



## Sketch of Rural Life in One of Premchand's Novel: Godaan

**POLY BHOWMICK**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF HINDI

RAMTHAKUR COLLEGE, AGARTALA, TRIPURA, INDIA.

E-MAIL ID: [polybhowmick123@gmail.com](mailto:polybhowmick123@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Premchand was a famous Indian novelist. He was also known as 'Upanyas Samrat' who was famous for his Hindi-Urdu literature. His real name was Dhanpat Rai but he was writing by his pen name Premchand.

He wrote more than 300 stories and notable novels. He wrote in that time when India was completely a rural place. He showed in his novel the true pain and agony of the farmers and poor. His novels showed the actual Indian society and the conditions that existed that time i.e. before Independence period or colonial North India.

Premchand was one of the important writers of the Hindi literature in India who developed a tradition of Hindi story and novel so influential that it became the guide for the literature produced across the span of the century.

Premchand wrote many novels that have the clear view of the Indian society. His famous writings 'Godan' which is about a man protagonist, Hori who always wanted to have a cow in his garden but could never afford one and all his goals were completed. His ups and downs are beautifully shown in the novel.

Premchand's novels were never showy and out of realism. He wrote in that time India was almost completely rural place with quite a surprising number of farmers whose true pain and agony were beautifully described. He showed the society's image like a mirror.

**(Key words:** rural life, pain, agony, farmers.)

## Introduction

Premchand was a famous Indian writer. He was well known for his Hindi-Urdu literature. He was also known as "Upanyas Samrat." He lived an isolated life because of early death of his mother and his father was always busy in his work. This loneliness in life helped him a lot in writing some spectacular novels and stories. His feelings about life, society, can be easily seen in his work.

Premchand wrote many novels that have unmatched view of Indian society. Godaan is a famous novel written by Munshi Premchand. It was first published in 1936. It was considered the greatest Hindi novel of modern Indian Literature. It was also translated in English and was first published in 1968 by Gord on C. Roadarmel in . In English it is named "The Gift of a Cow." This novel became a trademark novel for him. It can also be seen as the key to Premchand's worldwide success and fame.

## Summary of Godaan

The famous novel Godaan is about a man, protagonist 'Hori'. Hori, a poor peasant who always wanted to have a cow in his garden. Hori lives with his family in the small village of Belari. He is a poor farmer, a decent soul. Like all the other villagers he was deeply indebted and trapped in an inescapable ever increasing debt. He believes in order of the day that also means putting the welfare of the local zaminders (land owner). Rai Sahib Amar pal Singh. Hori's wife Dhania is more practical. She always tries to prevent Hori's worst excesses.

The story revolves around many characters which represents the various sections of Indian community. Hori Mahato (a farmer) and his family members include Dhania (wife), Rupa and Sona (his two daughters), Gobar (son), Jhunia (daughter -in law).

Hori has a deep desire of having a cow as millions of other poor peasants. He purchased a cow from Bhola, a cowherd on debt of Rd.80. This in turn led to a fight between his wife and his younger brother Heera's wife. Heera was jealous of Hori. He poisoned the cow and ran away because of police action. When the police came to inquire the death of the cow, Hori took a loan and bribed the police to clear of his younger brother's name. On the other side of the story Hori's son Gobar eloped with Jhunia, a low caste girl and the daughter of Bhola. She was a widow and got pregnant by Gobar. Both of them ran away to the town due to the fear of action from villagers. Hori and Dhania were so kind and generous that they were unable to throw a girl who is carrying their grandson. So they protected her and accepted her as their daughter -in-law. But when the village panchayat came to know, they fines Hori. Again Hori compelled to take loan and pay the penalty. Now, Hori is in huge debt from local money lenders and eventually married off his daughter Rupa for mere Rs.200 to save his ancestral land from being auctioned because of his inability to pay land tax. But

his determination to pay those 200 rupees and to have a cow to provide milk to his grandson, leads to his death because of his excessive work. When he is about to die, his wife Dhaniam took all the money she had and made Hori pay the priest on behalf of Godaan. This fulfils the traditional dream of Hori but his desire to pay back the rupees 200 to his son-in law and to have a cow to feed the milk to his grandson remain unfulfilled.

Thus, Hori is shown as a typical poor peasant who is the victim of circumstances and possess all the deficiencies of common man but despite all this, he stands by his honesty and duties when time requires.

## Analysis of the Novel-Godaan

The novel of Munshi Premchand Godaan is considered as a beginning of a new trend in Hindi literature.

'Godaan' in Hindi can be interpreted as 'charity of cow'. Cow is symbolic which is related to all Hori's problems. Hori believes that having a cow is luxury and it will solve everything. But it actually makes all worse.

This novel is written in pre-colonial period which gives the clear picture of peasants in rural India. The novel revolves around the lives of Hori and his family, who represent the peasant society of India. This novel shows the clear picture of the problems faced by the rural society due to the political system. We can observe the struggling of a poor peasant for a living till his end.

The novel brings out the problems faced by the rural society due to the political system. Through this novel Premchand makes us see the problems faced by the peasant society during colonial period. We can see people are struggling for a living till his end. Godaan shows the realism of Indian society. 'Hori' in 'Godaan' is such a character that is like thousands who had the same struggle but survived. Hori's life changes and problems arise when he bought a cow for a better life but due to jealous his brother poisons the cow and it dies. Hori realises that he cannot escape that life which has been given to him by birth. Like Hori many peasants have such dream which is not achievable.

Another problem is caste system. Hori has a job that he was born with but his son disrespect that job and run away for getting a job outside his caste. Gobar returns with money but his father's believe in the caste unwilling to forgive.

The novel 'Godaan' describes the struggling for a living till the end. The story shows the problems faced by the peasant society during colonial period. These types of problems are existing till today in rural India. Farmers form the biggest chunk of the Indian population and are the foundation of its farm culture. The cultures of farmers are so important that no analysis can be complete without taking the culture of the farmers into account. Because India is predominantly an agricultural country and Premchand was only such author who made farmers the protagonist of his stories and novels. No other Hindi author wrote extensively and deeply about farmers as Premchand.

Dr. Ramvilas Sharma of Hindi literature comments that, "Not many novels were written in Hindi on the problems of farmers, and the ones that were written lacked the understanding of Premchand." Premchand immersed himself in the life of the farmers and what he wrote was something new for Hindi Literature.

Acharya Shukla identifies a broad class dependent on land and says that besides "farmers" it also includes "landlords" and "labourers" and they all inhabit the villages. Premchand view was that it was farmer's who made India an agricultural nation. Landlords had huge tracts of land but they never worked in the fields and they employed labourers for all land works and simultaneously their houses which built on that land were also not belonging to them.

## Conclusion

Godaan perhaps depicts the problems of the farmer's best among all the Premchand's works. Hori was an example of problems farmers faced in different times and at different places.

For Premchand farmers did not mean only exploited class but a class that has its distinct culture, that has his own pains, and pleasures castes, and groups, family relations, will power, tradition, humanity, progressive values and the will to plough on.

Basically, 'Hori' in 'Godaan' is traditional in thinking and believes in the old way of life. The author had created such a character of 'Hori' who is like thousands having the same struggle in today's life but still surviving.

## Works Cited

1. Premchand., Godaan. New Delhi: Rajpal and Sons; 2005.
2. Kumar, Jainendra. Premchand: A life in letters. Agra: Y.K. Publishers, 1993
3. Mishra, Shiv Kumar. Premchand our Contemporary. New Delhi. National Publishing House, 1986.
4. Rahbar Hansraj (1962) Premchand: Jeevan kala aur Kritisva, Delhi: Atma Ram and Sons.