

Thirst for Independence in Nayantara Sahgal's *Prison and Chocolate Cake*

N.GUNASEKARAN

*Research Guide, Head, PG & Research Department of English
Sri Vidya Mandir Arts & Science College, Katteri, Uthangarai, Krishnagiri*

R.SANTHI

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, PG & Research Department of English
Sri Vidya Mandir Arts & Science College, Katteri, Uthangarai, Krishnagiri*

Abstract

Independence has given the freedom to smell the air of liberty. Before 1947, the people of India had occupied by the British rulers and suffered a lot. In getting freedom for the nation, many have sacrificed their life. They have sent to prison and some of them died in the prison. Many freedom fighters have actively participated in the freedom struggle. Among them, some notable figures are Mahatma Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and his family have sacrificed their life. Gandhiji has preached Non-violence to the people getting independence. He has actively participated in the movements like Salt Satyagraha, Quit India Movement etc. Nehru has not only participated in freedom struggle but also who indulged his family for the nation. He has supported that to wear Khadi dress which is made by hand. He appreciated the handcraft things of India and who hated the imported things of foreign people.

The thirst for independence has spread over the country. People have expressed their opposition by throwing the things made by the British People. Indians had struggled much. The well to do family like Nehru and all his family members had been arrested one by one except children. The nieces of Nehru had been sent to America through ship for the safety of them. After getting freedom, Vijayalakshmi Pandit has become the first Cabinet Minister. This present paper tries to analyze the suffering for getting freedom through the novel *Prison and Chocolate Cake*.

Keywords: Thirst for independence, the feel of freedom, prison's importance, political family of Nehru, sufferings of People.

Introduction

All the Colonial countries have occupied by the British Government. India is among that and that people of India have suffered a lot to get the freedom. And Nayantara Sahgal is a writer of that time of independence. She has seen every suffering and political issues from her early age. These things have evoked her to express certain real feelings through her novels. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar says about Sahgal in his book *Indian Writing in English* as,

Mrs.Sahgal's feeling for politics and her command over English are rather more impressive rather than her art as a novelist. There is too much contriving, and there are satirical patches that stand out as though they have been lifted from Mrs. Sahgal's journalism.(474)

This novel *Prison and Chocolate Cake* is an autobiography of Sahgal. She has revealed her life and her surroundings, political happenings through her novels. This novel clearly picturizes the people's opposition to the British Government.Nayantara Sahgal says,

We were born and grew up at a time when India had come under the leadership of Gandhi and was maturing the nationhood under his guidance. My sisters and I were among the youngest of India's children to be touched by the spark with which Gandhi illumined our country. (18)

Sahgal has admired of Gandhiji's and his principle of non-violence. India's fight for freedom, courage and idealism has been represented by Jawaharlal Nehru. He had guided the people from the influence of Gandhiji. People all over the country have opposed the things made by the British companies. Many people have been arrested. They didn't even left Gandhi. The author comments on Gandhiji's power upon People,

When Gandhiji inaugurated his first jail-going campaign, calling upon Indians openly to defy certain repressive measures launched in India after the war-and by so doing deliberately to court arrest-Mamu threw in his lot with him, eventually persuading his father to do the same. Mamu's example has fired the examination... (19)

Prison remains as part of life for the freedom fighters of India. Their imprisonment also is proud to them. Nayantra Sahgal feels that they are the children of India at the time of incarnation of darkness into light. This light of freedom is not an easy task. This become possible only after the death of many freedom fighters. "Going to jail was a procedure carried out with the utmost simplicity, dignity and courtesy".(20). B.P.Sinha rightly comments about Gandhi in his book *Social and Political Concern in the Novels of Nayantra Sahgal* as,

The Indian freedom struggle was already more than a generation old, but with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi it was so thoroughly democratized that freedom consciousness percolated for the first time to the very grassroots of Indian society and revitalized it. It is possible to see a connection between this development and the rise of the Indian novel in English, for fiction, of all literary forms, is more vitally concerned with social conditions and values.(27)

For the sake of independence, arrest was to be accepted as a boon. The jail goers were not only silent sufferers but also their pilgrimage of getting freedom. Tara and her family have spent their time for the welfare of the people. The whole family have gone to prison by British Government. They have sacrificed their wealthy life. Mahatma Gandhiji has participated in the freedom struggle and who made others to include in it. He has the formal relationship with Nehru family and children. Women have participated in the freedom struggle. Clara A.B.Joseph clearly says about the wordings of Madhu Kishwar through his work *The Agent in the Margin:Nayantra Sahgal's Gandhian Fiction* as,

Indian feminist activist and scholar Madhu Kishwar identifies Gandhi as one of the persons to effect a major transformation in many women in India: "From passive objects women became active subjects or agents of reform." Kishwar points out that Gandhi deliberately drew links between private life and public life as a means to introduce women into the freedom struggle.(25)

From Gandhiji, even children of Nehru family also interested to involve in the freedom struggle. They like to follow Gandhi for non-violence in many aspects of his life. Even after getting freedom in India which remained as it was the same. People's life had not changed. They had suffered from the beginning. Even children have felt the

thrust of freedom. Mostly people were arrested including Nehru and his family. It is known from the wordings of Lekha. Her mother asks Lekha that

"Why are you holding that large flag, darling? You'll get tired," said Mummie, who had come to see her off. Lekha blinked back big tears and smiled jauntily. "Oh no, Mummie. You see, it's frighten the police away with." (23)

The familiar freedom fighters have been arrested in nights. Nehru, Gandhi had been arrested in night. And few days later Vijayalakshmi had been arrested in night at 2 am in one hot August. Nearly seven truckloads of policemen had arrived to arrest her. In 1940, May had to be considered as important time for India because the congress has decided not to co-operate with Britain in the war. People had opposed the British Government in another way that was opposition of using foreign made products. They had fought and used only khadi saris and caps etc. Each and every little dress is made up of khadi. Because of this, the British Government had burnt the shops of Indians especially the khadi shops, handcrafts etc.

Conclusion

The thirst of independence has come to an end in the year of 1947. People of India have felt satisfied with their breath. But that has not lengthened for some time. There arises the big issue Hindu Muslim separation through separation. Because India is divided that one is India another one is Pakistan which is for Muslims. This problem has not come to an end till now. Now itself forty Indian Army Soldiers were died because of Pakistani terrorists.

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