



Expatriate Of Femininity In Premchand's Writing

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Abstract

Literature exhibits the social issues as the primary purpose. Any form of literature is a reflection of life and culture. Premchand has mastered it since he was a pre-independent writer, he had the liberty to magnify the social issues such as caste discrimination, poverty, marginalization and peasants. These types of writers uplift the society through their thought process. Feminism is one such thing he took in hand. His novels like *Nirmala*, *Pratigya*, *Gaaban*, *Godan* and *Karmabhoomi* all spoke about the problems of pre-independent India. The problem of feminism was a raising concern throughout the world even in countries like England and America had that concern. The process of evolution takes time though India has progressed in multiple disciplines still the problem of women has been unstoppable. This paper is a study of exposure of feminine concepts in the novels of Munschi Premchand.

Keywords: Feminism, Premchand, Marginal, Pre-independent India.

Troubles of Women throughout the Indian History

In India the concern regarding women's rights and their emancipation stands much ahead as compared to the other parts of the world especially West. (Nasti 159) Though Indian women achieves a lot in this modern day still they face certain obstacles through gender discrimination, violence against women, and unequal pay continue to be major issues. Female foeticide and infanticide, particularly in rural areas, remain a significant concern. Women's safety and security are also a significant issue, with many incidents of sexual harassment and assault reported each year. (TOI) Prior to India's independence, many cruel and barbaric traditions prevailed there, such as the practice of Sati, in which widows were burned alive on their husband's funeral pyre, the need of celibate widowhood, the killing of female infants, and early marriages.

In the Hindu tradition of sati, a widow ends her own life following the passing of her spouse. When a widow sets herself ablaze on her husband's funeral pyre, it is the most well-known instance of sati. Approximately 400 CE saw the compilation of the Mahabharata, which contains the earliest known mention of sati in Sanskrit. Diodorus Siculus, a first-century BCE Greek author, also made reference to it. Other customs and nations, such as Vietnam, Fiji, and Russia, also valued sati. In various regions of India, the practice of sati was common. Shortly after they arrived in India, the British came across sati, which greatly incensed them morally. 'If you do not educate women, how can you consider them as inferior' is an argument against the practice of Sati. This was vehemently criticized by reformers like Rammohun Roy. Rammohun Roy published many pamphlets to spread his ideas. The Sati (Prevention) Act took its place in 1987 after the Bengal Sati Regulation was abolished in 1829.

Premchand's Reformation

Premchand, in addition to being a patriot and scholar, the literary giant of colonial India, was also a social reformer. He routinely attacked a variety of social ills that were pervasive in modern society in his writings, which were often intended to further some sort of social agenda. Therefore, he wrote with the intention of not only raising public awareness of social injustices but also alerting the colonial authorities to them, which became part of the colonial narrative. Nonetheless, among all the issues he addressed in his books, one has to do with women and gender equity. In actuality, a variety of causes influenced Premchand's beliefs, transforming him into a social activist and supporter of women's rights. Factors that influenced his life and work include his family background, individual life experiences and the socio-economic conditions of the time. He is also a witness of colonialism and its ugly consequences, characterized mainly by the exploitation and oppression of peasants and workers under feudalism and female patriarchy. Thus, Premchand could provide a realistic portrayal of poverty, exploitation and the difficulties of women. Munshi Premchand was also influenced by the socio-political events taking place in India at that time. In this regard, he was encouraged by Swami Vivekanand and other heroes of the Bengali Renaissance and National Movement, whose views on nation and society, including the suffering of women in a male-dominated society, became his guiding principles that drove him to realize that India cannot grow without addressing women's issues. The most important event in the life of Premchand, on the other hand, was perhaps the beginning of Gandhi, who would soon become the sole distributor of the activities of the Indian national movement.

Moreover, Gandhi was also a social reformer and advocate of gender justice, aiming to create a counter-dialogue in which "naritva" (the essence of femininity) was privileged over "purusattva" (the essence of masculinity), which in turn was privileged over "kapursatva" (the core of manhood), which in turn was privileged over kapursatva or cowardice. Thus, Gandhi questioned the basis of gender bias that denied women their basic rights and assigned them a lower status in society. He also blamed men for their oppression and oppression of women and strongly demanded their emancipation. To achieve this, she advocated for women's education and felt that only education and economic independence could truly influence women.

Premchand's Literature

Many examples can be cited from Premchand's fiction that demonstrate the biased attitude of society towards women who are subjected to sexual discrimination since birth. There is perhaps no more obvious example of this than an extramarital affair, where men who should have equal and greater responsibility are let off the hook and women are blamed for it. In Premchand's *Godan* Dhania holds Jhunia accountable and bails her son Gobar out, though who not only impregnates her but also flees away leaving her unto the mercy of others, saying that Gobar being a child "fell into her clutches (and) the witch has ruined my sons life" (Godan 49-50) Premchand expected woman to remain loyal to her husband irrespective of any compulsion is exemplified by the case of Nirmala, the heroine of his novel *Nirmala*, who tried to justify her controversial relations with her stepson Mansaram, saying:

"I know that if there had been any sinful intention in his heart, I could have done anything and everything for him" (Nirmala 110)

Thus, while Premchand condemns foreign marriage, he also makes a strong reference to incompatible marriage. In fact, due to the sensitivities of age, Nirmala's biggest challenge in the matrimonial home was adjusting not only to her incompatible and elderly husband, but also to her disgruntled and hostile brother-in-law and errant and troublesome sons. In fact, Nirmala was engaged all her life, fighting various problems arising from her incompatible marriage, but ultimately did not give her life in the process. Similarly, Suman's predicament in *Savasadan* stems from her inappropriate marriage to an older man living in poverty.

A woman's traditional field of activity is limited to exercising power in the family. The relationship between man and woman can be explored in this novel because novels offer an intimate view of life by providing a complete picture of perceived reality. *Godan* would be an interesting study of the strength and powerlessness of rural and urban women. Billed as a social and historical documentary, this novel portrays the corrupting effects of an unjust land tenure system reinforced by an exploitative caste system. It represents a period of transition in the socio-economic and political scenario of India. Premchand calls this "money culture" in human relations, where society moves from a domestic mode of production to a capitalist economy.

An educated upper caste and upperclass woman and the wife of a banker-industrialist Khanna, Govindi poses before the readers as a victim of multifaceted violence. Govindi and Malti are from the upper class or elite social spectrum. She is the wife of one of the most respected men in town. She is a mother of four children and lives a life of luxury - the nicest guy in the bungalow, the most sophisticated furniture, the best car and an endless amount of money. She devoted all her energy to taking care of the children and taking care of the details of the home. He never paid attention to the nature of the charm or how to create it. Govind lacks Dhaniya's confidence and aggression, with which he threatens Hori to do his daily chores like cooking and cleaning. She pretends to be happy and seemingly quarrelsome, but lives a miserable life with a rogue and cheating husband, Mr. Khanna. He is cunning and cruel and even beats Govind regularly.

At home, Khanna is rude and fiery as she is sweet and gentle at the office; kind of a dual personality he has. Her rude and heated behavior with Govind behind closed doors only made her more withdrawn. He often pointed angrily at Govind. In such situations, she would retire to her room and spend the night crying, while Khanna would sit in the living room and listen to the music of prostitutes or go out drinking in clubs. (234) Despite the harsh treatment, Govindi preferred to remain silent and passive and not protest against her abusive husband. He cannot imagine his existence without her and admits that his love for Khanna has made him a slave, while Malti has made Khanna a love slave. Govind, victim of patriarchy, victim of the "misrecognition" of patriarchal ideology, Louis Althusser equates with a misrecognition of ideology.

Munshi Premchand presented the social problems in the same way in Karmabhumi where he described the same thing in the same way. he emphasized the political issue. Socially, he dealt with untouchability, land tax robbery, march of poor demanding land for their houses and through political issue, the national movement to free India from the slavery of British government through Gandhian approach. He was greatly influenced by the concepts of Gandhi and his movements, especially the Satyagrahi movement. His writing clearly shows compassion for the poor and also the struggle of the Indian freedom movement. We find a clear and strong influence of Gandhi on Munshi Premchand Gaban, Karmabhumi, Rangabhumi. But in his novels, he independently created a new social image of women.

“Premchand’s creative efforts were strongly imbued with this social commitment, which perhaps found its best expression in the manner in which he treated the problems of women in his fiction. In doing so he marked a definite break with the earlier literary tradition which placed women within the parameters of romantic chronicles. In contrast to the earlier tradition, Premchand conceived a new image of woman in the context of the changes taking place in Indian society in the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the process, the ‘persecuted maiden emerged as a social being, a living critique of the male world, with a new dignity, a new confidence, a new self-view and with a vision of a new destiny’”. (Gupta, Mehrotra 2298-99)

Conclusion

Munshi Premchand's writings had a worldwide impact. His writings are considered one of the modern classics, on a par with his Tolstoy and Marquez novels and other writers. Munshi's prejudice has always influenced and will continue to influence the thinking mind because he is the voice of the underdogs, the farmers; dalits, tribals and women continue to be subjugated in some form. That is why what Munshi Premchand wrote so many years ago is still relevant today because human nature, human greed and materialism and the desire to rule does not change. Thus, Munshi Premchand's works have even greater significance in today's world. The farmer who grows food, the supplier of milk and modern India has to meet his needs as Munshi Premchand predicted and showed so many years ago.

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