

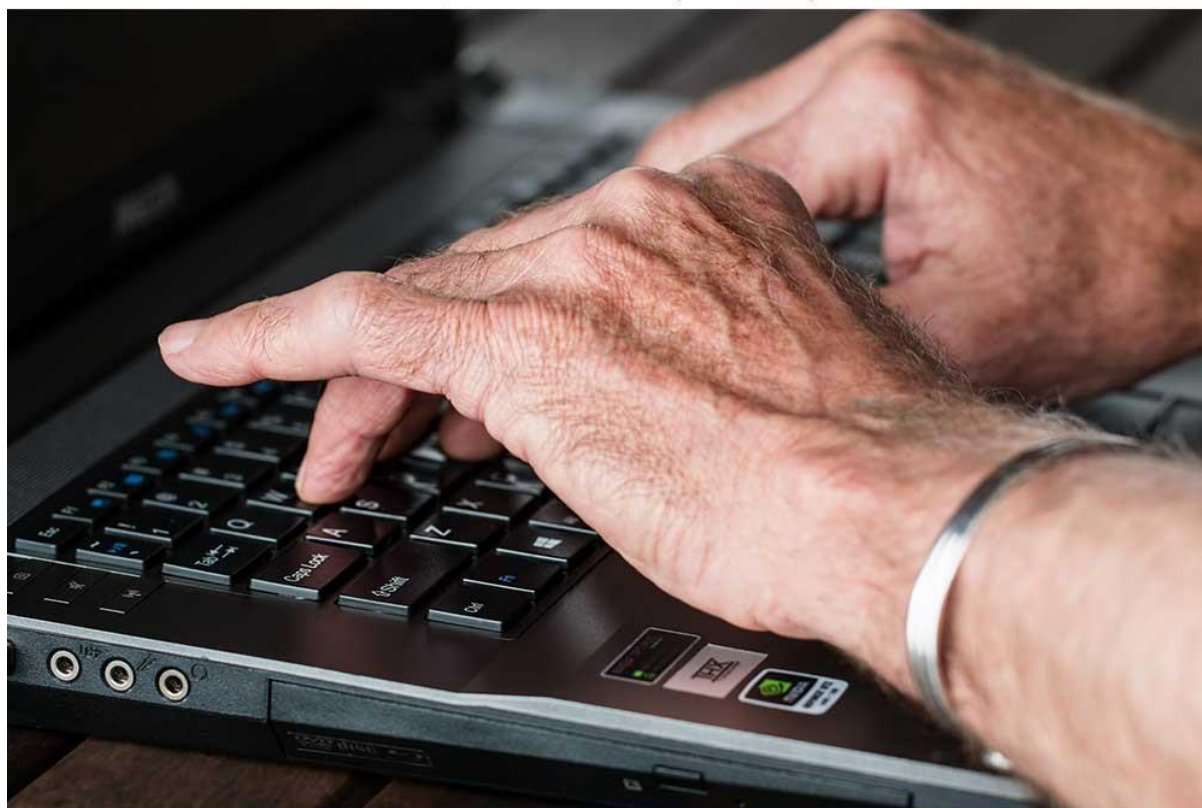
ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER

ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed) Journal



Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

Dr. Moyuri Chetiya

Assistant Professor

Department of English

C.K.B. College, Teok

Assam, India

Bureaucrats And Politicians in Nayantara Sahgal's Fiction: Critiquing The Architects Of A
Modern And Developing Nation

Abstract

The paper is a study on the way of life, social and private behaviour and relations with the common masses of bureaucrats and politicians in independent India through two postcolonial Indian novels in English - *This Time of Morning* (1965) and *Rich Like Us* (1985), by Nayantara Sahgal.

Key Words: Bureaucrats, Politicians, Entrepreneurs, Ministers, The Emergency

Objective:

The paper aims to present a critical view of private and public behaviour of bureaucrats and politicians in independent India as depicted in Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* and *Rich Like Us*.

The analysis of the first novel is directed to examine the activities of bureaucrats and politicians in the formative period of a Democracy in India during the initial years of independence while the analysis of the second novel focuses on a dark period of Indian political history, the period of Emergency, during the 1970s, and examines critically how some rich

people including entrepreneurs take advantage of the Emergency to manoeuvre bureaucrats and politicians to get their own interests fulfilled.

Introduction:

Bureaucrats and politicians play a significant and dominant role in post-independence India in administrative and political systems which are vital to nation building and strengthening of democracy. The powers of the Government are still divided into three main parts or wings – legislature, executive and judiciary. The first two of these three wings are dominated and controlled by politicians and bureaucrats.

A bureaucratic system was introduced by the British to administer India after the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. These bureaucrats had to clear an examination called the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination held in England, and they were called ICS officers. In 1947 there were 322 Indians and 688 British ICS officers, but most of the British officers left at the time of Partition and Independence (Mansing, Surjit 288-290). During 1857 to 1947 these ICS officers acted as the guardians of the British Raj in India, and the Indian ICS officers continued to serve in independent India. Post-independence India retains the British bureaucratic system without much significant change. After independence the Indian bureaucrats are recruited through a similar selection procedure, clearing an examination called the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) examination. Nowadays there are state versions of such examinations to select administrative officers in the states although officers from IAS cadre are also appointed in relatively higher administrative posts in the states.

The top ranking bureaucrats, both at the centre and at the state levels, and the politicians, including the ministers, who represent the Parliament and the State Assemblies, form a very important, influential and powerful part of the administrative system. They are responsible for framing policies and implementing them for the progress and development of the country. It is

therefore natural that the behaviour and actions of this section of the population are always critically watched by the common masses.

The so-called entrepreneurs, realizing the importance and power of these two classes of people, always try to keep proximity with these people. The behaviour, life style and activities of this section of the population are indeed an interesting subject for study, and that is exactly being aimed at in this paper through the two novels mentioned above.

Sahgal comes from a well known high profile upper class family actively involved in contemporary Indian politics and nation-building – she comes from the family of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. She is a niece of Nehru, daughter of Nehru's sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, and therefore a cousin of Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi, who also was the Prime Minister of India for a pretty long time including a period of political turmoil bringing a state of Emergency in the 1970s.

Sahgal is a prolific writer of fiction as well as non-fiction in English, her creative activities spreading over a period of more than thirty years. She authors as many as nine novels during this period.

This Time of Morning:

The setting of *This Time of Morning* includes roughly a period covering the last years during the British rule and the early years in post-independence India. The challenges faced by newly independent India get prominence in the novel which assembles a large number of characters including bureaucrats and politicians, to unfold the story to depict the administrative, social and political scenario of India during the first phase of independence.

This Time of Morning shows how the power which works to shape and mould the future, full of hope, of a new republic at the initial stage is controlled by two classes of people – the class of politicians and the class of bureaucrats. Politicians, in particular the Ministers, and the

high ranking bureaucrats architect and design the structure of the entire policy-making and administrative setup. These two classes of people, the so-called guardians of the Democracy, are in focus in the novel which depicts their hypocrisy, mutual envy and jealousy, selfish interests, unrealistic ideologies, and involvement in promotion of corruption in collusion with other people whom they allow to mix up with them for their own benefit.

The story of the novel unfolds the new kind of upper class life that has been brought to being in India after the departure of the British through the eyes of a young bureaucrat, Rakesh, a Foreign Service officer who returns to Delhi after completing six years of his official assignments in foreign countries in the early years of independent India.

In the very beginning of the novel the author presents the aura of newly independent India by indicating how the bureaucrats acquire a new life style, enjoy special government privileges. On his arrival at the Palam Airport in Delhi Rakesh finds a chauffeur driven car waiting to take him to the flat arranged for him as temporary residence by his friend and colleague, Saleem, a bureaucrat in the Ministry of External Affairs of independent India. Rakesh and Saleem are in the same group of officers joining the Indian Foreign Service.

Sahgal describes how these young officers and their families are moulded during their first years of Foreign Service experiences:

Most of 'their group', those who had joined the Foreign Service five years after independence, were young men of provincial backgrounds, orthodox families and arranged marriages who had reacted in varying degree to their collision with other cultures. But they had all acquired polish and poise. ... Their wives spoke a smattering of several languages ... Even the most sheltered among them had obtained driving licenses, taken tennis lessons, learned to make a cocktail and to entertain with ease. ... The diplomatic corps was a nationality of its own. (*This Time of Morning* 5)

Thus, these young diplomats are gradually transformed to acquire a separate distinct 'nationality', and one wonders how much Indianness is left in them as their diplomatic career progresses. A simple arithmetic - five years plus Rakesh's six years of foreign assignments – places the events depicted in this novel in the late 1950s in independent India.

Rakesh comes to meet Sir Arjun Mitra, a senior bureaucrat (Secretary General, SG) in the Ministry of External Affairs, beginning his career during the British rule, now continuing his service under the government of independent India and carrying a part of British legacy to the administrative system of independent India.

Although it is late in the afternoon, Arjun Mitra is still in his office, as he likes to go home as late as possible, because he prefers to avoid his wife as long as possible during the day. Arjun Mitra is conscious of his class status and social prestige, and so, although virtually separated from his wife, he lives with her in the same house but in separate rooms to camouflage possible social reaction. This is a facet of upper class hypocrisy.

Rakesh comes to meet Arjun Mitra in his office with a dual purpose – giving a courtesy call after his arrival in India on completion of a foreign assignment, and requesting his posting in Delhi:

Sir Arjun Mitra looked up from a broad, polished, impeccably neat desk, separated by several yards of grey carpet from a semicircle of deep leather chairs grouped around a low coffee table. A carved Kashmiri cigar box of walnut wood stood on the table beside a bowl of white roses. (7- 8)

The very appearance of the office room reflects a lot of aesthetic taste and sophistication of the upper class bureaucrats, inherited from the British. But when Rakesh requests his posting in Delhi, "Sir Arjun coughed in the manner of some interrupting an unnecessary surmise. His business was administration, not politics. Ministers would come and go. Programmes would be made, remade, and unmade, but the department would go on." (9-10). This reflects a relationship between a bureaucrat and a politician.

M. Weber opines that politicians and bureaucrats are highly distinct as professional groups. According to Weber, the struggle for power is of vital importance for politicians, whereas bureaucrats tend to work with the politicians in an obedient and disciplined manner. Politicians value public relations with their voice as the working tool whereas bureaucrats function in institutions and they rely on the written word. Finally, the career of a politician is uncertain, temporary and flexible, whereas that of a bureaucrat is often stable. (*The Max Weber Dictionary 18-21*)

Despite professional differences politicians and bureaucrats often struggle for the control over the public policy. The politicians are driven by the ambition to win the upcoming elections, while the bureaucrats are interested in obtaining their working position and the stability of their career. Bureaucrats try to engage themselves in the policy-formation process, whereas politicians aim to have politically loyal or at least neutral bureaucracy. This power struggle is dominated by one side or the other because dominance is fluid and flexible, dependant on various factors. (*Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society 73-127*)

Weber's comments very much apply to bureaucrats like Arjun Mitra. Arjun Mitra is one of the fittest Indians of his time to serve as a bureaucrat during the last phase of the British rule and then in the early years of independent India because of his exposure to westernization before he joins his service:

Arjun Mitra was sent to England when he was fourteen and he came home after appearing for his I.C.S. examination. For a long time after his return he felt very uncomfortable in the country of his birth. ... He spoke his own language haltingly. The streets he knew best were the streets of London, the holidays he had enjoyed most were those he had spent motoring with friends on the Continent. He was familiar with London's pubs and restaurants, newspapers, bookshops and theatres. Politics, for him,

emanated from Whitehall. The reliable approach to the world and its affairs was that of England's rulers. (*This Time of Morning* 29- 30)

Arjun Mitra's westernization equips him with an ideology, an approach, of his own to see and assess the world and his life while serving as a bureaucrat. Arjun is a sample of those Indian bureaucrats who served in British India as well as independent India.

Arjun Mitra never breaks social protocol of attending parties and functions *with his wife*, following *British custom*, because of his concern for his social image even though his wife is virtually separated from him. He and his wife Uma come together to the party at the residence of Kailash Vrind, a well known Gandhian leader and politician and now Head of a United Nations Mission, and leave the party together as a *normal couple*, but "silence settled between them in the car. At home she went to her room and he to his." (28)

Upper class hypocrisy has no bounds indeed. But, despite "the disquieting stories that circulated about her" (32), and her refusal to deny these stories, Arjun feels a compulsion, for fear of social abhorrence because of the prevailing social norms of those days, to resort to a kind of hypocrisy by condemning "himself to an isolation where she could never reach or touch him again." (34) Arjun's decision, though hypocritical, seems to be a useful *diplomatic* and workable decision of his life. Arjun is not the only person in his class having domestic conflict and managing it to save their image in the society.

However, sometimes the bureaucrats have to be hypocrites because of the compulsion of the nature of the duties they are assigned to perform by those whom they serve. This happened for the Indian bureaucrats who served under the British rule. But very often these bureaucrats ignored or failed to appreciate, knowingly or unknowingly, the sentiments of the Indian people while executing orders of the colonial rulers, for which they became unpopular among their fellow countrymen. Arjun Mitra was the man who arrested Kailas Vrind during the pre-independence days for writing against the British in news papers. On the day of the trial, Kailas'

wife Mira, her daughter Rashmi and Rakesh, who were then little children, were present in the court:

The trial was over in half an hour and the judge's verdict was two years' rigorous imprisonment. Mira and the children watched Kailas walk away between two policemen beyond the iron gates where they could not follow. ... The man who came up behind her was Arjun Mitra. He said politely, "I see you have no conveyance. Please allow me to drive you home. I have my car here."

This man, this Indian, was the District Magistrate who had ordered Kailas' arrest, who had sent policemen for him like thieves in the night. ... She looked at Arjun Mitra, hardness surrounding her like a stone wall, and refused his offer. (56- 57)

It seems that the bureaucrats are made to be hypocrites by their profession, and a similar remark applies to politicians as well, otherwise how can the Mitras come to attend a party in the residence of Kailas, the politician. This hypocrisy is a part of the relationship between the bureaucrats and the politicians.

But hypocrisy seems to exist at the top of the political hierarchy. The Prime Minister's address to the newly recruited Foreign Service officers, including Rakesh, before they proceed to take up foreign assignments, over a tea party, curtailed to serving "only tea" because of the "Miss-a-Meal-Campaign"(68) due to "grain scarcity"(68), reflects the Prime Minister's personal ideology:

What does independence mean? ... Basically it means foreign relations, because to the extent that another country influences your foreign policy or tells you what to do, you are not independent. At least this is how we look at it.

I have no doubt at all that we have to learn a great deal from Europe and America and I think we should keep our eyes and ears open. We should be flexible in mind and

receptive, but we should not allow ourselves to be swept off our feet by any wind from anywhere. (69)

Equating independence to foreign relations for a country newly emerging from foreign rule, with grain scarcity and a host of other problems sounds awkward and hypocritical. And the other part of the speech seems to be a bit of advice, meant only for the upper class people including the bureaucrats, which has no relevance for the vast majority of the population who struggle for survival and sustenance.

Politicians in independent India constitute a class, a very important class indeed, by themselves in the greater Indian society, because of the power they possess in governing the country. Mutual rivalry and jealousy are commonplace among them in their effort for political rise and prominence to acquire more power. Sahgal depicts how this trend becomes perennial in the class of Indian politicians bringing manifold corruption in different spheres, and for this she introduces a number of characters, prominent among them being Kalyan Sinha and Hari Mohan very different from Kailas Vrind in experience and ideology. Whatever might be their political training before independence, they are now high-profile figures in the political arena of newly independent India. Kailas and Kalyan have different political backgrounds with different political ideologies, now finding themselves on the same platform. While Kailas has his training in his own country under the influence of Gandhian ideology, Kalyan has training on his own living in America, and the natures of their training are quite different:

Kailas belonged to the generation that had succumbed to the magic of Gandhi. The fire, the dedication and single-mindedness of the man in the loincloth had attracted him, made him a member of the Congress, sent him to jail along with thousands of his countrymen, and trained and tempered something within him that might otherwise had developed haphazard and purposeless. What he has lost of his law practice he has gained in his

manhood. A singularly fortunate generation, Kailas felt, for whom ideals and actions had been happily wedded, and the goal achieved. (14)

Kailas belongs to that generation of politicians who adhere to their ideologies to achieve the goals.

On the other hand, before independence, Kalyan had been doing something, not entirely irrelevant to India's freedom struggle though, on his own by opening the India Centre, with finances from different sources in Boston, America since 1935 "with the object of stirring public opinion in favour of India's freedom." (77)

These two men, very different ideologically and temperamentally are now put together on the same platform, the United Nations Mission – Kailas as the leader and Kalyan as a member. Kailas grows up as a politician under Gandhian influence whereas Kalyan does not believe in Gandhian ideology. Just before coming back to India, in reply to a question put forward by one of his associates in the India Centre he says that there is no chance for Gandhian activity in independent India:

Not for me. I would have disagreed with him on fundamentals. He believed in the power of suffering. He maintained it could bring about a catharsis of a spirit in oneself and others. This is a lie and one that all the religions perpetuate. Suffering is evil. It must not be endured or sanctified. It must be torn up by roots, brutally if need be. (96)

By this Sahgal indicates erosion of pre-independence Gandhian ideology in the politics of post-independence India, even in the early years of independence.

Like Kalyan Sinha, who has no involvement in and experience of the freedom struggle guided by Gandhi, Hari Mohan is another new generation politician, an owner of a confectionery in his pre-political days, now the Industries Minister of the State of Uttar Pradesh, running parallelly his own expanding business, maintaining closeness with the politicians at the centre. Sahgal describes how money power comes to play a big role in Indian politics:

He (Hari) had the money and the public knew it. ... Money had been his stepping stone into the Congress Party. He knew his worth to the Party and it was considerable. Kalyan, like others he had known, would need him – why else had Kalyan been persuaded to give the contract for the Peace Institute building to his son, Ram? – and Hari needed someone in Delhi. (117)

Hari is a shrewd politician in the modern sense of the term, and Kalyan has been persuaded and lured to be one of his partners with his money power. Hari takes ‘permission’ from Kalyan to get his drawing room furnished by his Delhi firm, and offers his chauffeur driven ‘shining green Buick with its black and green upholstery’ to Kalyan for his temporary use: “By the way ... please make use of this car. It remains in Delhi and the chauffeur is idle most of the time. I should like to put it at your disposal.”(119)

This is how corruption begins to bubble, and then gradually transforms to a whirlpool.

Collusion between leaders, like Kalyan and Hari, becomes a norm in the emerging political system. Such collusions lead to formation of so-called coterie among the politicians working for fulfilment of their individual political aspirations, and bringing moral corruption, and pollution to the political system. Also these new generation politicians begin to consider the old guards despicable. Kalyan thinks of Prakash Shukla, the oldest member of Parliament, as one of the “old fossils preserved in Parliament” (114), and asks Hari how he gets a ticket to contest the elections when Hari replies:

Because he knows every man, woman and child in that area, every hut, every grain of wheat and every buffalo. And they all know him. And he is so ancient he has known their grandparents, too, long before the elections were heard of. No candidate could possibly win against him. We have no choice. Only, ... he is a meddlesome old fool, always interfering where he shouldn't. He makes a lot of trouble for the State Congress. (114)

It indicates a change of values, from old to new, when all the praises of Prakash by Hari end in describing him as ‘a meddlesome old fool.’ Kalyan and Hari converge in their opinions regarding the veteran Gandhian leader – for Kalyan he is an ‘old fossil’ and for Hari an ‘old fool’, and it seems that their alliance is complete to overthrow the old guards.

On the other hand the Foreign Service bureaucrats seem to attach more importance to comfort and luxury than to dedication to a cause. They prefer postings in glamorous cities like Paris, Bonn, London, but not in any places in Africa or Asia. Dhiraj Singh, a senior I.C.S. officer, posted for the last two years in Delhi as “Additional Secretary in External Affairs, ... one of the plums of the Service”(134), loses peace of mind over his possible next posting which has been due for some time:

Peace of mind had deserted him (Dhiraj) during his third whiskey at last night’s party when he had heard it was almost certain he would be sent as ambassador to Burma. (133)

When Dhiraj breaks the news at the breakfast table consternation and distress grip his wife Ena and the children Vishnu and Binny:

Vishnu laid down his paper, Binny wailed and Ena sat speechless and pale. She had not even considered an Asian assignment. She had not dreamt they could do this to her husband. (137)

This is how Dhiraj’s wife and children react when their dreams and aspirations and expectations collapse.

Dhiraj was once alleged of corruption when he was in Uttar Pradesh as Chief Secretary. He cannot forget how Hari Mohan came to help him and pull him out of trouble:

... ... it was over a drink and Hari’s good offices that Dhiraj had been cleared of the suspicion of a misuse of his official position. Corruption was, in any case, too strong a word for the land transactions Dhiraj had made at the series of auctions in Saharanpur at the time of Partition when refugees had left western Uttar Pradesh for Pakistan. He had

bought the land cheaply and sold it at a profit, and if that was corruption, what of the presents that graced official and ministerial homes in Delhi instead of finding their way to the Treasury?.... Corruption was a word that excited people as much as steady drumbeat and often with equal illogic. If one kept one's head the excitement blew over and Dhiraj had always kept his head. (134,135)

This gives a corrupt man's justification of corruption which rolls on year after year, decade after decade in independent India, and is ever expanding and spreading to all fields of activity. It also indicates the understanding that exists between the bureaucrats and the ministers. If the politicians and the bureaucrats, who are expected to nourish the Democracy, are themselves promoting corruption, how can one expect to get corruption eradicated?

Lavish parties in western style have been a part of social life of the Indian upper class since pre-independence days, and these parties often become congregations of assorted high profile people including politicians, bureaucrats and other heavyweights in the society. Some come to attend such parties with personal motives, to meet the *influential* persons and place their requests to them to get their things done. One such party is the party thrown by the Rani of Mirpur – “the Rani, whose name was Srilata Suhashini Devi and whose title was five hundred years old, was known as Sally to her friends.”(139) So all the people, including Kalyan Sinha, Sir Arjun Mitra and Lady Mitra, Dhiraj and Ena, Saleem and his wife Saira and Rakesh, arrive at the house warming party for Sally's house:

Sally's house - for some reason it was known as Sally's house and not her husband's – with its huge entrance hall and curving marble stairway was the most recent and spectacular of Delhi's private homes. The garden was not large but it had been terraced and planted with telling effect and looked bewitching in the soft blue radiance of the concealed lighting. There were two reception rooms, one on either side of the hall. One had been cleared for dancing and music from a hired band came from it. Sally's brother,

champagne glass in hand, met them at the entrance, kissing Saira's cheek. All this bloody pseudo-western public kissing, thought Saleem in annoyance. (144)

Sally's Party is a conspicuous exhibition of so-called upper class sophistication, pompousness and extravaganza in western style and it indicates how politicians and bureaucrats get trapped in the web of the socially high-ups.

Dhiraj does not fail to make sagacious use of Kalyan Sinha's presence in the Party to get his thing done – begging a favourable posting. Kalyan's positive response, almost an assurance, makes Dhiraj excited and his impression about Kalyan instantly changes: "Dhiraj who had privately considered Kalyan 'a Bolshy type' and expected no result from the conversation, was agreeably surprised. 'He's very much misjudged,' he told Ena afterwards." (151) Kalyan's benevolence is not without reason – it is a kind of a politician's hypocrisy, he wants to pull as many people to his side as possible so long he loses nothing. Moreover in Dhiraj's case Hari Mohan's influence cannot be ruled out, for he once talked with Kalyan on the matter of appointment of the Director of the Peace Institute – Dhiraj is now made the Director of the Institute. So now the Kalyan-Hari-Dhiraj triangle comes into existence.

Sahgal shows how collusion between politicians and bureaucrats in independent India opens up new facets of corruption.

Rich Like Us :

Rich Like Us is a politico-historical fiction on India, its setting spreading over a period of forty years from mid-1930s to mid-1970s focusing on political turbulence that grips India from time to time. However, the main focus of the novel is on the socio-political ethos of India during the period (25 June 1975 – 21 March 1977) of so-called State of Emergency proclaimed by the government to stall the prevailing political unrest in India.

The novel depicts how new ideologies are enforced on the people during the Emergency, how the class enforcing these ideologies become overzealous and overenthusiastic in their pursuit, and how another class takes advantage of the new situation to meet their own interests. Sahgal portrays on one hand the India of the rich, the westernized upper class, the ruling elite comprising the bureaucrats and the politicians, and on the other, the India of the poor and the unprivileged who have been denied their rightful claims with abrogation of their rights after more than twenty five years of independence.

Sahgal assembles a number of characters to unfold the story of the novel – the principal among them being the businessman Ram, his two wives, the Indian first wife Mona and the British second wife Rose both living together with Ram, his son Dev, an entrepreneur, from his first wife and Dev's wife Nishi, the two civil service officers Ravi and Sonali, and the Minister of Industries.

The impact of the Emergency is felt by everyone in one way or another. Dev takes the Emergency as an opportunity to enhance his business which he inherits from his father who is now bed-ridden because of a stroke he suffered and therefore Dev who has already lost his mother has full control over his business. However, as his present garment business is not doing well, he plans to expand his business avenues, and with such business interest Dev invites Mr Neuman, an English businessman and Ravi, a high-up in the Indian bureaucracy, to dinner at his home.

The pre-dinner conversation gradually progresses from one topic to another, the foremost being the Emergency and Dev's new business venture. Continuing the conversation Dev says:

So you see ... this Emergency is just what we needed. The troublemakers are in jail. An opposition is something we never needed. The way the country is being run now, with one person giving the orders, and no one being allowed to make a fuss about it in the Cabinet or in Parliament, means things can go full steam ahead without delays and

weighing pros and cons forever. Strikes are banned. It's going to be very good for business. (*Rich Like Us* 2)

The bureaucrat, Ravi Kachru, a confidant of Dev arrives late, and joins Mr Neuman. Ravi helps Dev by managing a plot of land for him for constructing the Happyola factory, “a child of the Emergency, with a blanket import license that would store underground hidden wares for car manufacture, while machines produced a fizzy brown drink above.”(50) This is a face of corruption where high profile people, like Dev and Ravi are involved. Mr Neuman is interested in Ravi for his import-export business, for he has been told that Ravi is a “bureaucrat of interest in the current set-up, ... and part of the conveyor belt that has delivered the cash to the Minister for Industry, relatively minor graft in terms of a big investment and the returns expected from it.” (8) This gives an indication of the collusion between bureaucrats, ministers and entrepreneurs exposing a facet of corruption of high profile people. On the other hand a bureaucrat like Ravi cannot ignore or afford to displease an important and influential entrepreneur like Dev who later becomes a minister himself. Ravi has arranged a “perfect piece of land” (8) for Dev's proposed factory. Ravi says:

It was a rural belt, requisitioned from the villagers... with compensation paid, of course.

And it will mean jobs for them. (8)

The clever bureaucrat tries to assert that there is nothing wrong in requisitioning the villagers' land by mentioning about compensation and jobs. But it seems that he wilfully ignores the humane aspect of clearing the villagers' land for the factory making the villagers homeless. Surprisingly, Dev's step-mother, the cockney-speaking British lady Rose, who is also taking part in the conversation is able to appreciate what the requisition means to the villagers:

“Jobs is all very well. What about their ‘omes?” came from mother-in-law.

“They have been given compensation,” repeated the host, testily.

“And I suppose it would be all the same to you if a bulldozer came along and levelled this ‘ouse and you were given com-peng-say-tion. Compengsaytion! ‘Ow do we know if it was enough compengsaytion?”

The bureaucrat rescued the conversation with exemplary tact, turning the talk to his hostess’ recent trip to London. (8, 9)

The cunning bureaucrat may be successful to avoid embarrassment by hijacking the conversation, but the truth remains a truth – the truth is that a section of the unprivileged class is harassed, oppressed and exploited for the benefit of a section of the privileged class by government agency, by those who are supposed and expected to protect and look after the interests of this unprivileged section.

This bureaucrat, Ravi, was once a passionate advocate of Marxist ideology of communism while at Oxford. Change of individual ideology from time to time depending on the prevailing opportunities and circumstances is commonplace in a man’s life in India. Both Ravi and Sonali were at Oxford before coming to India to be part of the Indian civil service. While at Oxford Ravi frequently lectured before Sonali explaining the merits and necessity of communism, but Sonali’s views on communism did not coincide with those of Ravi:

Mine was no romance with Marxism. Ravi’s was. Our hearts beat quite differently over our discovery of it, his for humanity, mine for small actual conscience-pricking images, giving me a scratchy inner lining of anxiety. The Marxist sequence that would change mankind gave me trouble from the start: step one, the workers overthrow the government by force. Step two, they expropriate the expropriators, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Step three is the classless society. (121)

Where is now Ravi’s heart ‘beating for humanity’, where is his Marxist ideology when he orders requisition of farmers’ land making them homeless? How could he bury his ideology of communism and become part of an autocracy? On the other hand, Sonali whose heart ‘beats for

small actual conscience-pricking images, giving her a scratchy inner lining of anxiety' has been removed from her post for not according official approval to the construction of the Happyola factory flouting the norms and putting the villagers in utter helplessness, and her post is filled up by Ravi, once a communist, and Dev's job is made easier. The Emergency overrides all norms, devalues all humane values, and brings wealth to many like Dev.

On the other hand the ministers go on justifying the Emergency whenever they get an opportunity to do so; their public speeches are replete with praise and admiration of the all powerful Madam (the Prime Minister). The Emergency makes many people VIPs close to the throne, and Dev is one of such VIPs. He is now powerful enough to manoeuvre the Minister of Industry to his Happyola foundation stone laying ceremony. The minister who has the reputation of being pious begins his speech in "mellifluous Hindi about the Vedas, the unlimited glory of India's heritage, the high place of selflessness and sacrifice in her tradition and the brightness of the future assured by the Emergency." (48) He then recalls his first sight of the Mahatma in Champaran, Bihar, in 1917 and continues his speech:

A humble follower of Gandhi was what he still remained though the journey had taken him from Mahatma to Madam. He was but a speck of dust at her feet as he had been of the other. The Minister then laid the decades of his discipleship before them, rejoicing in the service he had been called upon to render his motherland as a Cabinet Minister and, God and Madam willing, he would continue in the Cabinet till the day he died. ... (49)

What the minister says signifies his effort to glorify the Madam as much as possible for his own safety and future, by describing his journey from *Mahatma to Madam*, and his wish to serve motherland, *God and Madam* willing, as a Minister. The magnitude of flattery to the Madam crosses all limits when he describes himself as 'a speck of dust at her feet.'

Dev and Nishi, who are on the dais along with the minister, have every reason to be proud and delighted, and to feel elated when the minister declares at the end of his speech that "it

gave him great pleasure to lay Happyola foundation stone, augury of the country's bright future.”(49) The Minister's presence in the foundation laying ceremony speaks of the cordial relationship that exists between a minister and an entrepreneur who work together for their mutual benefit. On the other hand Ravi's help to Dev by allotting a piece of land for construction of Happyola factory exposes the link that exists between a bureaucrat and an entrepreneur. Not only that, Ravi also uses his official capacity and power to arrange a suite with free supply of coffee and snacks in hotel Intercontinental for the New Entrepreneurs wives led by Nishi to hold a meeting to chalk out a plan to help implement some Emergency programmes in their own way. All these things bring to light the collusion between bureaucrats, politicians and entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The first novel shows how the British legacy creeps into the bureaucratic system in the early years of independent India and how the British culture and way of life influence the bureaucrats in their private and social behaviour. During the early years of independence of the country these bureaucrats seem to enjoy some kind of personal independence in an all-Indian bureaucracy and find their bosses accessible to place their personal requests. In the political sphere the novel shows how the pre-independence values sharply erode when the new generation politicians get the power in their own hands and corruption of various types begins to bubble.

The second novel shows how the bureaucrats and politicians behave and act in an extraordinary political situation that exists in the country in the form of the Emergency. In particular the novel shows how these privileged people use the Emergency as a handle to promote their own interests. In a sense the Emergency gives them a kind of freedom while the freedom of the common people is drastically curtailed during the period.

Works Cited

- Mansingh, Surjit. *The A to Z of India*. Lanham, MD, USA: Scarecrow Press, 2010. pp.288-290.
- Sahgal, Nayantara. *This Time of Morning*. 1965. Noida UP: Harper Collins, 2014.
- *Rich Like Us* . 1985.Noida UP: Harper Collins, 2017.
- Swedberg, Richard, and Ola Agevall. *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*.USA: Stanford University Press, 2005. pp. 18–21.
- Weber, M. *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society*, edited and translated by Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. pp.73-127.