Nayantara Sahgal's third novel Storm in Chandigarh like her other novels presents a juxtaposition of two worlds: The personal world of man-woman relationship and the interpersonal world of politics. The interpersonal incompatibility happens to be the most dominant subject in the novel depicting the Husband-Wife alienation resulting from lack of communication, extra-marital relationship, existentialist problems and temperamental irreconcilability. The storm in the lives of three married couples Inder and Saroj, Jit and Mara and Vishal and Leela is portrayed against the political backdrop of storm or confrontation between the newly divided states of Punjab and Haryana over the issue of Chandigarh.

The characters in the novel are at the same time modern as well as traditional in their outlook of life which is clearly presented through their attitude to love, morality, education, man woman relationship and architecture. In this paper my intention is to provide the predicament of interpersonal incompatibility between male and female characters in the backdrop of an unresolved clash of political personalities.

Sahgal's Storm in Chandigarh is primarily a novel in which her political and personal concerns are interwoven in the background of the historical event of the partition of Indian Punjab in 1966. The author has opted for a narrative style marked with the intensity of emotion and a penetrating thought stating that woman should not be seen in the stereotypical passive roles of sex object in the modern society or as the one who is fit only to manage home chores and children without any self identity of her own. She is equally concerned about the degradation of human values in the contemporary politics of India. Nayantara writes:

“.....Majority of the people are inspired and guided by the crude instincts, hunger, sex, power”

Storm in Chandigarh, 55

The scene is set in the city of Chandigarh, the capital of newly created states of Punjab and Haryana. From the very outset an air of tension and trouble looms large between these two newly formed states of north India. Gyan Singh and Harpal Singh Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana respectively are highly critical of each other and hold completely divergent stance. The Union Home Minister deputes Vishal Dubey an ICS officer in the ministry of Home Affairs to bridge the gap between the two warring Chief Ministers, which although never happens and Dubey is later on called back to Delhi after the death of Home Minister.

When we look at Storm in Chandigarh as a political novel, it appears to be laying thrust on degradation and degeneration of human values in the contemporary political environment of the post colonial Indian nation, which ironically indicates an end of the Gandhian era. One can easily discover the hunger for power and money as the real motif behind people joining politics. The novel focuses on the degeneration of human values in the existing political environment of the country which at its root level indicates an end of Gandhian era. Lone thus depicts:

“.....pleads for the new marital morality based on mutual trust, consideration, generosity and absence of pretence, selfishness and self centeredness.”

Lone, Iftikhar Hussaine, Nayantara Sahgal: Feminist Currents in Storm in Chandigarh

To conclude it can be emphasized that in Storm in Chandigarh, Sahgal's approach to presentation of her points of view is fictionally creative and artistically convincing. Despite the fact that this novel is shadowed with autobiographical leanings the writer has successfully dealt with reality of the Indian political situation in the late sixties which highlights deterioration of moral values in public life, with its related effects on personal and private values.

REFERENCES: