly matched. The narrator’s mother has achieved perfect harmony with her husband. They are an ideally matched couple.

They had been married as children and had grown up together, never being separated except for father’s university education in England (A *Time to be Happy* 7).

Though their marriage is an arranged marriage, they understand well each other and such experience is not known to couples who have married by choice like Sanad and Kusum. About their mutual understanding the narrator says,
Those who matched my mother and father did well. They were wonderfully suited to each other. Inspire of their disagreements, and there much have been some in marriage that lasted fifty years, they adjusted to each other’s foibles, maintaining an outward harmony that controlled the rhythm of the entire household (A Time to be Happy 8).

Maya is unable to pursue the goals set by Harish. There is no communication between the two. It brings conflict between them in an argument. “An argument hung in the air like a storm cloud between Maya and Harish” (A Time to be Happy 34). Harish Shivpal and Maya are extremely unmatched couple. There is a misunderstanding between them.

With regards to his career, Harish’s single mistake had been to marry a women who could not be a graceful hostess to his European friends...people said it was a shame that a man so obviously intended for advancement should have so pathetic wife (A Time to be Happy 20).

When Harish Shivpal is interested in eating, drinking and making enjoyment, his wife is a different woman having some goals. She feels lost in a forest and the longing to a kindred spirit is whetted each passing movement. Harish is a government servant, when she plans to join the congress to work for rural development. Harish did
not oppose her life style because he was willing to adjust but he did not continue the same for many days,

But he did make the resigned comment that though he did not care what Maya did with her spare time, he did mind the sort of people she would be mixing with (A Time to be Happy 45).

The couples do not have marital harmony but they have no mutual understanding at all between them. If they do not quarrel, it is very simple in their family because they do not share any things at all. They live like strangers:

They simply seemed to start their new life far distant from each other. A clash of will might have brought them closer, kindled passion, if not love, and through the years evolved some semblance of a workable relationship. But this was not to be. Their marriage was a sterile, if exotic bloom, having all the enviable façade….the looks, the money, the position that are deemed important by the world….but not the fragrance or the productivity inherent in a living breathing plant (A Time to be Happy 42).

Maya comes from a happy background where her presence is much needed but her husband, Harish is irresponsible for family responsibility. He does not respect his wife as an individual. The narrator says about their family.
At any rate, it was tragic that two young people who should have been ideally suited were in fact, as remote from each other as strangers (*A Time to be Happy* 43).

Girish and Devaki is an ideal couple and Mr. and Mrs. Sahai complements each other well. At the outset there is some misunderstanding between Sanad and Kusum, but it is nothing serious.

There is a little argument between the two parties; it simply shows that both the parties are individualist. But it may cause irrevocable the narrator had laughed at their quarrels, and becomes at least when he finds,.

His work aside and Kusum did not look happy. I (narrator) could understand their quarrelling at times, but not the uneasy discontent that seemed to have settled over them (*A Time to be Happy* 236).

The couples belonging the modern generation in the novel are suitable to each other. Though they are not soul-mates to each other there is no any serious problem within their marriage. It is only problem which is experienced by Govind Narayan’s parents.
Here though there is a great difference between the couple, they do not indulge in unnecessary arguments.

The Indolent, pleasure loving man who had married her and brought her here had not understood her nun-like disdain of luxury. Her stubborn refusal to submit to the moved in which he had tried to cast her. She had in her youth been a women of character at a time when character was not admired in women of breeding, and later this had given way to a sharp criticism of all that she disapproved of in her husband and his home (A Time to be Happy 28).

However, their match may be wrong; the women in this novel do not dare to come out of their homes or to break their bondages of marriage.

The novel Rich Like Us, introduces three major women characters revealing gender discrimination. Due to the series of events, they are brought together in this novel. There is a bond of understanding between the co-wives, Mona and Rose. Rose the middle – aged English woman, has changed her life style after she met Ram. Her life would never be the same again and Rose did not ever regret her decision to marry Ram.

When Ram meets Rose, She is a twenty-year-old lower class, English girl with little formal education to her credit. She is the
daughter of factory worker. Her parents had spent their will for only their daughter. Rose fate was decided by their parents with Ram on the altar of marriage.

In the interview with Nayantara Sahgal, S.Varalakshmi said,

She (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 wherever….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 lighting to behave in this (An Interview with Nayantara Sahgal 18).

Rose adjusts to the life of second wife without losing her values. She cannot accept living with Mona in the same house but she accepts the Hindu social system of wife’s position. It is Rose is background which believed in making an honest living, that makes impossible for her to understand the situation around her.

Through such characters Sahgal deliberately highlights a typical Indian woman. Once Ram brings her at his place, he changed himself to the traditional Indian husband trained in male chauvinism. He does not share anything with her. She is left alone all the day, and night sometimes with Ram by her side and sometimes alone on the bed. She is struggling with her courage. He needs her only
accompaniment to organize the parties for him and this sexual fulfillment in bed. This is last need of Ram and he never expects his wife’s need after Marcella enters his life. His wife is considered as useless thing discarded by her husband. It is a convenient arrangement for Ram as after remarks, “You have the path to heaven all pared for you…with a cocktail party upstairs and a prayer meeting downstairs” (Rich Like Us 65).

Rose keeps waiting for Ram to return but this is not her expectation for emotional fulfillment. Ram has two wives but he fails to manage as a husband to both. He never communicates with his two wives. Mona, his first wife has learnt to accept this. Besides she is a traditional wife, she does not have much to share with her husband. But Rose realizes what type a man Ram is exactly. “May be, he was hidden mark all the time” (190).

Ram leaves her side without caring for the emotional sensibility of his wife, and he returns again without any apology or an attempt at reconciliation.

Rose’s fate is decided by her parents. She cannot think of life without Ram and accepts him for what he is. He put his father’s signature without his knowledge, depriving Rose of even her respect.
She had not accepted to go to bed with him until their marriage because she wanted to secure her virginity. “It was the only way she could show him she had a mind and feelings of her own” (40).

Mona is shaped by her background. She comes from a typical conservative traditional Punjabi home. She takes refuge and has strength from her prayers.

In fact, Rose in those of early years at Lahore, had never seen her even though they lived in the same house.

Nobody can say that Mona accepts her husband’s second wife. While her background leaves her, she has no choice in this matter, protected by the sacrament of her Hindu marriage. She is secure in her status as the lady of the house. She instructs the servants in the managing the house hold works.

This novel also deals with the gender discrimination of working women. Sonali is a thirty- year- old I.A.S officer who finds herself in disfavor with the powers. Therefore, it is only Sonali who understands her father is commitment to freedom. It is found that her life is closely affected by various problem and politics and Sonali falls in love with Ravi after independence.
This was the period when young Indians felt the freedom of spirit and a sense of good with spreading out, enveloping all. This affects her relationship with Ravi. She believes that the nature course of independence would result in freeing the masses, in giving them their share of bread. Ravi always appears in political intrigue. Sonali finds that she cannot love the man that he has become.

As a narrator of the novel, Sonali is considered to be a passive observer. During the time of Emergency, her strong opinions on democracy affect her job. She accepts an event as symptom of changing times. But when Dev cheats in Ram’s cheques she can do nothing to stop.

She has some hope for the future, when she watched Ravi, a political turn-coat to help Rose. In the process Ravi is compelled to go out from Delhi in political disgrace. As she agrees the changes in Ravi, she believes that there are few things in life.

There are some occasions in the novel, exposing the social evils. When she reads her grandfather’s diary account of the scene of his mother committing sati; “I saw her filing her arms wildly in the air, then wrap them about her breasts before she subsided like” a wax doll into the flames (134).
Sonali’s grandfather explains why his mother had been forced by his uncle to commit sati, and his own anger and pain at being unable to prevent his uncle’s plan to get rid of her. After reading her grandfather’s diary, strangely enough, Sonali says, she did not see the social evil in it but the anger and the will power of the nineteenth year old boy that might have struggled to save his mother and killed his mother’s murderers.

The male superiority over female in marriage is clearly seen in Inder in *Storm in Chandigarh* and also in Ram in the novel *Rich Like Us*. With the tradition behind him the namesake epic hero Ram marries Mona and who falls in love with Rose and finally falls for Marcella. His marriage with and love for women are for him a part of the heritage he has inherited and considers polygamy. There is no relationship between the person of Lord Ram and the Ram, Mona’s husband. He tells Rose that king Dasaratha had three hundred wives and lord Krishna lives with two wives. He claims daringly that Hindus are more adventurous than Mohammedans who can only have four wives at a time. Claiming that Hindu Marriage is a sacrament, he rules out giving up his first wife, Mona.

He does not feel guilty in having first wife on the one hand and marries second time with Rose. And after his second marriage he
carries an affair with Marcella. When Rose asks an explanation on this matter, he explains to Rose that he feels intellectual love for Marcella and feels pride in loving her. But his attitude turns violent to words Rose when she goes out with Freedie (with whom she was engaged before she meet Ram) to get some relief from the suffocating experience which she got after marrying Ram. He does not approve her meetings with Freedie and gets angry at her. He scolds her brutally.

Rose is the Sita figure in the novel. There is an inexplicable fatalism about her – her yielding to Ram’s persuasion and her decision to sail to India against warnings by her parents. Ironically in spite of all her experience of the male, and even with the knowledge that Ram had been married, she fatalistically walks in to his life. There was something romantic about her attitude to Ram. The cold war between Rose and Mona encouraged by women visitors, disgust Rose until they are reconciled after Mona’s attempt to commit suicide. But this was not the end of her troubles. There is the Marcella affair which leads to her separation from Ram for five year in all her changes of circumstances. It is Sonali who remains a friend and who fights for her right to property. And finally she is murdered. But people are made to believe that she invited the death on her.
The story of Rose is the story of several Indian women. In the name of sati, many women are murdered. It can be seen the parallel between the accounts of sati found in Sonali’s father’s diary. In both cases, the deaths are not voluntary but forced to death. But like a phenix, Rose dies is struggling with her husband so that her son, rather foster son may live. He had forged her signature to withdraw money from the bank and has now become a cabinet minister. Betrayed by her lover, Ram, by law, she lives and dies pathetically much like the beggar. She fails to fight for her legitimate rights. Here the practice of polygamy may be a system of patriarchal society but many women are humiliated under this practice of polygamy is the injustice done to women pathetically.

*Mistaken Identity* is the story of a man, Bhushan Singh. Through this character the novelist presents the related stories of four women in this novel. The women are – Sylla, Bhushan’s Mother, Razia and Willie May. Sylla is a fully emancipated Parsi woman, who has never faced patriarchal practices to her freedom. Willie May is the foreigner in a western set up; hence her story is free from all such elements. Bhushan’s mother however is the only woman who faces serious attacks to her existence.
Bhushan’s mother was only five years old when she was married and at the age of thirteen, she was brought to the palace as a bride with her twin sister. Unfortunately her sisters died and she only survived. After her marriage, she had to struggle against the patriarchal forces her survival particularly against her own husband. The Raja is extremely callous inhuman husband and opponent to the desires of Ranee. He marries one after another woman to make angry in his first wife, she refuses to accept his continued enjoyment with another marriage. When Raja marries for the third time, he ceases to exist for her first wife. She changed herself to live for her only son. Even the female attendants are a part of that world, but her husband finds no place for her. In fact, there is no conjugal relationship between the husband and wife.

Ranee is portrayed as a mother only and not as a wife. She was not permitted to play the role of a wife. It is not only the Ranee who is suffering from the patriarchal society and also her daughters had also been murdered by male dominated society. The rumor was spread that the babies had been still born but she knows, as Bhushan also does, that the babies were brutally murdered because they had been girls. Lucille Craft was murdered by her husband, but only once she died. But here, the Ranee is being killed, as her baby girls are
murdered. The Ranee is stronger than Lucille and she survives every
day, as Jasbir Jain said, the middle aged Ranee represented a strong
force of change.

Thus, in the story of Bhushan’s mother Sahgal explores the life
of a woman, who is oppressed at multiple levels- purdah, polygamy,
brutal killing of female foetus and absolute lack of response on the
part of the husband. Sahgal seems to be in full sympathy for this
woman, as she has not been for any one before.

And mother’s apartment was almost as alien as the rest
of the house. She didn’t lose her temper any more. Her
reviving wrath deserted her when she gave up the
Supernatural powers brigade (**Mistaken Identity 60**).