

### Impact of Gandhi and Nationalist Fervour on Premchand

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**Abstract:** - Munshi Premchand was deeply influenced with the doctrine of Mahatma Gandhi and the Nationalist Movement of India. It was the consequences of that influence only that he left his government job and enthusiastically became a part of the Freedom Movement of India on the urge of Gandhi in spite of utter financial constraints of his family. Premchand considered writing as a source to correct and reform the society. The influence of Gandhian philosophy and the nationalist fervour could be traced in his novels, stories and articles. Like Gandhi, he fought against the social evils present in the society such as untouchability, gender biasness, class segregation, exploitation of poor and farmers, religious dogmas and propagandas and social snobbery etc. The critical analysis of the theme and characterization of his writing demonstrates the impact of nationalist fervour on him.

**Key words:** - Impact, Nationalist Fervour, Philosophy, Themes, Characters, Social conventions, Depiction, Reform, Enthusiasm

**Introduction:** - Munshi Premchand was appreciated as the ‘Upanyas Smrat’ in Hindi literature. He holds a mirror to society through his versatile writing skill. He has been widely studied in present time as the part of school and university curriculum, discussed in many seminars at national and international level with adequate relevance and enthusiasm to understand his society and writing. His characters seemed like the personification of different social conventions. Unlike his contemporaries, he chose a path to aware and reform the society through the delineation of real circumstances and predicaments prevailed in that society. He was deeply influenced with Mahatma Gandhi and the nationalist fervour. The influence could be apparently noticed in his personal life and the writing skill. A precise observation of the gallery of his characters, themes and the plot-construction demonstrate the impact of Gandhian philosophy and nationalist fervour. Gandhi inspired the nation to get freedom on political scenario while Premchand motivated the society to

liberate from social ill-conventions and problems. Both of them can be titled as the towering personalities of the nation who manifested a free nation at political and social ground with intense nationalist fervour. The nationalist fervour had influenced his personal life, characterization and the plot construction.

**Impact of Gandhi on Premchand:** - Premchand was deeply influenced by the speech of Mahatma Gandhi where he addressed the nation to be a part of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Inspired by Gandhian thoughts and Nationalist fervour Premchand resigned his government service at the call of Mahatma Gandhi to be a part of the movement.

Premchand considered Gandhi a great man and the repository of great social power.<sup>1</sup> Premchand appreciated Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence, truth, equality, untouchability, liberty, justice, secularism and upliftment of society. Like Gandhi, he strived through his writing to eliminate the communal disharmony of the society. To establish peace and harmony, he appealed for

Hindu- Muslim unity and blamed the religious dogmas and biasness. According to him, religious leaders were the responsible agents of communal disharmony of the society. He vehemently criticized the religious and social exploitation. Premchand applied Gandhian ideology in many of his novels and stories. He voiced the torment of untouchable and women. Many of his novels like Seva Sadan, Nirmala, Gaban and Godan penned the agony of women, untouchables, farmers, prostitutions. The characterization of Selia, Jhunia, Dhania, Rupa, Zohra, Suman, Nirmala, Jalpa, Ratan, Miss Malti, Rukmani Devi etc. delineates the social concern of Premchand for the empowerment of women in the society. He realistically explored the miseries of women in the society. Women, to him, as projected in many of his novels stand as a strong pillar of the family and the society whether she is Dhaniya or Jalpa. The reformation in the conditions of prostitutes was also the burning issues of the time. He discussed the conditions of such deprived women of the society. Premchand was certainly influenced by Gandhi's personality. He saw Gandhi as a pioneer in mobilizing the masses during the national movement. Premchand, therefore, had great expectations from Gandhi for the emancipation of the poverty-stricken tenants and workers.<sup>2</sup> Premchand criticised oppressive capitalism and wished to discard it to establish social equality. In his novel Godan, he argued, "Nobody has a right to fatten upon the labour of others. Such a social order in which a small part of society leads a comfortable life, whereas large one writhes under the fell

clutch of hardships, has no right to exist".<sup>3</sup> Premchand had a deep sense of sympathy for the poor and oppressive. He aimed to destroy the distance between poor and rich. The novels of Premchand majorly explores realistic picture of rural India. The multiple complication like development of industries, pathetic conditions of farmers, financial slavery in form of money lender and hypocritical nature of zamindari system, oppression of poor and needy, religious dogmas and selfishness, plight of women, untouchability etc. have been shown in Godan. The novel seemed to be truly scaffolded on the ideologies of Gandhi. **Impact of Nationalist Fervour:** - At the arrival of Gandhi in Indian political scenario, the nationalist fervours emerged powerfully in nation in form of different Movement. Freedom movement sprouted patriotic sentiments in the country widely. Premchand was involved into the national movement by the Swadeshi movement at 1905-1906. In 1905 he wrote an article in the Zamana suggesting ways to spread the use of indigenous products. He was of the opinion that without indigenous materials such as cotton, sugar and cloth, national liberation could not be achieved.<sup>5</sup> Many novels and stories have been written to awaken the people for freedom. Premchand's book 'Sojje Watan' was banned and burned by the British government with the allegation to provoke people's sentiment for revolts. Consequently, Premchand had been banned to write or publish anything without the prior permission of the British government. That led the establishment of his new identity from Danpat Rai to Premchand to continue

the writing career. It proves the deep impact of nationalist fervour which triggered his advancement in the Freedom Movement of India. Shivrani Devi had to go jail for many times in the movement. The theme of his stories and novels brimmed with the nationalist fervour. Devidin who is a Khatik has sacrificed his sons in the nationalist movement. The picture of the family of the martyrs whom Jalpa serves also evokes the nationalist emotions in the reader. As the whole novel is having two plots first, the embezzlement of Ramnath and second, the transformation of Jalpa in culcatta. The novel has been written at the back drop of national fervour to show the sacrificial role of Devidin, Jalpa, and Zohra. The scheme of the British government to trap the patriot proved a failure. Gaban is truly composed at the high fervour of nationalism.

**Conclusion:** - Premchand himself stated, “A writer is influenced by his environment. Whenever there is an upsurge in the country, it is impossible for a literature to be unmoved.”<sup>4</sup> Similar occurrences could be noticed in the life and writing of Premchand as well. His characters and plots exemplified the influence of Gandhi and the nationalist fervour. Eventually, his personal life also exhibited the impact of Gandhi’s philosophy and nationalist movement.

**References: -**

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