Preface

The theme of resistance in Indian writing in English is a significant phenomenon. Many important and interesting novels dealing with dissent or resistance against social, economic and political problems and evils, with women’s resistance against the male dominated society have mostly appeared in the post-independence Indian English novels. The credit of selecting the topic of the present research work on the theme of resistance in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal goes to my teacher, Dr. Santosh Gupta. Retd. Prof, Raj University, Jaipur. It is interesting to see that after India’s independence, Indian writers in English, like Nayantara Sahgal came out of their romantic realms of imagination and turned their focus on the depiction of the ambitions, aspirations, fears and frustrations, miseries and misfortunes of the people of this country with its purpose.

The analytical and critical study of resistance in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal is made with a view to explore the Indian sensibility and highlight the different shades and shapes of resistance through a real portrayal of Indian life, manners and social ethos. For this purpose, the major novels of Nayantara Sahgal, which highlight different covers and colours of resistance—social, economic, political or feminine have been taken up for detailed discussion. Besides her novels, the journals, reviews and articles relevant to her study have also been consulted.

Nayantara Sahgal’s novels form the norms of the common pattern of resistance, be it social or political, individual or collective, violent or non-violent, feminine or existential. The result of resistance is the interplay between social and economic, the rural and urban, the old and the new, yesterday and today, a male and female attitudes and approaches. They create a powerful flow of creative tension. This tension for the part of the writer, results in the form of the novels of resistance.

The focus of the present academic pursuit is to explore the theme of resistance and closely examine the various modes, codes and techniques by which it has been depicted by the novelist in her novels.

The frustrations and discontentment of the Indian psyche of women found full flow expression in the novels of Nayanatara Sahgal. The social situations and political
surroundings stimulated the theory of resistance more powerfully and poignantly against the social and political order in particular and overall human conditions in general. The theory of resistance remains absolute and faultless but the art of resistance usually to some extent, an extension of the novelist herself as well. In the world of today, the concept of resistance is no longer like that of a slave against his master or in the form of frenzy that should violence during the struggle for independence. Resistance today has taken a new shape and wider dimension so as to include even the feminist and existential or metaphysical resistance.

The present academic venture comprises six chapters-

In Chapter one, the focus is on the various political event and conflicts during India Independence Movement. The period of the National Emergency is portrayed as depicted by Nayantara Sahgal in her novel *Rich Like Us*. Sahgal has focused on some historical events like the Khilafat Movement, Satyagraha Movement, Non-Cooperation movement, Civil disobedience movement in her autobiography *Prison and Chocolate Cake*. The core idea behind the National Movements in India is dealt with in detail.

In chapter two, various struggles of colonial India are focused as highlighted by Sahgal in her novels like *Mistaken Identity, Rich Like Us*. How common people were resisting during the British rule. What made the common people to participate in these movements? How these common people were trying to resist during the colonial struggle. How these people were sacrificing their lives for the freedom struggle in India? The hegemony which has been created through the political issue has been pointed out.

In chapter three, the various political crises, situations, internal conflicts and social problems after Independence are focused as depicted by Sahgal in some of her novels. The fact that people got independence yet they were surrounded with various conflicts and problems is highlighted by Sahgal in some of her novels like *Storm in Chandigarh, Rich Like Us, Plans for Departure and Lesser Breeds*.

In chapter four, Gender roles are amply highlighted. The difference and discrimination in the upbringing and socialization of women in male dominated society is also focused. Sahgal has depicted the patriarchal hegemony and marriage
conflicts in her novels like *A Situation in New Delhi, Storm in Chandigarh, This Time of Morning and The Day in Shadow*. Women’s search for dignity, self-respect, independence, fulfillment and love are adequately dealt with. These women make a bid to liberate themselves from male oppression and thus cherish the ideals of self-reliance and self-sufficiency and self-respect.

In chapter five, the perspective, characterization, myth and form of the novels are described by Sahgal. The social background of the characters as depicted by Sahgal in her novels is also dealt with. Various forms of hegemony are taken into account. How hegemony is constructed? How patriarchy is used as a part of hegemony? An effort has been made to explore the religion and religious attitude which Sahgal feels through political and emotional stances and personal relationships.

In the last chapter, conclusion has been drawn keeping in view the study made in the previous chapters.

Various classes and categories of resistance as social, individual, political, economic and feminine have been made only for the sake of convenience and also for a deeper understanding of the works of Nayantara Sahgal. Sometimes it is observed that one mode or attitude of resistance overlaps or mingles with the other mode. Hence, it was but inevitable that several salient features and peculiar shades and colours of one kind of resistance might be presenting another shade of resistance. For Example, man and woman are two individuals but they also form the basic components of the society and at the same time they are the citizens of the country. So a man if he resists or resents against any evil with a view to improving his own lot, he is indirectly and importantly improving the society at large. Similarly, a woman rises up to the occasion and resists hard for setting up a new mode of morality and code of conduct for herself, that code or mode of morality must have its objective co-relative in the society as a whole. Thus, all these shapes and shades, covers and colours of resistance form a major part of awakening as noticed in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal.