

CONJUGAL CONNUBIAL STRUGGLES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA  
IN *STORM IN CHANDIGARH*

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present Nayantara Sahgal's perspective on marital disharmony and women's psychological transformations in modern Indian society. This paper is to examine how female characters change psychologically throughout their lifetimes while striving for a meaningful existence as an individual and also in marital relationship. In addition, this paper also analyses the suffering and dilemma of women in marriage. With particular reference to Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh*, this paper analyzes the disharmonious relationship in marriage and also the psychological trauma that women undergo. Moreover, it emphasizes how marriage is glorified in Indian society, which puts more emphasis on women's sacrifice, support, and loyalty.

**Keywords:** Conjugal Connubial Conflict, Marital Disharmony, Relationship, Stress, Inequality, Psychological Trauma

### Introduction

In comparison to other types of relationships, the husband-wife relationship takes center stage. It is the foundation of all familial ties. The two major pillars of the institution of marriage are the husband and wife. They must have the same amount of love, respect, and support for each other. This relationship must be treasured and nurtured for meaningful coexistence to occur, and peace and harmony must be maintained between them. Rather than slavery and enslavement, it is a relationship of love, care, concern and trust.

Women in Indian society have undertaken an incredible transformation due to education and the following work opportunities, which transferred women from the background to the central stage. Today, Indian women feel the need to maintain their individuality, which can, ironically, lead to marital disharmony. An Indian woman's function as a wife has historically been more important. Without a doubt, a wife serves as the foundation of the family. Religion is important in Indian civilization, and in various religions and religious scriptures, the position of the woman as a wife is valued more highly and her contribution is seen to be more important from the beginning of the human race. The irony is that all of the religious laws, scriptures, and writings made the woman inferior and obedient. Even the scriptures were authored by men, therefore it goes without saying that they could have all of these patriarchal ideas. This is more significant.

In her own life, Nayantara Sahgal has felt the agony of a failed marriage that led to divorce. Based on her experience, she represents her female characters who are caught in a life-altering scenario and who are experiencing marital conflict and domestic stress. The novels of Nayantara Sahgal portray many types of married women. In the fictional world of Nayantara Sahgal, marriage is frequently depicted as a source of arguments, annoyance, struggle, and a prolonged period of stress during which women endure severe mental torment. The female characters in Nayantara Sahgal's works are liberated women who struggle against the inequality and injustice embedded in India's allegedly traditional marital system.

### Marital disharmony

Nayantara analyses the harsh realities of society in her book *Storm in Chandigarh*, showing that women can only be happy if they voluntarily embrace the traditional roles of wife and mother set by male patriarchal society. This is the unavoidable fate of a woman. But it's also true

that a woman has a separate existence from her husband, her father, and her child in the outside world. Both partners perform equal roles in the institution of marriage, there is no better or lesser person, both require the same amount of love, respect, and care. However, the truth is quite different, society constantly expects more devotion, love, and sacrifice from women.

In this novel, the story portrays marital struggles that are endured. It depicts the lives of Inder, a textile mill owner in Chandigarh, and Saroj, his wife. Despite being married for four years and having two children, they do not communicate passionately. The oppressive marital experience that exists between both parties is brought to light by Nayantara Sahgal. The author highlights specific marital complications that result in detachment. The characters in this book don't treat their relationships with sincerity, sensitivity, emotional attachment, or loyalty.

In *Storm in Chandigarh*, Inder constantly criticizes his wife's qualities and turns violent towards her. Saroj is constantly scolded, abused, and tortured by Inder because of her premarital sexual indulgence. Love and understanding are all she longs for, but whenever it has to be begged for, she withdraws into silence. In college, Saroj engaged in sexual activity with one of her friends to satisfy her curiosity. However, after learning about it, he treats her harshly and considers her a sinner. He punished her often and tortured her mentally and physically.

Inder is punishing his wife for her relationship with another man before marriage, but he has no defense for his extramarital relationship with another man's wife. Moreover, in Indian society, girls and women are forbidden to engage in sexual activity with any man, but men aren't considered forbidden to engage in such activity with other girls, before or after marriage. It is evident that there are different norms for men and women in India. As a result, it emphasizes how our culture applies disparate norms for man and women.

Saroj is content in her roles as a loving mother and wife and has no interest in meeting anyone or seeking anything else. However, Inder and Saroj are at a point in their relationship where everyday communication is challenging. As a way of controlling, Inder sets certain rules in Saroj's behavior. Saroj is quite aware of her identity, her roles and responsibilities. She struggles to find love and harmony in her marriage and fails to give the same to her spouse. She receives all of Inder's blame. Even his children are treated like non-living things. She rebels at this point and begins to realize that her marriage has failed. Saroj's departure is a move toward personal freedom as well as a rejection of the role that Inder had intended to impose on her.

### **Psychological Trauma**

In *Storm in Chandigarh*, Nayantara Sahgal explores the agony caused by conjugal connubial conflict. Most importantly, the author draws attention to the problematic aspects of marriage that lead to divorce. She describes how the approach of an oppression destroys marital harmony. A marriage might fail when there is doubt and frustration as it really needs the love and faith of both partners. Women who do not experience equality, respect and love in marriage feel entangled, betrayed, and tormented. According to Nayantara Sahgal, a strong woman is more than just a socially or economically independent individual she also has a constructive attitude. According to her, a woman's striving for individuality requires more than just challenging long-standing expectations, it also demands helping her identify her own personality and refusing to accept being placed in stereotypically passive positions like a weaker sex or a mother-figure incapable of having her own identity.

Nayantara Sahgal describes the situation of women in marriage, who often fail to achieve harmonious relationships with their partners. Additionally, it shows the differences in couples' tendencies that result in extramarital affairs. Inder has not forgotten Saroj's pre-marital relationship, which caused their marriage to fail, and has not let her forget it either. A desire for communication and sharing naturally leads Saroj towards Vishal, who she finds more understanding and considerate of her needs. Nayantara Sahgal aims to convey to the reader that extramarital affairs are not the answer to marital harmony. Instead, they add pain, frustration, and loneliness to lives. Throughout

the novel, the novelist shows concern for the plight of a woman who is caught between an aggressive lover and a passive husband. Nayantara Sahgal describes the condition of women in marriage, who sometimes inevitably fail of their partners expectations for positive relations which creates psychological trauma in her.

### **Conclusion**

The women protagonists in Nayantara Sahgal's works strive to overcome their hardships and are strong and self-reliant. Her female characters aren't scared to speak up, and they're constantly looking for their own identities. After analysing the marital relations in *Storm in Chandigarh*, we can assume that a lack of love, trust, and understanding is the primary cause of marital issues. Despite sharing a home, Saroj and Inder don't seem to care much for one another. Marriages that rely mainly on the love and faith of both parties might fall apart when there is doubt and frustration. In *Storm in Chandigarh*, Nayantara Sahgal describes how the attitude of a dictatorship ruins marital harmony. Inder views women as parasites that can only survive with a male figure's help. Here, the author portrays the tragic scenario of Saroj, who strives to show her spouse her love and affection but is unable to do so. Despite sharing a roof, Saroj and Inder don't seem to care much about one another. They yearn for love outside of their marriage but were unable to develop it within their marriage. Sahgal is in favour of a relationship based on honest communication, commitment, and equality. While marital disagreement usually arises from a lack of understanding and trust, there are times when it is social customs that create conflict and annoyance. Ironically, marriage has the potential to destroy lives as well as bring about peace and happiness.

### **References**

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