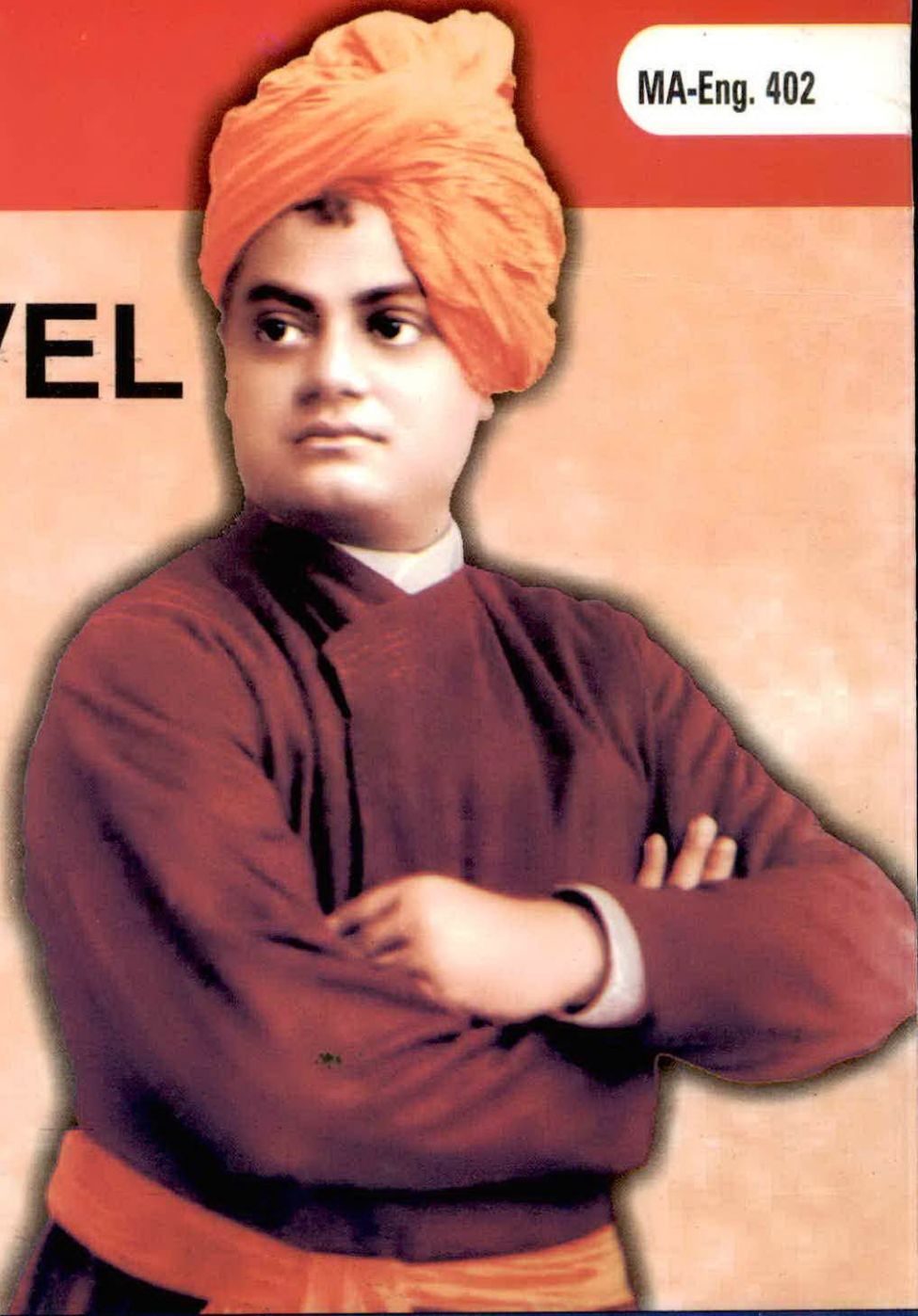


MA-Eng. 402

THE NOVEL IN INDIA



DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

**SWAMI VIVEKANAND
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Meerut (National Capital Region Delhi)

SYLLABUS

Semester-IV

THE NOVEL IN INDIA

MA ENG-402

Course Content

Unit-I : Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay

- ♦ Krishnakant's Will (1876), tr. S. N. Mukherjee, in *The Poison Tree : Three Novellas* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1996), pp. 173-300.

Unit-II : Premchand

- ♦ *The Gift of a Cow* (1936), tr. Gordon Roadarmel.

Unit-III : Shrilal Shukla

- ♦ *Raag Darbari* (1968), tr. Gillian Wright (New Delhi : Penguin).

Unit-IV : U R Ananta Murthy

- ♦ *Samskara : A Rite for a Dead Man*, tr A. K. Ramanujan New Delhi : Oxford University Press.

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UNIT-I

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(KrishanaKanta's Will)

Bankimchandra Chatterjee (KrishanaKanta's Will)

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Objectives
- About the Author Bankimchandra Chatterjee:
 - (a) Biographical Sketch of Bankimchandra Chatterjee
 - (b) Awards and His Works
- Introduction
- The Plot
- Title
- Summary of the novel
- Themes
- Characters
- Rohini as a rebellion - in KrishanaKanta's Will
- Treatment of women character by Bankimchandra Chatterjee
- Exercise
- References

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Give bio sketch of the author - Bankimchandra Chatterjee.
- Discuss about the major works of Bankimchandra Chatterjee.
- Understand the plot and summary of the novel Krishankant's Will.
- Explore the main themes of the novel Krishankant's Will.
- Discuss about the characters of the novel Krishankant's Will.
- Explain the treatment of Bankimchandra Chatterjee in 'Krishankant Will'.

• ABOUT AUTHOR

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay) was a great novelist and poet. He wrote more than twelve novels, essays and

commentaries in Bengali which were widely translated into other regional languages of India as well as in English. He is famous as author of poet of national song VandeMataram which personifying India as a mother Goddess to inspire the activists during the Indian Independence Movement.

Early Life and Education

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was born on 27 June 1838 in the village Kanthalpara, Near Naihati, in an orthodox Bengali Brahmin family. He was the youngest of three brothers. His father's name was Yadav Chandra Chattopadhyaya and his mother was Durgadebi. One of his brothers, Sanjib Chandra Chattopadhyay was also a novelist and his known for his famous book "Palamau".

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was educated at the Hooghly Mohsin College and later at the Presidency College, graduating with a degree in Arts in 1858. He was one of the first two graduates (another one was Jadunath Bose) of the University of Calcutta. He later obtained a degree in Law as well, in 1869 and was appointed as Deputy Collector, of Jessore and retired from government service in 1891.

he married when he was only eleven. At that time his wife was only five years old. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was only twenty-two when his wife died. After sometime he married again. His second wife was Rajlakshmi Devi. They had three daughters.

Novelistic career

In the starting years, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee started publishing his Novel in a newspaper and sell it weekly and later he started to write his own novels and publish it. He began his career as a writer in Bengali language. His fantastic writing skills and subjects got attention from critics and received awards for his writings. He also wrote a novel in English language but dropped the idea after sometime due language problems.

He mostly wrote romantic novels but sometimes also tried to write historical novels. In the year 1872, he started publishing his most of the Bengali novels such as Sitaram, Krishna Charitra, Lok rahasya etc. got a great response.

His Literally Works

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had founded a journal called 'Vangadarshan'. 'Anandamath' appeared in installments in this monthly journal. In 1882 it appeared in book form. Soon the copies were sold out and the book was reprinted five times.

His novels an altogether offered a new kind of experience to his readers and they were fascinated by his novels. Even when the novels were translated into other Indian languages they delighted the new readers too.

Due to his simple and easy to understand language he became very popular among all the sections of society. According to Bankim Chandra the language of a writer must be the language of the people—language they can understand; he must write as they speak. He wrote in that manner. Though his language was close to the spoken form of his day, it was attractive. The Bengali language acquired a new dignity because of his writings. Soon, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay is regarded as one of Bengal's treasures; this was because of his novels.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee While at Khulnabegan a serial story named 'Rajmohan's Wife'. This was his first public literary effort. His writings were adorned with beautiful original Bengali language heavily influenced with Sanskrit stanza. He experimented and modernized Bengali language for future generation. He, also, transformed Bengali language into rich Lyrical form which was inherited from ancient Sanskrit language through his writings. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was superb storyteller, and a master of romance. No Bengali writer before or since has enjoyed such spontaneous and universal popularity as Chatterjee. His novels have been translated in almost all the major languages of India.

He wrote 14 (Fourteen) Bengali Novel and one English novel which are given below serially with Writing Years:

- (1) Durgeshanandhini (1862–1864)
- (2) Kapalkundala (1866)
- (3) Mrinalini (1869)
- (4) Vishavriksha (1873)
- (5) Indira (1873)
- (6) Yugalanguriya (1874)
- (7) Chandrashekar (1875) 8) Radharani (1877-1881)
- (9) Rajani (1877)
- (10) Krishnakanta Will (1878)
- (11) Rajsingha (1893)
- (12) Anandamatha (1882)
- (13) Devi Chowdhurani (1884)
- (14) Sitaram (1894)
- (15) Rajmohan's Wife (Only English Novel : 1864)

Many of his stories have been made into plays and films. Some are as Follows :

- (1) Kapalkundala
- (2) Durgesh Nandini
- (3) Anandamath
- (4) Rajani

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(Krishnakanta's Will)

(5) Krishnakanter Will

(6) Devi Chaudhurani

• INTRODUCTION

Bankimchandra Chatterjee's 'Krishna Kanta's Will' deals with burning issues like child marriage, widow remarriage, reigning feudalism and anarchic patriarchy, corruption among the clergy of colonial Bengal. This is the first time when Bankim Chandra dealt these issues openly. We can also call it the starting of the renaissance in India for the first time. In this way he opened a new chapter in the history of literature in colonial India. This novel is translated in English by S.N. Mukherjee, and incorporated in 'The Poison Tree'. The novella Krishna Kanta's Will portrays a brutally true picture of issues prevailing in colonial Bengal. In 'Krishna Kanta Will' Bankim Chandra depicts the struggle between good and evil and the ultimate victory of the former over the latter. He also explored the vexing socio-political issues via depiction of Rohini-Govindalal relationship.

Krishna Kanta's Will is a brilliant romantic novella in Bengali literature which is timeless. The tragic end of the novel thrilled the readers. The novel gives an idea of contemporary socio-economical section of society. A rich zamindar wishes to write a 'Will' disposing of his property and does not wish to give the entire estate to his wayward son who hates his father for obvious reasons. The rich man wishes to give a good part of the estate to one of his close relations and he has an attractive sister, a widow, Rohini. The wayward son wins over Rohini and persuades her to steal the original will and substitute it with a fake. She does so but when she learns about the villain's intentions, she changes her mind and tries to replace the fake with the original. However, she gets caught in the act and more complications ensue leading to several interesting situations, including kidnap and murder.

It is a realistic social novel and revolves around a widow's socially inhibited love and its grim tragedy. In it, the novelist blends feeling and imagination to arrive closer in style to the western novel. Its plot resembles his other novel Bishabriksha. Bankim wrote in the preface to Krishnakanta Will that, "novels are expositions of difficult problems of human life." This novel makes widow remarriage the central problem of the story.

• PLOT

In "Krishna Kanta Will" (1878) Bankim Chandra produced a complex plot. In that complexity, critics saw resemblance of Western novels. The story is dealing with many issues prevailing in contemporary Bengal. On

one hand the generosity and goodness of the characters give positivity while the wicked and rude characters offer reality of the society. The story begins with the account of a generous but rich Zamindar, Krishan Kanta, who has two sons who are opposite to him attitude. The conflict between the father and the son (Harala) is revealed at the very starting. The whole story is woven around a 'Will' written by KrishanaKanta. Later new characters are added with purpose of defying or condemn the 'Will'. The story moves with conspiracy, betrayal, love, romance, sexual desire, tragic end of characters etc.

The plot has a good deal surprises as well interconnected incidents which amaze the audience. The happy marriage of Gobindlal and bhramar is going well. But the conspiracy of Haralal invites complexity in the story by putting a new character Rohini into their happy life. The twist in the story disturbs the happy married life of Gobindlal and Bhramar. A love triangle of Gobindlal, Bhramar and Rohini create chaos in trio life. The betrayal of Haralal to Rohini leads the story to a new romance.

The consequences of the folly, ill passion and sexual desire drags all the three to destruction. The climax brings death to Bhramar and Rohini while salvation to Gobindlal.

• TITLE

The Title of the Novella 'KrishanaKanta's Will' is apt to the story of the novel. The whole story revolves around a 'Will' which was prepared by Krishannakant, a rich Zamindar. The things started after the disclosure of the Will and all the actions in the play are performed to alter or to steal or to forge the 'Will'. KrashanaKanta and his brother Ramkanta shared a property and at the death of his brother krishanaKanta Decided to handover the half share of the joint property to the son of his brother. Hence krishanakanta prepared a Will with an honest intention but the wicked son of Krishanakanta objected and plot a plan to change the Will and forge it. All the characters are now and then added to this story only because of this 'Will'. For example :

1. KrishanaKanta-Writer of the Will.
2. RamaKant-Shared ancestral property which is transferred to his son in the 'Will'.
3. Gobindlal-the Son of Ramakant who was given half share of the property in the 'Will'.
4. Haralal-Son of KrishanaKanta who objected on the 'Will'.
5. Rohini-a widow who was seduced by Haralal to steal the 'Will'.

6. Bhramar-wife of Gobindlal who was given large share of the Krishnakanta's will in the end of the novel.

Hence, we can say that the title of the story justify it in all the way.

• SUMMARY

Krishnakanta's Will begins as a typical tale of disgruntled future heirs and forged wills. Krishnakanta and his brother, Ramkanta, owned a valuable piece of land, but the property had been bought in the name of Krishnakanta. Ramkanta had a son, Govindalal, and Krishnakanta always wanted to do right by his nephew. Hence, he makes sure he would eventually control that portion of the land that would be rightfully his. Ramakanta dies without owning anything in black and white. Even Krishnakanta never managed to draw up the right papers during Ramkanta's lifetime. When Krishnakanta does finally draw up his will he bequeaths half the land to his nephew his oldest son Haralal objected strongly and decided to plan a trick to change that will.

Haralal complains to his father in somewhat rude manner. In anger, Krishnakanta deducts his share and leave even less of his property to his son. Then Haralal threatens that if he would not change his will then certainly he will marry to a widow. Widow's marriage was newly legal at the time, but socially and religiously still very much frowned upon. Even this threat goes in vain and can't move him to change his mind. So Haralal decides to do the next best thing: change the will himself, by substituting a forged one. This isn't easy, but after a few tries he seems to manage the trick. He seduced a beautiful fair coloured young widow Rohini. He promised to marry her and takes her help to steal the original 'Will' but Rohini has second thoughts and tries to set things right again—landing herself in a heap of trouble.

Here Govindalal steps in. He is married to a girl known as Bhramar, whom he loves very much, despite her very dark complexion. Bhramar is a mere seventeen when all this happens, but they're quite happily married—until Govindalal tries to help out the bewitching Rohini.

Govindalal is eventually torn between the women—his wife: "has virtue, Rohini beauty", and with matters complicated by pride, miscommunication and misunderstandings between some of the actors, things get messy and complicated. Considering or actually attempting suicide is something that goes through the minds of those involved in the love triangle, and it comes to worse, too. And even if after Krishnakanta's death the way his estate is divided up ultimately does reflect what's just, the beneficiaries are unable to truly enjoy what's theirs. It's an often

compelling and heart-breaking story. It also offers amusing commentary on the writing and presentation of the story, as in noting :

Now I have a special need of this Rohini, and must therefore say something about her appearance and her character—although descriptions of appearance are not much in demand these days, and it is risky under recent laws to describe anyone's character but one's own.

While much of the story is related in fairly conventional form, parts also consist entirely of dialogue, and Chatterjee puts in some more creative touches as well, as when he has Govindalal debating what to do, with his: "Kumati (Bad Counsel) and Sumati (Good Counsel)" offering the different sides of the argument—think a small devil and a small angel on a character's shoulders, arguing pros and cons about some action; in a very nice touch Chatterjee has one such back and forth conclude :

Then Kumati and Sumati began to exchange blows and pull each other's hair.

Ultimately too unevenly paced, with a few too many large gaps and jumps and uneven character development (it would have been nice to know, for example, that Bhramar is so young—and that she has already lost a son—much earlier on), Krishnakanta's Will nevertheless is quite an enjoyable novel, and parts and aspects of it are excellent. From melodrama to some thriller elements, it offers quite a lot of variety too.

• THEMES OF THE NOVEL

The collection titled 'The Poison Tree' includes three of his novellas - The Poison tree, Krishnakant's Will and Indira in English translation. All three deal with predominantly 'domestic' themes and personal conflicts. 'KrishanaKantaa's Will' deals with love, marriage, infidelity, transgressive widowhood and death. The twenty first century Bankim's novels are both documents of an age gone by and ones which help us make sense of our own experiences. Krishnakant's Will dwells metaphorically on the passing away of the feudal order, social reality repeatedly creeps in: Sati, widow remarriage, child marriage and property rights and ownership were all at the centre of heated debates during this transitional phase in Bengal and the novels articulate and negotiate with many of these dilemmas. The collection of stories testifies to Bankimchandra Chatterjee's mastery as a consummate artist and proves to be a gripping read.

Despite all, Krishnakanta's Will is recognized as a pioneering work of Bengali literature with universal romantic themes. It is a story that engages with the subjects of widow remarriage, land ownership, and heredity in Hindu culture.

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(KrishanaKanta's Will)

Generosity:

If Krishna Kanta had ever desired to cheat his brother's son, and snatch the entire property, there was now no obstacle in his way. But he had no such evil intention. He placed Gobindlal with his own family, and treated him in all respects like his own sons; he determined to draw up a will bequeathing to Gobindlal the half-share justly belonging to Ramakant, the brother of Krishnakant. Raised in a loving home, orphan Gobindlal hopes to carry on his father's legacy while honoring his uncle, who could have cut him out of the will entirely. Both Krishnakanta and Gobindlal show the virtues in the society.

Wicked and Corrupted elements in society :

Knowing that Krishnakanta has given a part of property to his nephew, his own son outraged at his father's generosity, hatch a plan to switch the will with one they have written, employing the seductive widow Rohini to do their dirty work. The corruption in the registrar office is clearly mentioned the distortion in society. In Krishnakanta's Will Chattopadhyay produced a depiction of contemporary India and its lifestyle and corruption.

Love:

Love is also a theme in the novel. Married to the beautiful Bhramar, Gobindlal seems to have a life of fortune ahead of him. But the entry of Rohini bring a halt in their romance and Gobindlal is seduced by her. It is the story of a love triangle involving a couple and a young widow. The very contemporary plot has made it a subject for several TV serials and movies till date.

Property rights for widows

The financial and economic position of widows in the Hindu society had a significant impact upon their lives. There were two primary divisions that governed the laws of inheritance- the Dayabhaga and the Mitakshara. The first was prevalent in Bengal and was more favourable for the widows. It allowed an individual to have autonomous control over the ancestral property and even sanctioned the widow to inherit her husband's property in the absence of a male heir. Many novels highlight this trend of inheritance in their works. For instance, in Krishnakanta's Will, the patriarch Krishnakanta decides to pass on all his wealth not to any of his sons but his daughter-in-law Bhramar.

Transgression:

"A taste for transgression" could be detected in all his novels and it is central theme in Bishabriksha, Krishnakanta's Will, Indira. In Krishnakanta's Will, Haralal enters Rohini's kitchen, thereby violating the

sanctity of the inner domain. Also, Rohini's encounter with Gobindlal in his private garden foreshadows the subsequent destruction of Bhramar's conjugal happiness. The transgression of the norms of private sphere inevitably leads to destruction.

Condition of widow:

The novel provides a glimpse into the minds of widows as they struggle within the confines of the patriarchal order and carry the burden of traditions that impose extraordinary constraints on their sexuality and desires. They reflect on the anxiety about the sexuality of the dangerous non-wife, who lies outside the influence of a male guidance. Rohini in Krishnakanta's Will is in the full bloom of youth with her beauty 'brimming over like the full moon in autumn' but she is deprived of true love and sexual pleasure. "For what fault was I destined to become a widow while still a child" laments Rohini in Krishnakant's Will.

Believe in Hindu Social Culture:

The novel is sensitive to the agonies and despair of widows, yet author ultimately punishes them for their weaknesses and upholds the norms of traditional morality. The author aims to highlight the nature of human frailty, punishment and the possibility of redemption while at the same time emphasising on the need to restore order within society. Bankim was sympathetic to the condition of widows but was reluctant to disturb the existing Hindu social structure. He expressed his views in Bangadarshan (1870): "If it is a cruelty not to relieve the miseries of a handful of widows, then it must be a barbarous inhumanity to cause mischief to thousands of individuals of society by inaugurating widow-remarriage."

• CHARACTERIZATION

The two aspects of Bankim's fiction are his skitfully crafted protagonists, and his expansive prose style. In developing his characters Bankim emphasizes dialogue and interior monologue, and his prose style features sudden flashes of wit and philosophical epigrams. As his protagonists speak to themselves and to others, the reader is drawn into their struggles with self and society. Setting in this case refers to the specific surrounding environment and its atmosphere in which a character exists at a specific point in time. The particular setting in which a character exists reflects the character's moods, actions, reactions, and their rationale for these, whilst the setting also influences how a character behaves. Bankim's, comprehensive description of these settings also conveys to the reader the insignificance of individual characters in relation to the social atmosphere in which they live as a whole. He gives equal importance to the story as well as to his characters. In fact, the story is of the characters.

Bankim was a superb storyteller and carried the readers off their feet by the sheer flow of narrative. He had an imaginative vigour, which gave to his characters life and vitality. He upholds eastern values through his characters in situations with respect to human relations.

Bankim has the finest women in the world. He painted on his canvas very beautiful and gorgeous women giving them very prominent place and roles in his novels.

The sheer beauty and voluptuous appearance of these characters in his novels would have made him remain permanently in the imagination and dreams. Few of the finest 'moons' of Bankim like, Matangini, Padmavati, Kapalkundala, Indira and Rajani are explored in this chapter. And of course, Bankim also has seductive women like Hira and Rohini who give the delight to the reader and a feast to the eyes of beholder as they too are very beautiful.

Rohini is a female creation Bankim introduces in the novel Krishnakanta's Will. She is a young widow living in the village and works as a cook in Krishnakanta's house. As she became widow at a very early age she was easily lured by Haralal, the Eldest son of Krishnakanta to rob the original Will and put the forged Will in its place. She ventures to do this risky job because Haralal offers to marry her in return.

However, Haralal cheats her and refuses to marry her. Rohini is disgusted and goes to put back the Original Will. This time she is caught by Krishnakanta. Govindalal stands a guarantee for her and gets her released from his uncle on the promise that she should leave the village at once. She develops love for Govindalal and was unwilling to leave the village. She is a typical fiddle minded woman who changes her heart very soon. But now she wants to seduce Govindalal and so does not want to leave the village. His volatile youth fails to hold him back. Later on, an incident occurs where Govindalal rescues Rohini from the waters of the tank. His openness to temptation and softness do not yet entirely take hold of him. 'Rohini knows how weak Govindalal is, as all men who are addicted to women are.' Rohini does not observe any of the customary rites and rituals incumbent upon a widow and there is no one to guide her in this respect. She is young with the sprightliness and possesses the allure of a beautiful woman. Right or wrong does not concern her. Love consumes her. She is ready to face any kind of punishment meted to her for the sake of her love for Govindalal, but would not leave Haridragram. She says that even if Krishnakant throws her out of his estate, shaves her head and whey is poured over it, she is willing to take all that shame. Rohini determines that life or death it is in Haridragarm, with Govindalal.

Though finally she snatches Govindalal from his wife, Brahrnar, her life only ends in her death in the hands of Govindalal.

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(Krishnakanta's Will)

Depiction of women was Bankim's forte. With an accurate and deep insight he could bring out subtle shades in the psychology of the contemporary Bengali woman-whether an educated girl of Calcutta, or an unsophisticated rustic housewife. His sympathy for and understanding of their sufferings, their often unspoken loves, their need for affection, made them stand out as authentic pieces of portrayal. Although he could never completely break away from certain traditional values and sentimental fads like admiration for enlightened landlords or a wistful longing for virtues in so-called fallen women, one has to admit that Bankim created a world of fiction where every woman could find a place for herself.

Bankim also portrayed fine male characters which are interesting, with all their traits, good or bad. He filled his male character with all the warmth and fervour of his imagination. They give a punch of dynamic force that stream out a skilful plot construction and they are most impressive.

In the novel *Krishnakanta's Will*, Govindalal is the son of Ramakanta, the youngest brother of Krishnakanta. The property was in the name of the eldest Krishnakanta. Suddenly, one day Ramakanta dies. Krishnakanta without deceiving his brother's son brings up as his own son, with his own children and determined to give the half share of the property that rightly belonged to Ramakanta. Govindalal is married to Bhramar.

Govindalal has a fickle mind and has no control over his senses. When he looks at the beauty of Rohini he gets attracted towards her. Instead of keeping his senses in his control, he prays to God to control his thoughts about Rohini. "Govindalal is the son of wealthy parents, but he was not dissolute. No obstacle had ever been put in way of his doing what he liked and he had never been faced with the necessity for self-discipline. He had indulged himself unchecked. And now, when he feels an urgent need to control his propensities he does not know how to do it. He suffers sincerely in this, the first real crisis in his life, unable to overcome himself.

"Govindalal suddenly threw himself on the floor and started to cry.

He hid face on the floor, and with tears streaming from his eyes he called out, 'Oh Lord, save me from this danger. I shall not be able to save myself unless you give me strength. I shall die, Bhramar too will die. Abide in my head-with you I can conquer my weakness.'

Govindalal succumbs to the wily charms of Rohini and starts doting on her. Without his knowledge he falls prey to the beauty of Rohini and her love.

After Rohini leaves he becomes deeply troubled and broods over it. His heart further weakens when he saves her from drowning by giving artificial breathing with his mouth.

"Since there was no way out, Govindalal decided to blow into Rohini's mouth and the gardener agreed to rise and lower her arms.

The operation of moving Rohini's arm up and down and blowing into her mouth continued for two or three hours, at the end of which she breathed and came back to life."

Confronted with the certainty of approaching disaster, Govindalal is weak and self-indulgent. He makes no effort to summon up his inner strength. He does not have the will or the strength to pull himself away. So, he finds a way out to escape from the voluptuous nature of Rohini. He asks his uncle the whereabouts of the estate and leaves to settle disputes there. This was only a pretext; the original reason is to avoid the presence of Rohini.

When Govindalal was on the field visit, rumours spread about the Govindalal and Rohini affair. He returns at once but Bhramar leaves for her mother's place on the pretext of mother's illness on the day of his arrival from the field visits. He sees mistrust in her action and swears to never see her face again. "His heart has been a thirst for beauty for a long time. Bhramar's mistake and the arrival of Rohini gave him an opportunity he does not hesitate to seize." He has the ego which every man possesses. He makes no effort to summon up his inner strength. To him it seems the best way to forget Bhramar and punish her for her pride. He does not have the will or the strength to pull himself away, and is not as strong as he is rash. The easy way is the way natural to him.

Govindalal's attraction for Bhramar is not untrue, but it lacks strong commitment. He is unable to forget Bhramar but neither he can forgive her, he is carried away like a wisp of grass by the passionate desire for another woman. His character lacks singleness of purpose. He has no integrity of heart and is unsteady by nature and his coarseness is deterrent, even when he experiences higher love. He is also spurred by his emotions and like an ordinary man who does not like to see a woman cheating him. He observes Rohini alone with Bhramar's father's friend at night near a tank, and in fit of anger he shoots Rohini dead. "He feels no hesitation in killing the woman he has dragged down into the mud, who came to him as a helpless and suffering mendicant, whom he stripped naked, both body and soul. His debasement is at its lowest the day he brazenly begs Bhramar to give him shelter and money."

Bankim has successfully portrayed the characters in his novels with great precision and maturity of a novelist. Most of the characters are

embodiments of certain concepts and ideas, and that most of them have a symbolic function. While portraying them he kept in mind the intricacies of life and he was very conscious of the frailty and transience of life. He opens the readers' eyes to the new sources of aesthetic delight while depicting his women characters. All his characters are also typical representatives of the nineteenth century Bengal society. They reflect the age and the history of the Bengal society in nineteenth century. Their behaviour in the daily life situations is realistic. "The craft that he applied to give characters and worlds a concrete form, was determined by his purpose or vision." He did not miss a single opportunity of observing incidents, happenings where he can gain something for the writer in him. Most of the characters have shaped themselves from real earth. The Characters in his novels are a mixture of good and evil, virtue and vice. The aim of Bankim is to create awareness in the people about the real life situations and shows the ways for the social restructuring of life results in the simultaneous presence of two strains in his novels.

• CHARACTERS

Krishanakant

Rich and renound : The title of the novella has his name as 'KrishanaKanta's Will'. The very opening of the novel says, "There was a rich Zamindar family in Haridragram. The Head of the family was Krishnakanta Roy. He was a very rich man; the annual income of his estate was nearly two lakhs of rupees. The estate was acquired jointly by him and his brother Ramakanta", sets the tone suggesting some of the momentous themes the novelist would focus upon. 'Zamindar family', 'head of the family'; 'acquired jointly' are phrases which speak volumes about feudal and patriarchal set up of the society the novelist endeavours to portray.

Honest : He was an honest and genuine person as the lines suggests "if Krishna Kanta had ever desired to cheat his brother's son, and appropriate the entire property, there was now no obstacle in his way. But he had no such evil intention. He placed Gobind Lâl with his own family, and treated him in all respects like his own sons; he determined to draw up a will bequeathing to Gobind Lâl the half-share justly belonging to RâmKântaRâi."

When his son asks about the property share he says- "It is quite just," returned Krishna Kanta; "I have given to Gobind Lâl his father's half-share."

Determined : Krishan Kanta was very determined person. When haralal argued in a rude way to him he tore his will and reduced his share

to teach him a lesson. Secondly when Haralal threatens him that how will marry a widow, he didn't heed to it and didn't change his mind.

Assertive, patriarchal nature : The novelist allows a glance at Krishnakanta's assertive, patriarchal nature as he responds to a query as to whether Krishnakanta had decided to send Rohini to the police, "What have I to do with the police? I am the police, magistrate and judge in this estate. Will it help my manliness if I were to send this unimportant woman to prison?"

Govindalal : Govindalal is himself a weak and unsteady character. He wants to seek beauty that he finds in Rohini and then he quickly forgets all his responsibilities and duties for her innocent and childish wife Bharmar who was completely devoted to him. He justifies his decision of leaving Bharmar by putting all blame on her and elopes with Rohini. He doesn't even care for the pleadings of his wife and remains unresponsive when she throws herself at his feets begging forgiveness. He is unsteady by nature which is clearly seen by the way he keeps on thinking about Bharmar while living with Rohini in Prasadpur. He keeps her like a prostitute, and treats her like a plaything. His mean and cruel character is also evident by the way how he murders Rohini suspecting her of adultery and later keeps running away from police and writing a letter to Bharmar asking for her help. Even when released from the accusation of Rohini's murder he doesn't return to his wife asking forgiveness. Bharmar dies waiting for a long time of his return but he remains insensitive of her suffering and only returns on her death bed. Overcome with immense guilt, he gives up his life as a householder and becomes an ascetic.

Govindalal realizes the gravity of the situation engendered by Rohini's love for him and feels being infinitely galvanized towards her. Therefore, he prays, "Oh Lord, save me from this danger. I shall not be able to save myself unless you give me strength. I shall die, Bhramar too will die. Abide in my heart—with you I can conquer my weakness." However, he falls prey to his „human weakness" and decides to begin life with „beauty" and not with „virtue". Govindalal goes to Bandarkhali estate to be away from Rohini and her memory; but he had to come back in a few days only to find Bhramar already left for her father's house. Bankim's subtle observation of human character reflects when he shows that though Govindalal wanted to avoid Rohini and her memory, Rohini was all pervasive and pervading in his heart and therefore, he blew the issue of Bhramar leaving the house before his arrival out of proportion and decided not to call Bhramar home or send somebody to bring her home. The novelist aptly says, "At first Rohini was a memory, then she became a sadness and finally a desire." Govindalal actualized his desire for „beauty" by running away with Rohini and began a new lease of life at Prasadpur under the pseudonym Chunalal.

Rohini : Krishnakanta's Will (1878) is another novel that deals with domesticity and personal conflicts. It presents the widow Rohini is willful and assertive. She falls in love with Krishnakant's nephew Govindlal who abandons his wife and elopes with her. However, the story ends tragically as she is murdered by Govindlal. In the novel, Rohini desires to embrace satitva which is revealed in her sorrowful utterance: "what sins had I committed that I became a child widow? For what fault am I to spend my youth like a dried-up log". The narrative highlights Rohini's desire to assume the role of a kulalakshmi and her longing to become a part of the bhadralok society, thereby gaining rights of conjugality. Although the author is sympathetic to her plight initially,

The narrator's detachment from Rohini reveals a conflict between expressing sympathy for her and castigating her desires. Her deliberate transgression problematizes and questions the codes prescribed by the scriptures regarding women.

Haralal : Haralal is the eldest son of Krishnakanta. He was greedy, dishonest, rude and way out son. He threatens his father for marrying a widow which was not in practice in those days though it was legal. He plan forge ways to get the Will of his father changed but failed. Then he thinks a plan. He seduced a beautiful young widow and promise her to marry. Though she acts on plan and Brings the stolen will. Rohini gave it to Hara Lâl to look at. He read it over, and saw that it was indeed the genuine will. The villain's face lit up with glee. But at the later stage Haralal's true intent came to Rohini's notice when he vituperated her for not surrendering the stolen Will to him.

He is also a liar. He informs Rohini that widow remarriage is allowed by our sacred books and his allurements to Rohini that she can also marry again kindled desire in Rohini for a new life. She sees rays of hope and becomes all the more attentive to Haralal as he meaningfully arouse her desire for remarriage. He said that they both are your neighbours; there is no blood relationship, nothing to prevent them from getting married.

Bhramar : Bhramar is an innocent character in the story who become prey of the wicked plan of Haralal. He was noble, humble and loving wife of Govindlal. Her pet name was "Bhramar" or "Bhomrâ." She was dark-complexioned, and hence had got the name of Bhomrâ. Author describes her as the face of bright, pure, soft, glowing picture. Though she is the woman of the house but she was too young to be taken seriously as her mother in law and sister in law take care of homely affairs. Her true love towards her husband brings happiness in their life. She loves her husband very much.

At some point in the story she favoured Rohini. She firmly believed that Rohini was guiltless. She believed in her innocence as firmly as she did in her own existence.

But when Bhramar learns that Rohini has already expressed her love for Govindalal. She gets outrageous and calls one of her maids named Khiri and asks her to go to Rohini and "tell her to go and kill herself." This shows her deep love towards her husband.

• ROHINI AS A REBELLION - IN KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

Rohini is the main character of the story. She is plotted beautifully by the author. Rohini in Krishnakanta's Will emerges as a rebellion as she is defiant to all practices that impede her desire to remarry. She is characterized by boldness, ability to speak out what she thinks is unjust, oppressive and biased. She plans a happy life though destroying Bhramar's. She is determined, focused and uncompromising. Such tendencies in a woman in orthodox society of colonial Bengal were discouraged and abhorred. However, Bankim portrays her as an incarnation of change in the status of women determined by patriarchs. Her role as a rebellion has been justly and appropriately portrayed in the novel. However, the tragic end she met with, reinforces Bankimchandra's attempt to justify that women venturing into socially unacceptable practices invite destruction and death. Rohini's attraction for Govindalal and her ultimate elopement with him, as evidenced by Krishnakanta's Will led to her own suffering as well as Govindalal's.

Rohini is an immortal character in Krishnakanta's Will. The first encounter of the readers with Rohini has been executed in the novel with great artistic brilliance and elegance. The novelist describes Rohini, "...Rohini was then in the full bloom of youth and overflowed with beauty like the harvest moon in autumn." Besides being beautiful, lively, agile, energetic and vibrant she is bold and articulate. The novelist seems to exhibit flood of sympathy for her although she comes to a sad end. A strongly determined widow, Rohini's headstrong decisions and desire to enjoy life, thwart the long-established socio-cultural practices characterize her as a rebel woman. Her determined step towards remarriage, her burning pulsating desire to snatch Govindalal from Bhramar, her passion and zest for life stamp Rohini out as a symbolic representation of a society Bankim wants to see in Bengal.

Bankim was a reformist through and through and he advocated for a change in the status of women which he definitively portrayed in his literary works. Rohini's rebellious, determined nature is required for bringing about change in the long internalized patriarchal and feudal

society. She defies protocols of widow and wears clothes of her choice and wear bangles which a widow was not expected to use in the Bengali society.

The portrayal of 'New Woman' in Indian literary scenario finds its fullest manifestation in Rohini who remains resolute and unyielding to Haralal's pressure once she is able to read his heinous trick of having the Will stole and then denying to marry her. Haralal's true intent came to Rohini's notice when he vituperated her for not surrendering the stolen Will to him. Rohini's outrage and determined nature comes to light as she takes on Haralal:

"Rohini suddenly stood up and, threw back her dhoti from over her head and looked at Haralal full in the face. 'I am a thief? And you are a saint! Who told me to steal? Who tempted me? Who deceived a simple woman? You are a son of Krishnakanta Roy, but you cheated me. You said which the vilest of men would not say, you are a cheat and a liar. And you say that I am not worthy of you! There are no such wretched women as will have a scoundrel like you. If you were a woman, I would give the broom. Since you are a man, leave now, before I tell you what I really think of you.'"

Bankim Chandra exposes the hidden personality of Rohini whom Haralal betrayed for his selfish interests. Hence, the otherwise unseen side of her personality surfaced ferociously and Haralal was forced to run before her. Such blunt demeanor of a widow with a feudal lord's son was unthinkable in the nineteenth century orthodox Bengali society.

Bankim portrays Rohini's loyalty and fidelity to Brahmananda and KrishnaKanta. As a poor widow, she enjoys every one's affection in Haridragram. Even Govindalal was soft towards her for her innocence. The novelist unwinds her innocent heart full of desire and justifies that all her adventures and misadventures to realize her dream of enjoying 'a full blooded life' was a natural drive because she was vibrant with youth. She is extremely conscious of her physical needs. She responds to Haralal "you must give me what you said you would give", which has an implicit bearing on her desperate desire to bring an end to her widowhood, realize her individuality and satisfy her biological needs.

The socio-cultural milieu of colonial Bengal comes to light as the novelist embarks upon throwing light on Rohini's behavior and her status in the society. The novelist in exquisite and lucid terms says:

She had become a widow in her early youth, but had acquired some improper habits for a widow: she wore a black bordered dhoti, bangles on her wrists and took up chewing betel leaves. On the other hand, she excelled in cooking—she was like Draupadi: all Bengali vegetarian dishes, jhol, ambal, charchari, ganta, dalnaetc received a special flavor in her hands. She had no rival in needle works, in decorating with rice paste and

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(KrishanaKanta's Will)

in flower decoration. She was the only one who was in demand in the neighbourhood for dressing women's hair and arraying brides.

A widow was not expected to use 'black bordered dhoti' or 'bangles' or 'chew betel leaves' as part of convention of the society. However, Bankim's Rohini undermined such conventions and thus became the representative of 'new woman' in colonial Bengal. Her expertise in cooking various dishes has been extolled. Haralal informs Rohini that widow remarriage is "allowed by our sacred books" and his allurements to Rohini, "You can also marry again," kindled desire in Rohini for a new life. She sees rays of hope and becomes all the more attentive to Haralal as he meaningfully arouse her desire for remarriage, "..... we are your neighbours; there is no blood relationship, nothing to prevent us from getting married."

Bankim Chandra exposes Rohini's heightened frustration, unquenched burning desire and venomous jealousy as she harangues herself and indulges in self-contempt.

'For what fault was I destined to become a widow while still a child? Have I committed more sins than others that I should be deprived of all worldly pleasures? What is my fault that although I am young and beautiful, I am condemned to live the rest of my life like a dried-up piece of wood? People who have all the happiness that life can give—take Govindalal's wife for instance—what virtues do they have that I have not? What spiritual merit have they acquired that they should have happiness while I have none. I do not really grudge them their happiness, but why are all paths closed to me? What shall I do with my unhappy life?'

Rohini is acutely conscious of her beauty and youthfulness. She speaks blatantly against the norms of the society which impede her desire to quench physical thirsts and enter into remarriage. She is jealous of Bhramar's happiness and she rightly feels that as a human being she has her right to enjoy a full blooded life and at the same time she is oblivious of the fact that her act would destroy Bhramar completely.

Rohini's succinct but meaningful repartee to Govindalal in response to his insistence on telling him the reason of her melancholy, "Someday I will tell you. Not today. Some day you must hear what I have to say." speaks volumes about the psychological vacuum she has been experiencing in the absence of a life partner.

The tug of war going on inside Rohini represented by Sumati and Kumati symbolize her dilemma as to whether she should return the Will to Krishnakanta. However, Sumati prevails over Kumati in the end and she decides to return the will because, "the forged will must not be passed" and she doesn't want to "ruin such a nice man (Govindalal)". More importantly, "The image of Govindalal was printed in deep colours in Rohini's heart."

Rohini is Bankim's 'strong will incarnate' whose zest for life and desire to enjoy its beauty to the fullest emboldened her to set all socio-cultural restrictions at naught and work single mindedly towards realizing her goal. Rohini confides in Govindalal the reason why she had burnt the counterfeit will and kept the original will in place. She saw an extremely good and humane human being in Govindalal who must not be subjected to injustice. Rohini says to Govindalal, "You gave me something which I never had in this life and shall never get again in this life."

Rohini's short but emotive sentence is fraught with meaning. She not only drew Govindalal's attention but also hinted at her sad plight of being a widow who never seemed to be blessed with the opportunity of enjoying life as a married woman. The novelist says, "Rohini saw that he (Govindalal) understood. She was embarrassed but very happy. She forgot her pain and wanted to live again, did not want to go away." She refers to her own feelings for Govindalal poetically, "There is no treatment for this disease. I shall never be able to be free of it." Rohini cleverly puts in Govindalal's mind what she wanted to and feels happy because she was, so far, not able to divulge directly to Govindalal that she has fallen for him. Bankimchandra portrays Rohini's daring nature as a 'new woman' in a feudal set up.

Govindalal's love for Rohini became an open secret. While allowing the readers a peep into Krishnakanta's psyche who already had inkling about Govindalal's feelings for Rohini, the novelist goes on to claim that Govindalal was keen to save her but he did not give the least air about it to Govindalal. Bankimchandra draws a life-like picture of the Bengali society in the colonial period where privacies and secrets were a far cry.

The novelist's craftsmanship and his powerful imagination come to light in his depiction of Rohini's suicide attempt. Rohini decides to kill herself by drowning and goes to the Varunighat. The floating pitcher in the Varuni gave rise to curiosity in Govindalal's mind and he went to the ghat only to discover "Rohini lying under water like a golden image set in crystal, her body lighting up the bed of dark water."

The sensual description of Rohini's body and different parts of her body, Govindalal's act of blowing air into Rohini's mouth all point to the novelist's craftsmanship and sound understanding of natural therapy. On being asked as to why she attempted suicide, Rohini says, "My heart is burning with desire, there is cool water in front of me. I cannot touch it not in this life. I cannot hope to touch it." Rohini's statement exposes her desperation and her desire to live full blooded life. She loves Govindalal but social restrictions do not allow her to enjoy life with him. Colonial Bengal was alien to Rohini's blunt, articulate nature because, such brazen defiance of established norms of the society was unthinkable.

Bankim Chandra's characters are not supermen or superwomen, rather, they are characterized by their own human vices and virtues. They are realistic.

The novelist dwells upon betrayal inherent in Rohini's character. Rohini's blissful life with Govindalal facilitated by Govindalal's elopement seemed to augment her desire for more enjoyment and more pleasure. Such transgression spells her doom in the long run. Change of her status and life seemed to make her more ambitious instilling in her more hunger. Bankim describes Rohini's attraction to Nisakar :

I suspect she had quite different reasons for wanting to meet Nisakar. The two had exchanged glances and divined each other's thoughts. She had noticed that he was handsome, had a beautiful pair of eyes, and was a prince among men for his manliness. She resolved not to be unfaithful to Govindalal--- but this was quite different from being unfaithful.

The patriarch within Govindalal comes to life and commits Rohini's murder for her infidelity. Bankimchandra shows that Rohini's tragic end is self-invited and her death justifies the importance of the age-old traditions of the Bengali society. Thus, the novelist seems to foster an inclination towards the social norms as shown through the death of Rohini. Bankim's female protagonists are reckoned as strong women with the potential to stand against oppressive social norms, customs and traditions.

• TREATMENT OF WOMEN CHARACTER BY BANKIMCHANDRA CHATTERJEE

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee began his literary career as a writer of verse. He then turned to fiction. *Durgeshnandini*, his first Bengali romance, was published in 1865. His famous novels include *Kapalkundala* (1866), *Mrinalini* (1869), *Vishbriksha* (1873), *Chandrasekhar* (1877), *Rajani* (1877), *Rajsinha* (1881), and *Devi Chaudhurani* (1884). He wanted to bring about a cultural revival of Bengal by stimulating the intellect of the Bengali speaking people through literary campaign. With this end in view he brought out monthly magazine called *Bangadarshanin* 1872.

Conflicts in idea on role of women in conservative patriarchal structures

The pre-marital romance which was introduced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his novels in Bengali literature. The idea was completely in opposition of the male-dominated orthodox society of that time. He brought into picture a very different kind of image of women which was baffling for the existed social structure of that time. He deals with the emotional and sexual tangles among women within the conservative society. He also depicts the frustration of Bengali women within these patriarchal

structures. He questions the values and the beliefs of male-orthodox society and resents women's roles determined by conservative society merely as a respectable wife and mother with no individuality of their own.

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(*KrishanaKanta's Will*)

Although his views and ideas were assisted by the socio-political milieu of that time because there was British rule at that time and western education was taught in schools and colleges which supported such kinds of ideas and concepts but at the same time the conservative society of that time was completely in the opposition of this new and different image of women portrayed by Bankim in his novels. They believed that these new kinds of attitudes would spoil women and then they would become rebellious and assertive and would question the existed male patriarchal order and they would threaten its security. The women had no life of their own. Their function was to keep the family together, adoring their husbands, taking care of their children within the domestic atmosphere. They did not have an identity and individuality of their own. Women's education was derived from two sources – knowledge of epics largely conveyed through the oral tradition and their own work within the household. They were born to serve others. Their personal feelings and desires were not taken into consideration.

Impact of changing scenario on women in Bankim's novel

Bengal was undergoing a turmoil and witnessing modernity in the nineteenth century which brought many new tensions within gender relationships, love, marriage, illicit affairs, jealousy, break up of marriage and similar other issues. These issues found place in Bankim's novels. He was first writer to portray women as individuals in his works within the framework of realistic society. He did it for the sake of his love for humanity and he wanted to raise the voice of the oppressed women. His women characters assert his deep understanding of the human mind and his remarkable power of delineation. His novels also portray many defiant heroines like Ayesha in *Durgeshnandini*, Prafulla in *Devi Chaudhrani* and Shanti in *Anandmath* and many other characters. Clarke has commented about Bankim's novels :

"The social life of Bankim's novels is pitched at different levels, according to the status of his principle characters. He himself came of a middle class family, and it is only when dealing with characters of this class that he is at home and that his descriptions are realistic and convincing."
(Clarke 69)

Realistic picture of women plight

In his novels we mainly find a struggle between individual and social being shackled by conventions. In this process the individuality of women suffers most. They have been denied of their primary rights and at the

same time the opportunities of self- fulfillment. At that time women were deprived of the rights of education, inheritance, free choices in male dominated society. On the one hand they are seen clinging to the social roots and on the other hand fighting against the blind conformism and social tyranny. Bankim Chandra as a novelist was chiefly concerned with suffering of these women. The issues related to women plight make us familiar with nineteenth century Bengal. Women have really powerful roles in almost all of his novels. Though the women in his novel are powerful but he didn't praise them as he had a kind of fear in his mind that these women, so inflamed with passion and desires, could not be accepted by the conservative orthodox society. He was courageous to reveal the attraction between men and women even outside the conjugal life which was not acceptable in orthodox society and which that society did everything to suppress. It was said that Bankim derived this courage and strength by reading European literature.

On the one hand he has made his women characters to question the social injustice done to them without any serious fault committed by them and on the other hand there was a conflict within his mind which forced him to cling to autocratic males who dominated social life. For example Rohini, who is a widow in KrishanaKanta's will. Rohini is young and beautiful and not inferior to anybody in her intelligence and she questions her own state by saying "what sins had I committed that I became a child widow? For what fault am I to spend my youth like a dried-up log". She was an orphan and there was no brother or sister or any friend to console her in her distress. She had nothing to lose in the wide empty world to save her good name. That is why she fell in love with Govindalal, knowing that he is already married to Bharmar.

Injustice to women with illicit passion

Not man but women of his novels are punished for their boldness and illicit passion like Rohini was punished in 'KrishanaKanta's Will'. She does not deserve the punishment or the treatment meted out to her. Bankim brought into play the conservatism of the society even when acknowledging the power of socially transgressive romantic love. He reveals the secret passions and desires of Hindu wives and widows and men drawn into clandestine relationship with others outside their marital life. Although he represents the conflicts between personal aspirations and cultural practices and emotional and sexual needs of his characters but he has made all these clandestine and transgressive thoughts and feelings invariably ending in death and disaster.

The women characters once deviating from social code and following their own desires meet disaster and death and are left with no other alternative. I think it is his conservatism that compels him to choose these

kinds of conclusions for his novels. This is also evident by the way how he gives a clean chit to Govindalal who is the cause of the suffering of both Bharmar and Rohini.

Although “a taste for transgression” could be detected in all his novels and it is central theme in *Bishabriksha*, *KrishanaKanta's Will*, *Indira*. In his novel *Bishabriksha* he has tried to morally caution men and women of illicit passion. Here, also, he has adopted a very conservative approach. This illicit passion is not justified in his eyes even when it leads to the marriage of Nagendra and Kundanandini, two characters in this novel. Through his writings he gives a message that once drawn to the life of immoral acts, men and women are unable to redeem themselves. He is making a point that lack of judgment is responsible for the growth of this illicit love and passion. Another character widow Kundanandini is forced to end her life once Nagendra and his wife are reunited after having both realized their folly. Nagendra feels that he has fallen a prey to carnal temptation by loving and marrying Kundanandini and his wife Suryamukhi realizes her fault for not having thwarted her husband's marriage with her. Here, again Bankim fails to choose a good life for the widow.

Though he concerned with the issues related to widow women but he could not do justice and they end in disaster or death. In reality Bankim resents widow remarriages that's why both the widows Kundanandini and Rohini are not given any good life to live after they are transgressed. Multiple marriages of men are common in his novels as in *Krishna Kanta's Will*, *Bishabriksha*, *Kapalkundala*, but if a woman marries more than once, then she meets gruesome fate. At the same time he is upholding family values and also quick to condemn any injustice done to a wife as in the case of Bharmar in *Krishnakanta's Will*. He is on the side of wronged wife Bharmar who has the courage to say to her husband that she will respect him as long as he is worthy of respect this point also illustrates the idea that to what extent he justifies the conduct of his characters.

High values to the domestic women

On the other side, he rewards the women who are domestic and ideal for family culture like Prafulla in

his novel *Devi Chaudhrani* in which Bankim has once again proven his idealization of domestic life. Prafulla, the protagonist, is so defiant and courageous that she participates in the freedom struggle against British Government. She was rewarded as she returned to her in-law's home and accepting her role as a respectable wife leaving her previously powerful role as a great freedom fighter. Here he has portrayed a very different image of a woman because at that time it was very unnatural for women to participate in independence movement and they always remained behind

purdah and seclusion, Bankim here shows the freedom struggle led by a woman, Prafulla. This proved to be a powerful message for the women who gradually began to come outside of their homes to participate in the freedom struggle. At the end of the novel he loved to see Prafulla as a domestic woman. It shows his praise for the women who follow cultural rules and domestic responsibilities. This is because Bankim might have the conservative society of his time in his mind which was not ready to accept such rebelliousness from the women of their times and second reason might be that, he had certain beliefs in the values of domesticity to some extent as he himself came from orthodox middle class.

New era women

Conflicts between personal aspirations and cultural practices characterize Bankim's novels. There are flagrant references to the desire to satisfy emotional and sexual needs of his characters which ultimately invite fatal consequences. His female characters are shown as deviating from the accepted normal social practices, defying the established norms and thus they find themselves in chaos. His female protagonists are 'new women' amidst oppressive old traditions. He has not spoken freely and openly on the issues of widow remarriage and child marriage. But despite certain controversies he is overall the first writer dealing with emotional needs and conflicts of Bengali women of upper middleclass. In his short story *Indira*, He has also described the issue of transgression but in a very different way by making a husband falling in the illicit love with his wife not knowing her true identity. Here he has represented a very triumphant figure of woman. Here the speaker narrator is a woman who tells her own story, this technique of narration was very new in the Bengali novel. It clearly shows the importance of women in society. We cannot imagine a woman who is so individualistic engineers in the medieval literature of Bengal. Here Indira shuns the hesitation, fear and the Sastric shackles of medieval woman and establishes her superiority in worldly affairs. Here, Bankim has represented a new kind of woman apart from the role of woman as mother, wife or sister assigned by the orthodox Hindu society. Bankim is here asserting a woman's identity which was missing in Bengali society of that time. Here individuality is the essence.

Bankim is depicting the inner conflict in the Bengali woman 'modern' and yet conformist under social compulsions slowly discovering her individuality & identity. She is the champion of women's place in society.

In my conclusion I would like to say is that in a sense Bankim exposes the false moral conventions of Bengali society without developing empathy for the victims he has portrayed in his novels. He did not show the compassion towards the victims and at the same time, he could not treat the sinner with love, and kindness. I have really debated the theme of

transgression in his novels and to what extent it is justified for men and women and his ability to express the inner frustration and turmoil with in his female characters.

Bankimchandra Chatterjee
(*Krishna Kanta's Will*)

• EXERCISES

1. What are the major issues that were the pats of Bankim Chandra's novel.
2. What are the major works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
3. Give an account of life sketch of Bankim Chand Chatterjee.
4. Comment on the 'treatment of women in the novel of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
5. Explore the plight of women in the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee with references to the novels you studied.
6. Give detail character of Rohini as in 'Krishna Kanta's Will'.
7. Only women are punished by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his novel 'Krishna Kanta's Will'.
8. Throw light on the characterization of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

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UNIT-II

Munshi Prem Chand (Gift of a Cow)

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Objectives
- Learning Objective
- Introduction
- Plot
- Title
- About Author
- Characters
- Summary of the novel
- Themes in Godan
- Godan as a plea for Indian Farmers
- Realism and Symbolism in Godan
- Analysis of Godan
- Exercise
- References

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Answer the questions based on novel 'Gift of Cow'.
- Describe the characters of the novel 'Gift of Cow'
- Write about the themes of novel 'Gift of Cow'
- Understand the plot and summary of the novel 'Gift of Cow'
- Explain the background of the novel 'Gift of Cow'.

• INTRODUCTION

It was first published in 1936 and is considered one of the greatest Hindi-Urdu novels of modern Indian literature. Themed around the socio economic deprivation as well as the exploitation of the village poor, the novel was the last complete novel of Premchand. It was translated into English in 1968 translation by Gordon C. Roadarmel is now considered "a classic in itself".

The story revolves around many characters representing the various sections of Indian community. The peasant and rural society is represented by the family of Hori mahato and his family members which includes Dhania, Rupa and Sona (Daughters), Gobar (son), Jhunia (daughter in law). The Story starts from a point where Hori has a deep desire of having a cow as other millions of poor peasant. He purchased one cow by taking debt. Hori tried to cheat his brothers for 10 rupees. This in turn led to a fight between his wife and his younger brother Heera's wife. Jealous of this, his younger brother Heera poisoned the cow and ran away because of the fear of police action. Hori took the loan and paid the bribe to the police and was able to clear off his younger brother's name. Jhunia was widow and eloped with Gobar after she got pregnant by him. Because of the fear of the action from villagers Gobar also ran away. Panchayat issued a penalty on Hori. Hori again took the loan and paid the penalty. Hori is in huge debt from local money lenders and eventually married his daughter Rupa for mere 200 rupees 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 grand son, leads to Hori's death because of excessive work. When he is about to die, his wife Dhania took out all the money she had (1.25 Rupees) and made Hori pay to the priest on behalf of (Godaan) (cow donation). This eventually fulfils the traditional dream of Hori but still 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. 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 stand by his honesty, duties and judgement when time requires. He is shown died partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied. Other rural characters includes but not limited to Datadin (priest), Matadin, Bhola, Bateswari etc. The urban society is represented by Malati devi(Doctor), Mr. Mehta(Lecturer and philosopher), Mr. Khanna (Banker), Rai Sahib (Zamindar), Mr Tankha (Broker) and Mr. Mirza (social worker). Rai sahib is two times local election winner. He wanted to marry his daughter, want to win in election and claim the property of his in-laws. He married his daughter to another rich, widow and rake zamindar. He claimed and won the zamindari of his in-laws. He won the election and became the municipal minister. But when he planned to get his son married to the daughter of Raja Suryankant for his family's prestige, his son refused that. He is in love with Saroj, the younger sister of Malati devi. They both married and went to London. His son claimed and won the entire property Rai sahib won from in-laws leaving Rai sahib in huge debt. His daughter got divorced. This eventually left Rai sahib too unsatisfied despite all his efforts. Malati devi is a beautiful lady. She is mostly involved in levish lifestyle with many men around her. She keeps interacted most of them but do not love any of them. Mr. Khanna is

married but is in love with Malati. Malati in turn falls in love with Mr. Mehta because of his ideology. On a trip to the village of Hori, she explored herself. She started serving poor and got involved in many social activities. After seeing the change in Malati, Mr. Mehta falls in love with Malati. But though Malati loves Mr. Mehta, she refused his marriage proposal. She now wants to serve the poor and do not want to marry. Mr. Mehta and Malati keep serving the poor and needy people together. Malati devi is the only character shown as satisfied at the end because of her commitment to the charity. Mr. Khanna eventually started loving his wife and stop taking interest in Malati devi. The narrative represents the average Indian farmer's existence under colonial rule, with the protagonist facing cultural and feudal exploitation. It shows how the life of these character takes the shapes.

• **PLOT**

The story revolves around many characters representing the various sections of Indian community. The peasant and rural society is represented by the family of Hori Mahato and his family includes his wife Dhanias, daughters Rupa and Sona, son Gobar, daughter-in-law Jhunias. The story begins with Hori wanting to have a cow as other millions of poor peasants. He purchased, on debt of Rs. 80, a cow from Bhola, a cowherd. Hori tried to cheat his brothers for 10 rupees. This in turn led to a fight between his wife and his younger brother, Heera's wife. Jealous of Hori, his younger brother Heera poisoned the cow and ran away because of the fear of police action. When the police came inquiring the death of the cow, Hori took a loan and paid the bribe to the police and was able to clear off his younger brother's name. Jhunias, the daughter of Bhola, was a widow and eloped with Gobar after she got pregnant by him. Because of the fear of the action from villagers Gobar also ran away to the town. Hori and Dhanias were unable to throw a girl carrying their son's child and gave her protection and accepted her as their daughter-in-law. The village panchayat fines Hori as his wife tackles the personal attack of the Pandit on them for sheltering Jhunias. Hori again is compelled to take a loan and pay the penalty.

Hori is in huge debt from local money lenders and eventually married off his daughter Rupa for mere 200 rupees 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 Hori's death because of excessive work. When he is about to die, his wife Dhanias took out all the money she had (1.25 rupees) and made Hori pay the priest on behalf of godaan (cow donation). This eventually fulfils the traditional dream of Hori but still his desire to pay

back the 200 rupees to his son-in-law and to have a cow to feed the milk to his grandson remain unfulfilled.

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, duties and judgement when time requires. He is shown dead partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied towards the end of the story. In a way, Hori stays true to his beliefs hence making the ending bittersweet.

Getting a cow is something Hori does dream of it. It was his life's ambition. His greatest dream since any ideas of living of bank interest, of buying land or of building a mansion were too grandiose for his cramped mind to comprehend. In fact however, the book begins with his dream being fulfilled but the perfidy of a never-do-we brother means that this happiness lasts only short while. Among the consequences of his having accepted the cow from a herdsman from a neighboring village. Bhola. Hori's son Gobar falls handover heels in love with Bhola's widowed daughter Jhunai But because of criticism Hori did not accept Jhunai. This casts all in dishonor including Jhunai's dad and the whole village is outraged.

Caste is one of the central features of this society. The villagers largely of the same caste and it is the main thing that binds them together making them a sort of extended family. But caste brings obligations with it and violation the rules can mean excommunication. The major problem in the village is that everyone is deep in debt and that the debts keep growing. Borrow thirty rupees and before you know it what with fees and compound interest you owe two hundred. Premchand devotes considerable space to money lending Practices, understand able, since money lending, is so central to all their lives cash problems don't only plague the poor and rural; folk, much of the novel also centers around a rich urban class, the zamindar and his circle of acquaintances which includes lawyers, professors, industrialist, doctor's newspaper editor and businessmen, several of them also have money trouble though things work out much more easily for them. The gift of cow is a political novel and Premchand occasionally perches but generally he concentrates more on recounting the lives of these many characters and showing by example. The contrast between village and city life is quite well handled and there is considerable cross-over between the two involving several of the characters. Godan is the main one bridging the two worlds.

*Munshi Prem Chand
(Gift of a Cow)*

• TITLE

A realistic picture of the Indian rural society :

Prem Chand's "Godan" is considered as one of the greatest novels in Indian literature. It presents a realistic picture of the Indian rural society. A critic rightly observes, "It is a story of changing people, hungry and semi-

starved, yet hopeful and optimistic. "Godan deals with the miserable lives of the Indian peasant. The novelist depicts and feudal villages teamed semari with its courageous belief in future renewal. According to the novel, a change in social set-up is sufficient to transform the lives of the individual. His characters have no courage to fight against the adverse conditions. They accept the given social conditions. They bear all kinds of exploitation. They have an unshakable faith in destiny. Here he exposes their weaknesses and the evils in the Indian society.

Hori's only ambition is to own a cow:

"Godan" opens with Hori busy in his house hold and agriculture duties. His wife, Dhaniam assists him in his work at home and also in the field. Despite their hard labour, they can not clear their debts. They have a son, Gobar and two daughters, Sona and Rupa. Poverty and exploitation have made them rough. In the midst of such hardships, Hori's only ambition is to own a cow which gives a lots of milk. It is very hot outside and he has to do much work. Suddenly he sees Bhola with his hard of cows. He expresses his wish and Bhola agrees to give him a cow on loan. Hori is overjoyed and starts thinking of a life of luxury with the help of this cow.

Hori's effort to clear the dept:

Hori works in the hot sun because he has to clear the dept of a Brahmin. He gets sun stroke and falls unconscious. He is brought home and Dhaniam weeps on seeing the dying man's face. In these last moments, Hori hears the voice around him but can not see. Someone suggest that hit is the proper time to offer Godan for a dying man. It is ironical that throughout his life, Hori struggled to earn enough money to buy a cow but even new at the time of his death. He is not able to fulfill his ambition. Suddenly his eyes become lifeless like stone and Dhaniam faints on seeing her husband deed.

A pathetic and tragic note :

At this point, the novel ends with a pathetic and tragic note and the reader closes the novel with a heavy heart. Here the characters are passive against unfavorable circumstances, and they become helpless puppets'. The action covers a long period of many years. The novelist's main concern is the social set-up rather than individuals. They lead a collective life, not an individual one.

Thematic title :

The main theme of the novel is tradition versus individual. The title of the novel, "Godan" is highly suggestive and meaningful. Here the novelist uses the powerful device of irony to intensify the tragic effect of the situation. The novel is also a tragedy of Indian peasantry on an epic scales.

Munshi Premchand, Indian writer (novel writer, story writer, and dramatist), is a famous writer of the early 20th century. He gave his great writings and enrich Hindi literature. His birth name was Dhanpat Rai Srivastav and the pen name was Nawab Rai. He wrote his all writings with his pen name. Finally, he changed his name to Munshi Premchand. Munshi is an honorary prefix given by his lovers in society because of his quality and effective writings. As a Hindi writer, he wrote approximately a dozen novels, 250 short stories, numerous essays, and translations (he translated a number of foreign literary works into the Hindi language).

Dhanpat Rai was born on 31 July 1880 in village Lamhi, in Varanasi district. His grandfather, Guru Sahai Rai was a patwari and his father Ajaib Lal was a post office clerk. His mother was Anandi Devi Dhanpat Rai was the fourth child of Ajaib Lal and Anandi. His uncle, Mahabir, a rich landowner, nicknamed him "Nawab", meaning baron. "Nawab Rai" was the first pen name chosen by Dhanpat Rai.

When he was 7 years old, Dhanpat Rai began his education at a Madrasa in Lalpur, located near Lamhi. He learnt Urdu and Persian from a maulvi in the madrasa. When he was 8, his mother died after a long illness. His grandmother also died soon after. He felt isolated as his elder sister Suggi had already been married, and his father was busy and now posted at Gorakhpur. He remarried but Premchand received little affection from his stepmother.

As a child, Dhanpat Rai sought solace in fiction, and developed a fascination for books. He heard the stories of the Persian-language fantasy epic *Tilism-e-Hoshrub* at a tobacconist's shop. He took the job of selling books for a book wholesaler, thus getting the opportunity to read a lot of books. He learnt English at a missionary school, and studied several works of fiction including George W. M. Reynolds's eight-volume *The Mysteries of the Court of London*. He composed his first literary work at Gorakhpur, which was never published and is now lost.

In the mid-1890s, Dhanpat Rai enrolled at the Queen's College at Benares. In 1895, he was married at the age of 15, while still studying in the ninth grade. It was not a match to Premchand in many ways.

His father died in 1897 after a long illness. He managed to pass the matriculation exam with second division. He could not continue his study due to poor financial condition. He started taking tuitions and later in 1900, Premchand secured a job as an assistant teacher at the Government District School, Bahraich and then he was transferred to the District School in Pratapgarh.

After a family dispute his wife left him forever and he remarried to a child widow named Shivarani Devi in the year 1906 and became a father of two sons named Sripat Rai and Amrit Rai. After his second marriage, he faced several social oppositions. His wife wrote a book on him after his death named Premchand Ghar Mein.

He was posted to Mahoba and then to Hamirpur as a Sub-deputy Inspector of Schools in the year 1909. He got promoted as an Assistant Master at the Normal High School, Gorakhpur, in the month of August in 1916. He got promoted as a Deputy Inspectors of Schools in the year 1921 after completing his BA degree from Allahabad in 1919. He decided to resign from the government job after attending a meeting held at Gorakhpur on the 8th of February 1921 when Mahatma Gandhi asked people to join the non-cooperation movement. He was facing financial problems and health issues so he relocated to Kanpur in the year 1931 as a teacher in a Marwari College. He also served as a headmaster at Kashi Vidyapeeth for short period. He also koved to Bombay for one-year contact to manage his finance but because of his bad health he returned and died on the 8th of October 1936.

Career as a writer

He wrote his first short novel by the title of Asrar-e-Ma'abid means Devasthan Rahasya in Hindi "The Mystery of God's Abode". For job purpose he moved to Allahabad then Kanpur in the year 1905 where he met the editor of a magazine Mr. Daya Narain Nigam and his magazine was 'Zamana' where he published his articles and stories in the later years.

He published his first story named 'Duniya Ka Sabse Anmol Ratan' in Zamana in the year 1907. In the same year, he published his second short novel named 'Hamkhurma-o-Hamsavab', ashort novel 'Krishna' and the stories like 'Roothi Rani', Soz-e-Watan etc. Around 500 copies of Soz-e-Watan were burnt in a raid of a British collector. This is the reason why he changed his name from "Nawab Rai" to "Premchand". He started writing in Hindi in 1914. The first Hindi writing Saut was published in the Saraswati magazine in the month of December in 1915 and Sapta Saroj in the month of June in 1917.

At Gorakhpur, he translated many books to Hindi. His first Hindi novel named Seva Sadan (original language was Urdu by the title Bazaar-e-Husn) was published in Hindi in the year 1919. After leaving his job in 1921 and after returning to Varanasi started focusing on his literary career. During this period, he suffered financial problems and poor health till his death in 1936. He became successful in establishing his own printing press and publishing house in the Varanasi named Saraswati Press in the year 1923 where he published his writings Rangabhumi, Nirmala, Pratigya,

Gaban, Hans, Jagaran etc. After leaving the college he came back to Banaras as an editor of the Maryada magazine, where he published the novel Karmabhumi in the year 1932. and later as an editor of the Madhuri magazine at Lucknow.

Munshi Prem Chand
(Gift of a Cow)

He tied luck in the Hindi film industry in Bombay in the year 1934 and got a job in scriptwriting from the Ajanta Cinetone production house. He became successful in maintaining his family's financial difficulties. He wrote the film script for the movie Mazdoor by Mohan Bhawnani and use to stay in Dadar. He played a cameo role (leader of laborers) in the same film. He did not like the commercial film industry environment of Bombay and came back to Banaras after completing the one-year contract.

Due to his bad health he was unable to publish his writing named Hans and handed it over to the Indian Literary Counsel. In the year 1936, he was nominated as first President of the Progressive Writers' Association at Lucknow. Kafan was one of his best writing in the year 1936. His last story was Cricket Match which was published after his death in Zamana in the year 1937. His last and one of the premium Hindi novels is Godaan. He never moved outside the country for writing or studying purposes that's why he never became renowned among foreign literary figures.

His works

Premchand wrote over three hundred short stories and fourteen novels, many essays and letters, plays and translations. Many of Premchand's works were translated into English and Russian after his death.

Novels

- (a) Devasthan Rahasya (Urdu title: Asrar-e-Ma'abid)
- (b) Prema (Urdu title: Hamkhurma-o-Ham Sawab)
- (c) Kishna
- (d) Roothi Rani
- (e) Soz-e-Watan (Urdu)
- (f) Vardaan (Urdu title: Jalwa-e-Isar)
- (g) Seva Sadan (Urdu title: Bazaar-e-Husn)
- (h) Premashram (Urdu title: Gosha-e-Afiyat)
- (i) Rangbhoomi (Urdu title: Chaugan-e-Hasti)
- (j) Nirmala (Urdu title: Nirmala)
- (k) Kaayakalp (Urdu title: Parda-i-Majaz)
- (l) Pratigya (Urdu title: Bewa)
- (m) Gaban (Urdu title: Ghaban)
- (n) Karmabhoomi (Urdu title: Maidan-e-Amal)

- (o) Godaan
- (p) Mangal-sootra (incomplete)

Short Stories

- (a) Adeeb Ki Izat
- (b) Duniya ka Sabse Anmol Ratan
- (c) Bade Bhai Sahab
- (d) Beti ka Dhan
- (e) Saut
- (f) Sajjanata ka dand
- (g) Panch Parameshvar
- (h) Ishwariya Nyaya
- (i) Pariksha
- (j) Ghasvali
- (k) Nashaa
- (l) Lottery, to name a few.
- (m) Some of His other Works include:
- (n) Film script
- (o) Mazdoor (1934)

Plays

- (a) Karbala
- (b) Prem Ki Vedi
- (c) Sangram
- (d) Roohani Shadi
- (e) Tajurba
- (f) Biographies
- (g) Durgadas
- (h) Mahatma Sheikh-sadi (biography of Saadi)

Essays

- (a) Qalam Tyag aur Talwar
- (b) Kuchh Vichar (two parts)

Children's Books

- (a) Jangal ki Kahaniyan
- (b) Manmodak
- (c) Kutte ki Kahani
- (d) Ram Charcha

Characters from Rural life :

(i) **Hori** : Hori is a peasant who is married to Dhania and has two daughters and a son. He is an up-righteous man and struggles throughout his life to preserve his up-righteousness. He has two younger brothers and he considers his obligation as the eldest brother to help them, sacrificing his own family. He bribes the police officers who come to the village enquiring the death of his cow. Thus, he saves the police from entering his brother, Heera's house for a search. He is a man who is bound to the community and considers the verdict of the panchayat as final. He is penalised for the death of the cow and he accepts. He feels orphaned to be out of the community and hence accepts the penalty levied by the panchayat when Gobar brings home a low-caste girl. Similarly, he allows Bhola to take his ox away as he is neither able to pay the cost of it nor willing expel Jhunias from his house. They have accepted her as their daughter-in-law and her child as their grandchild. He is kind and generous. He gives shelter to Seliya, a cobbler's daughter who is exploited by Matadin, a Brahmin, and is shirked by her own people.

(ii) **Dhanias** : Dhanias is Hori's wife, devoted to him and always supportive to him. She is bold and fiery and cannot tolerate injustice. She raises her voice against injustice, against the wishes of Hori and irritates him. She is vexed when Hori puts up with much oppression from the money lenders and the Brahmin priest. Hori, though he beats her at times for disobeying him, knows that her arguments are correct. She makes him see the truth and the reality of facts. Unlike him, she is not lost in rigmarole of clichés and ideals. She stands by what she thinks is correct and her dharma, rather than the traditional principles of the community. She knowingly accepts into her household, a low-caste girl, as her daughter-in-law. She does not blame only Jhunias for placing them in an embarrassing position. She knows that her son, Gobar, is equally responsible. She is a loving mother. She even takes care of Heera's children when necessary, she willingly accommodates and shelters the pregnant Seliya, the cobbler's daughter. Dhanias has never known a life of peace and comfort, as throughout the novel we see her struggling along with her husband for a livelihood. She is strong and irrespective of caste or creed helps the needy.

(iii) **Gobar** : Gobar is the only son of Dhanias and Hori. Born into a poor family, he aspires for a life of comfort. Though initially a simpleton like his father, he gets exposure in the city, Lucknow, and learns to be practical and worldly wise. He impregnates Jhunias, Bhola's daughter, and lacking courage to face the wrath of the villagers, flees to the city, leaving Jhunias at his parents' doorstep. His insensitive hasty behaviour creates

trouble to Hori, who pays the penalty. Gobar works for Mirza Kursheed, but creates his own business. He also lends money to other people. When he comes to the village dressed as a gentleman with pump shoes, on a short visit, he is unrecognised with difficulty. He becomes the centre of attraction in the village, the other young men are tempted to go to the city seeing him. He promises to get them jobs. Upon learning that Datadin is exploiting his father, he advises his father to come out of the shackles of traditional bindings. He organises a function and with his friends enacts a skit to expose and satirise the mean mentality of the village money lenders and the Brahmin priest. He threatens to drag the priest to court and has a fight with his father on this issue. He realises that Hori is too simple, god fearing and cannot go against his dharma. Angrily, he leaves the village with his wife Jhunia and returns to the city. His weakness for liquor and short tempered nature affects his relation with Jhunia. He realises his mistake only when his devoted wife nurses him during his illness. He works in the sugar factory and later becomes the chowkidar at Malathi's house.

(iv) Datadin : Datadin is the village Brahmin priest and a greedy moneylender. It is ironic that this man with low standards goes about the village policing the wrongs of the other villagers. He penalises Hori for accepting and sheltering a low caste girl, Jhunia, as their daughter-in-law. He is a hypocrite and is blind to the fact that his own son Mataddin is having an affair with Seliya, a cobbler's daughter. He invites pundits from Varanasi to perform the purifying rituals of his defiled son so that he is brought into the mainstream of Brahmanism. He does not pity Hori's poverty, rather takes advantage of his goodness and exploits him.

(v) Matadin : Matadin is the son of the Brahmin priest Datadin. He is young and has an affair with Seliya, a low-caste woman who works on the farm for him. The villagers know about it. Seliya does not have entrance to his house. Her parents and relatives hopefully wait for her to be accepted by him. Finally, they decide to punish him and beat him and put a piece of bone into his mouth—a taboo for the Brahmins. But Seliya saves him. Matadin becomes an outcast in his own house. His father performs purifying rituals to bring him back to the mainstream of Brahmanism. He spends a lot of money on the rituals and pundits from Kashi are called in. Matadin's malarial fever which had taken him to death's door has made him realise his mistake in exploiting Seliya. When Matadin discovers that he has a son from Seliya, he longs to see the child and goes on the sly in her absence. He is repentant and sends her two rupees through Hori. He realises that he is bound by duty to Seliya and his son. He removes his holy thread and thus liberates himself from the shackles of Brahmanism. Now, he is free to live courageously with Seliya as his wife.

(vi) **Bhola** : Bhola is a cowherd of the neighbouring village. He is a widower and has two married sons and a young widowed daughter, Jhunia. Bhola agrees to give Hori a cow on loan and in turn Hori promises to find a companion for him to remarry. Bhola is very upset when his daughter elopes with Hori's son Gobar. He comes to Hori's house on vengeance and claims money for the dead cow. Hori does not have Rs.80, the cost of the cow. Bhola threatens to take his oxen away, that would reduce Hori to a labourer. When Hori pleads with him, Bhola suggests that they should throw Jhunia, their daughter-in-law, and his own daughter out of the house as she had hurt his feelings. This is not acceptable to Dhaniam, Hori's wife. It is unbelievable that being Jhunia's father, instead of being contended that Hori and his wife have accepted this girl who became pregnant without her marriage being sanctified, he would like to see her sent away with her infant. He heartlessly takes away Hori's oxen and renders him totally helpless.

(vii) **Heera** : Heera Hori's younger brother, from whom he is jealous. Hori and Dhaniam have raised him. He is married to Punia, whose fighting nature makes him separate from Hori. He assumes that Hori hid the money at the time of Partition, and when Hori borrows a cow from Bhola, he assumes that Hori was hiding the money. Due to this jealousy, he fatally poisons the cow. Fearing the allegation of cow slaughter, he flees. He then comes to the end of the novel, and apologizes to Hori.

(viii) **Punia** : Punia Heera's wife, who is of a combative nature. She keeps fighting with Dhaniam all the time. But, after Hira has disappeared, she realizes her mistake when Hori helps him.

(ix) **Shobha** : Shobha youngest brother of Hori, who loves and respects his both brothers.

(x) **Chunia** : Chunia is the neighbor of Gobar in the city, who is a close friend of Juniya. She takes care of Juniya and Gobar's son.

• CHARACTERS FROM URBAN SOCIETY

Malati Devi (doctor), Mr. Mehta (lecturer and philosopher), Mr. Khanna (banker), Rai Sahib (zamindar), Mr Tankha (broker), Mr. Mirza (social worker) and Pandit Omkarnath (publisher)

(i) **Rai Sahib** : Rai Sahib has won the local elections twice. He wanted to marry his daughter off to a rich zamindar to again win in the election and claim the property of his in-laws. Thus, he married his daughter off to another rich, widower and rake zamindar. He claimed and won the zamindari of his in-laws. He won the election and became the municipal minister. But when he planned to get his son married to the daughter of Raja Suryankant for his family's prestige, his son refused that. He is in love

with Saroj, the younger sister of Malati Devi. They both married and went away to London. His son claimed and won the entire property Rai Sahib won from in-laws leaving Rai Sahib in huge debt. His daughter got divorced. This eventually left Rai Sahib too dissatisfied despite all his efforts.

(ii) Ms. Malti : Ms. Malati is a beautiful lady intelligent doctor who is educated in Europe. She is one of the three daughters of Mr. Kaul. She is the centre of attraction in the parties and is flirtatious. Mr. Khanna flirts with her and she is envied and disliked by Govindi. Malati in turn falls in love with Mr. Mehta because of his ideology, his simplicity and intelligence. On a trip to the village of Hori, she explores herself. She starts serving the poor and gets involved in many social activities. After seeing the change in Malati, Mr. Mehta falls in love with Malati. But though Malati loves Mr. Mehta, she refuses his marriage proposal. She now wants to serve the poor and does not want to marry. Mr. Mehta and Malati keep serving the poor and needy people together. Malati Devi is the only character shown as contended at the end of the novel because of her commitment to charitable deeds.

(iii) Mr. Mehta : Mr. Mehta is a scholar and lectures philosophy in a college. He is also authoring a book on philosophy which he dedicates to Malati. Malati and Govindi are two characters who are influenced by him. Govindi finds solace talking to him as he appreciates her concept of womanhood. Malati loses her ego and understands the true meaning of life through him. She learns to serve the poor. He needs the guidance of Malati as he has mismanaged his funds and income in over-generously serving the poor. Though he is interested in marrying Malati, the two mutually agree to remain as friends under the same roof.

(iv) Mr. Khanna : Mr. Khanna is an industrialist and owns a sugar factory. Though married and father of three children, he disrespects his wife Govindi for her traditional values. He flirts with Malati. He is unable to recognise the virtues in his wife. Govindi is fed up of his behaviour and this goads her to leave home. He exploits the labour class. It is only when his sugar factory is destroyed in a fire accident and Govindi stands by him encouraging him to set it up once again, he realises his mistake. Mr. Khanna eventually starts loving his wife.

(v) Govindi : Govindi is Mr. Khanna's wife, the rich industrialist, and is epitomised as an ideal Hindu wife. She is virtuous and very tolerant with her husband and children. Mr. Khanna is uninterested in her as he finds fault with her traditional values. He takes interest in Miss Malati and flirts with her. Govindi is desperately dejected and decides to abandon him and his house. But it is Mr. Mehta, who has always been appreciative of her ideals, who advises her to return to the children. She is a moral support to

her husband when his sugar factory gets destroyed in fire. It is she who encourages him to set it up again.

(vi) **Mirza Saheb** : Mirza Saheb is a good and jovial person, who always make jokes. When Gobar comes to the city, he first works as a gardener at Mirza Saheb's place. Mirza Saheb is very much influenced by Gobar.

• SUMMARY

Literature is the true mirror of society. A writer is considered a keen observer of the incidents taking place in society. Munshi Premchand was a sincere observer of the incidents of contemporary. *Godan* is regarded as an immortal novel. Premchand has highlighted various aspects of life of a poor farmer living in rural area during British rule. This was the time when the condition of peasant was very pathetic.

Munshi Premchand was also focussing on the issues like exploitation, Untouchability, poverty, hunger, illiteracy etc. He has beautifully highlighted the helplessness of a poor farmer. The novel '*GODAN*' presents before us the social, economical, and political situation of India during British rule. The story of the novel presents the pathetic condition of poor Indian peasant being exploited by the Britishers and local zamindar. The poor farmers were helpless, there was no one who could come forward and help them. They were compelled to bear the tyranny of the British rule. Thus *Godan* is the story of naked poverty, incessant, hunger and ruthless exploitation of the poor in Indian society.

The main character of the novel is Hori, a poor farmer. He has Dhaniam as his wife, Gobar as his son and Rupa & Sona are his two daughters. The novel began with a scene where Hori is in hurry to go to zamindar, Rai Shaib place. He was called by the zamindar to convey a message to other farmers of village. Hori is informed by zamindar that all the villagers have to contribute rupees 500 to him so that a program in the near future can be organised. When the zamindar conveyed this message to him he was in great hurry. Hori was extremely in a fearful state. He was not able to understand as to how the money on his part will be managed to be contributed to the zamindar. Hori informed his family members about the order of zamindar. At this Gobar and Dhaniam revolted openly. But Hori kept his calm and made them understand by saying "One cannot fight with the crocodile while living in water".

There is another important character in this novel i.e. Bhola. He was a widower and was willing to marry again. Actually, Bhola was kind hearted and noble person. He was a member of lower caste. He was 50-year-old. He dealt in milk and cow. His two sons are already married. He

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had a young widow daughter, Jhunia at his house. On the other hand, Hori had a great desire to have a cow at his house. At this point of time Hori developed a plan in his mind as he had no money he decided to trick Bhola by virtue of clever policy to get a cow without paying instant money.

Hori and Gobar go to Bhola's house to bring the cow. Gobar meets Jhunia at Bhola's house. When cow was brought to Hori's house it became a matter of envy for the neighbours. A fight took place between Dhaniala and Heera, Hori's brother. Due to enmity the cow was poisoned. Thus Hori's desire of having cow remains unfulfilled.

Gobar is having a love affair with Jhuniala. Dhaniala came to know about this affair. The couple, Hori and Dhaniala discuss about it and they do not approve this. Gobar does not follow the instruction of his parents and bring Jhuniala at his house. Gobar went to Lucknow with a resolve that he would return after making some money. Thus, for humanity they accepted Jhuniala as their daughter-in-law. This act of humanity brought a great trouble for Hori. The community of village imposed a fine rupee 100 on Hori.

Hori was facing all sort of problems. He had no money on the other hand Gobar had fled to the town. He was residing in Lucknow while his wife was living with Hori and Dhaniala. Bhola was also pressing Hori to give the price of cow. One day Bhola came to Hori's house to take away Hori's two bullocks in exchange of the cow. At this point of time Hori was surrounded by all sort of problems. Actually, Bhola was victim of Dattadin's conspiracy and was playing in the hands of Dattadin.

After some days Hori meet his sad demise. After his death Dhaniala, Hori's wife was asked by the priest to do "GODAN", charity of cow for the peace of his soul. But because of money issues she could not afford a cow so instead of cow she gave 1 rupees 25 paise to the priest as everything for the ceremony of her husband death.

• THEMES

Problems due to cast segregation and Industrialization

People of different location and their respective castes represent the village. Dattadin, the Brahmin priest represents the uppermost caste; he exploits the lower caste villagers with his various religious sanctions. Hori, Bhola, selia represent the various hierarchies of lower cast in the caste system that existed in India.

Growth of capitalistic greedy industrialist who exploit the labour class. Migration of youngsters from the villages to cities, conflicts and tension in cities are some of the problems.

Exploitation of the lower class and women.

Premchand has drawn a realistic picture of the poor peasants exploited by the village zamindar and the greedy moneylenders. The zamindars collected the revenue and imposed time. Here Rai sahib fined Hori for the death of the cow, though he did not kill it. The peasants are unable to pay the debts in time and it gets multiplied with the passage of time. They are caught in a debt trap and they suffer like Hori until their end. The author is advocating the need to end the feudal system that existed in the country.

The women characters such as Dhaniam, Jhunia, Selia and Roopa are exploited by the manly love and are dedicated to. All women also struggle a lot from their near and dear ones.

Realistic portrayal of the Indian society

In *Godan* Premchand gives a realistic portrayal of the Indian gallery of contemporary Indian society. He reveals the pitiable condition of the poor farmers. In the novel Hori is such a victim of this cruel and heartless system. The novel tends to assume man and everyday life. It realistically describes the various aspects of life, it is rich in social awareness. It is a vehicle to express the rapid society-cultural changes in modern society. *Godan* has epic dimensions as it deals with the epic struggle of the Indian peasantry against an established social order. A famous critic Francis Stoddard remarks in this respect. "A novel is a narrative of human life under stress of emotion. It differs from the epic in that it is a narration of human rather than super human life."

A Tragedy of Indian Peasantry

Godan is Premchand's best novel which concentrates on the poor economic condition of the Indian peasants. In fact *Godan* depicts the tragedy of Indian peasantry. Hori the protagonist is a God-fearing man who cannot think of violating the tradition values and customs. He has been brought up in an atmosphere of rigid orthodox religious beliefs. He is a very simple and sincere. He is an embodiment of the selfless service and ideals. He silently bears the unjust exploitation by the money lenders. Thus the helplessness and against the powerful money lenders and landlords is the leading theme in "*Godan*."

Blind Faith in Fate

Blind faith in fate is another theme in this novel. The novelist presents his characters as simple and innocent. His characters like Hori submit to all kinds of exploitation by the rich. They have an unshaken faith in the destiny. The hero, Hori, says, "It is the voice of God that speaks through the punches, but what is written must happen. Nobody quarrels with fate." As a result, they can never stand against unfavourable circumstances. Here Premchand believes that the best way to study and understand society and

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its problem is to study an individual with his environment. He also believed that a change in society set up is sufficient to transform the lives of individuals.

Struggle of Individual in Social set up

Here different characters are personification of certain values and ideals for ex. Dhaniya knows that Jhunina was responsible for their troubles. But she realizes that society judges the rich and the poor by two different moral codes. She says, when the rich commit wrong, no bother to blame them. If the poor commit the same wrong they lose five. The main theme deals with the life history of Hori and his family. In the sub theme we have selected individuals from the city is present a parallel point of view on life. These characters present modern values and their names are also suggestive on the other have the names of the villagers like Hori Dhanina, Jhunina, Gobar and matadin show their rural background. They represent their ethos and status. Here premchand is more of humanitarian like Togore rather than Gandhian. He believes that the environment has deep impact on the man's psyche and it shapes the grow of an individual. He asserts the instead of reforming as individual it is better to reform the social set-up which he lives. He wants to re-establish the essential goodness in man's life.

The Theme of Love

Mr. Mehta and Miss Maluti are the living and charming, characters of Premchand. The novelist highlights the theme of love through them. They transcend the limitations of life. They stand for the essential goodness of human heart. They believe that love is pious an sacred feeling. Their notions of love are platonic truth them Premchand advocates reforms in social set-up they follow radical and progressive ideas of equality and society.

Godan a Social Document

The present work is an important document of Premchand's contemporary society with its problem. The Indian farmer in the centre of the narrative. He is not aware of rights and importance in society Premchand's novel has a very important social purpose for him society is not a reflection of the temperament of the age and its people but also serves as a yard stick to sedge their action and conduct. A change in social set-up is sufficient to transform the lives of the individuals the novel also shows the feudal loads like Rai saheb and Hori, the poor. It shows the distance between two worlds and life style.

Realism and Symbolism in the Study

In Godan the portrayal of characters of miss Malati and Mr. Mehta is realistic. Their views on family life and love are objective and authentic.

Premchand believes that a stable family life can give an individual the strength to face the hardship in life. Premchand believes in sanctity and the power in Indian family system. He presents his characters with their weakness and qualities. It is the humanitarian approach towards life that makes Premchand's novels so appealing and they continue to retain their universal appeal and relevance. Before the advent of Munshi Premchand on the literary scene, the majority of in India were virtually without any direction their writings were full of improbable situations and fantasy. Fiction writing was done solely for self-gratification and entertainment. It lacked the element of realism and commitment. Premchand was the first novelist who infused the spirit of realism in novel by associating it with social problems. His themes and characters are closer to life and reality. He gives a realistic portrayal of his contemporary society.

Political scenario of the period

The country was fighting for its liberation from colonial powers. It was the period for the growth and development of different parties and ideologies. Premchand, through the novel, expresses his stand as a socialist. Socialism is a panacea for all kinds of discrimination and exploitation.

The narrative represents the average Indian farmer's existence under colonial rule, with the protagonist facing cultural and feudal exploitation. It shows how the life of these characters takes shape.

• GODAN AS A PLIGHT OF INDIAN FARMERS

A. Plights of the Farmer :

Premchand draws our attention to the plight of the poor and illiterate farmer through his portrayal of the life of an ordinary farmer named Hori Mahato. The story is set in Belari, a small, poverty-stricken village of North India. The depiction of the village in Godan is as follows :

"What was the village, it was Providence, ten to twelve houses, whose roof was half-tiled, and collapsing further."

Hori, the protagonist, is entrapped between feeding his family with his meagre earnings, and on the other hand, trying to pay off the numerous debts to the officials. He is not even able to protest against the system and suffers throughout his life. He is a typical character who represents the basic traits of the Indian peasantry and the manners in which the peasants are merely a puppet in the hands of rich and wealthy people like the Zamindars and the money-lenders. These money-lenders later exploit farmers capturing them with the false ideas of religion. In the novel, Hori himself expresses :

"A man is not a man without wealth and power and education. We are no better than bullocks, born to be yoked".

Poverty is a biggest problem for the Indian villagers. The consequences of poverty make them stuck into the money lending system which leads the peasants to indebtedness that is an important socio-economic aspect behind the ill-treatment of the peasants and their families. For instance, from the novel, the protagonist, Hori suffers from extreme poverty :

“Even though Hori had to pay the entire barn of this crop, there was still a loan of three hundred rupees remaining, and an addition of a hundred rupees as interest. Five years ago, he had taken sixty rupees to purchase a bull, he had paid it, but the sixty rupees is still remaining because of the interest added. Hori had grown potatoes with the money thirty rupees taken from Pandit Daatadin. The potatoes were dug up by thieves, and he completed paying it on installments, in the three-year period, a hundred rupees had been added as interest.”

Further, the peasants are at the forbearance of not a single person but several different persons who acts greedy and never miss any opportunity to rob the poor man of all he has. The Zamindars collected the revenue and imposed fine. Hori, too, is fined by Zamindar Rai Saheb for the death of the cow, though he did not kill it. Throughout the novel, Hori tackles to earn alone making some profit in the whole activity, but is forced to become a wage's worker working on his own field merely as a bonded worker. Hori describes the situation in these words :

“You know how many people here in the village have been thrown off their land or had their property taken away. When, someone's heel is on your neck, it's best to keep licking his feet.”

When Hori loses his bullocks to a moneylender, he is left with no seeds to sow and allows another man to cultivate his land. Later, he is unable to pay the debts in time and with the passage of time it gets multiplied and he is trapped in debts and suffers until the end of the novel. In the novel, Mr. Shah gets sold his debtor, Hori's harvest, whereas Daatadin makes Hori works on his field and takes 200 rupees for a loan of 30 rupees. But his hard work, to overcome his poor condition, makes him sick and he dies. His dream to possess a small plot of land and a strong desire to buy a cow remains unfulfilled.

“And this was not just Hori's condition. This was a disaster in the whole village. There is no person who does not cry.”

Premchand has used the metaphor Three Bigha Fort to describe Hori's land that represents his identity, pride and existence throughout his life. Many critics like Meenakshi Mukherjee consider *Godaan* “as a saga of Indian rural life whose protagonist Hori is the archetypal Indian peasant in his meekness and humanity” and “Hori is the victim of social determinism.” Thus, the novel highlights many problems related to debt, untouchability, Varna system, zamindari system, and overall political system prevailing in the pre-independence Indian society.

B. Problems due to industrialization :

Due to industrialization, the capitalist or the industrialist has become greedy and tries to exploit the labour class. They force the youngsters to migrate from the villages to cities where they face many conflicts and tensions. Hori's only son Gobar also migrates to the city and experiences the city life of Lucknow. In the beginning, he feels fortunate working in the city and serving as an employer since according to him the peasant works like a machine, leads a hopeless life, and faces oppression and suffering as a part of the destiny. However, in the city, he learns to be practical and worldly. His condition as a worker in the city is exact opposite of what he thought it to be because he has no permanent job and does different humble jobs. Soon he comes back to the village and enlightens the villagers. He serves as a social leader and makes the villagers aware about the money-lending system, the corruption, and the caste system. He hates the village and prefers to be a poor obedient labourer in the town where he earns some money and lends it to the other at an excessive rate which unwittingly, makes him a part of the money-lending system which victimizes the peasants. Like Hori, Gobar too suffers as the result of his experience of the endless competition, mental and violent upheaval that is an integral part of the life of every worker.

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• REALISM AND SYMBOLISM IN GODAN

Premchand is master in portraying real characters in his novel. In Godan, the portrayal of characters of Miss Malti and Mr. Mehta is realistic. Their views on family life and love are objective and authentic. Premchand believes that a stable family life can give an individual the strength to face the hardship in life. Premchand believes in sanctity and the power in Indian family system. He presents his characters with their weaknesses and qualities. It is the humanitarian approach towards life that makes Premchand's novels so appealing and they continue to retain their universal appeal and relevance. Before the advent of Munshi Premchand on the literary scene, the majority of writers in India were virtually without any direction. Their writings were full of improbable situations and fantasy. Fiction writing was done solely for self-gratification and entertainment. It lacked the element of realism and commitment. Premchand was the first novelist who infused the spirit of realism in novel by associating it with social problems. His themes and characters are closer to life and reality. He gives a realistic portrayal of his characters which are drawn from his contemporary society.

In his writings Premchand writes the social evils and outdated traditional values. As a progressive writer he belongs to the middle class and writes about common people. His progressive and humanitarian attitude towards life is clearly reflected in his novels. He declares that literature is not only a reflection of life in general, but it has a social function to perform. The function of literature is not only to entertain but

also to guide the individuals and society in the right direction. his characters fit into the descriptions in his narratives and he describes about their environmental and mental make-up. Premchand's descriptions are not mere acts of reporting but they are also highly suggestive.

In *Godan*, Premchand presents two categories of characters-rural and urban. the rural characters are Hori, Hira, Dhanai, Jhunia, Gobar, Bhola, Sona, Rupa, Mattadeen, Dattadeen, Nahari, Selia, Chuhia etc. the characters with the urban background are Mr. Mehta, Miss. Malti, Mr. Khanna, Govindi, Rai Sahib, Rudra Pratap, Saroj, Mirza Khurshid etc. their names themselves tell about the position and status of these characters, and give a habitat and a local name to them.

In his novels, Munshi Premchand is concerned with the relationship on individual levels and collective form. Generally, his novels show a couple of selected families engaged in a common common concern and their action affects each other's point of view. Through his characters Premchand highlights the contemporary social, economic, religious and political problems. He makes the individual and the family a medium for the realistic portrayal of contemporary social problems. In *Godan* one finds the biggining of the process of disintegration of the joint family system in the villages. He gives a realistic description of family life in his novel *Godan*. In it, he involves the family life of Mr. Khanna-Govindi, Hori-Dhanai, Gobar-Ghunai, Miss Malti and Mr. Mehta with a penetrating psychological insight.

Despite a vivid realistic portrayal of his characters, Premchand's characters lack the validity and dynamism. Premchand does not concentrate upon their inner conflicts and pains, because his main objective is to deal with some social problems and to project his vision of life. Through he allows his readers to have a peep into the minds of his characters, yet the characters seem to be preoccupied with the social concern and responsibility. This social concern restricts the readers from seeing the inner storms and conflicts in the minds of the characters.

In this novel on many occasions, crucial moment arrives in the lives of the characters, but the initiative on their part is restricted by the dominance of the social issues in the narrative. This the reason why the psychological analysis is lacking in the narrative. It is eclipsed by an increasing sense of social and collective responsibility. He does not halt for a moment to discuss the inner conflicts and he is too eager to initiate his characters in a new challenging situation. He shows that the middle class with its aspirations, defeats, notions of morality falls an easy prey to social evils like dowry system, bride, exploitation of the poor and prostitution.

The characters in Premchand's novels are so preoccupied with social problems that the moments of the self-introspection are rare in their lives. The moments of self-contemplation and about individual aspirations are there in the relationship between Miss Malti and Mr. Mehta in detail, and the moments of self-introspection are found in the lives of other characters

only as passing references. In *Godan*, Hori is a unique creation of Premchand who always in his environment without showing any sign of opposition and resistance. Hori is a farmer whose life is a tale of untold misery and suffering.

In his writings, Premchand's aim is to suggest rather than to moralize directly. His characters are symbolic and representatives of their respective classes. Apart from symbols and representations, his characters show a rare blend of individuality and a common concern. This makes Premchand's writing more effective and powerful in their appeal.

• ANALYSIS

Godan was authored in Hindi in the year 1936 by Munshi Premchand (1880-1936), one of the pseudonyms of Dhanpat Rai. The novel was translated into English in the year 1957 by Jai Ratan and P. Lal. Premchand was born in a village near Varanasi on 31 July 1880. He is one of the most prominent writers of Hindi and Urdu. Premchand's writings are characterized by social realism and are sympathetic of the poor, the marginalized peasantry, and the underprivileged. The selection of ordinary people as chief characters is another characteristic of Premchand's writings. His intent is consistently reformist. Jai Ratan and P. Lal write on the blurb that "*Godan*, a story of stark realism, is Premchand's most outstanding novel.

Godan is the story of Hori, a poor agricultural labourer who lives with his wife Dhania, their eldest son Gobar and two daughters Sona and Rupa. Hori has a strong desire to keep a cow which he can gift to a Brahman before dying in order to attain moksha. Once he manages to buy a cow from Bhola, a cowherd who agrees to take the payment in installments. Hori's dream, however, is again shattered when he finds his cow poisoned to death soon after. He suspects that his estranged brother Heera has poisoned the cow because he is spotted near Hori's house the night it is poisoned and also because Heera leaves the village the very next morning. Hori could never buy another cow due to lack of money. Gobar marries Bhola's widowed daughter Jhunia in secret but they continue to live in their respective parental homes. When she becomes pregnant with his child, he sends her alone to his house assuring her that he would follow in a while. Instead he goes away to Lucknow in search of work. The village panchayat imposes a fine on Hori for accepting Jhunia in his house. Datadin's son Matadin lives separately with the Chamar woman Selia. Yet, he does not allow her to touch his utensils or to claim any part of the grain that she grows on his land. He mistreats her and is one day punished by Selia's family and a few other Chamars for abusing her. They avenge Selia's mistreatment by thrusting a bone into Matadin's mouth and breaking his sacred thread. As a result, Matadin abandons Selia and she is given shelter by Hori and Dhania. The annoyed panchayat, once again, imposes a heavy fine on Hori and his family. Gobar returns from Lucknow with some money, however,

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annoyed by Hori's submission to the exploitative practices of the money lenders, he goes back to Lucknow with Jhunia and his son. Meanwhile, realizing that the Brahmans would not accept him back in their fold, Matadin returns to Selia for good. Till his death, Hori and his wife spend their lives working in the fields of Datadin and other landowners to settle their debts. Hori dies without being able to make the gift of a cow to a Brahman. Godan focuses on the socioeconomic exploitation of the poor. Since most poor people were Dalits and Shudras, caste features in the novel as well. As mentioned in the Introduction, unlike Dalits, Shudras form the lowest section of the varna system but were sometimes treated at par with the Untouchables. Godan depicts broadly the difference between the life of Shudras and of Dalits.

Hori and his represent the masses in India who continue to slave as agricultural labour but fail to ever improve their economic and social conditions. Premchand describes the debilitating effects of penury and hardships through his delineation of Dhaniam: "And what was her age?"

Ordinarily nobody would describe a woman of thirty-six as old. But her hair had already turned grey and her face was creased with wrinkles. Her youthful body had declined; the glow of her swarthy complexion had turned sallow and her eye-sight dim. All because of the canker of poverty". The extreme poverty of the family leaves Hori and Dhaniam with no choice but to marry their younger daughter Rupa with Ram Sewak, who is almost as old as Hori. The lives of the rural poor in Godan are thus marked by the motif of poverty and deprivation. Premchand ascribes the poverty of the peasants in Godan largely to the oppressive matrix of industrialists and the Zamindari system. Dhimant Parekh remarks: "Page after page you get the same sinking feeling that Hori gets when his spirit is crushed every waking moment by the machinery comprising of the Zamindari system, the police, the money lenders, the religious zealots, the caste system and prestige".

Untouchable was first published in 1935 and its focus, as is evident from the title, is mainly on the life of the protagonist who suffers untouchability and caste-based oppression. It was Anand's first novel and the first Indian novel in English on the Dalit theme. Like Premchand, Anand also highlights social issues through his writings. Born in Peshawar, Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) is acknowledged as one of the leading Indian English writers of the twentieth-century. He received many prestigious awards for his writings, including the Padma Bhushan in 1967 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971. Anand's disgruntlement with the exploitative and discriminative social order finds voice in many of his novels. The protagonists in most of his novels are victims of oppression. In Untouchable, Bakha's encounter with debilitating untouchability and verbal and physical abuse during the course of a single day forms the plot of the novel. Bakha's father Lakha has three children; the eldest being Bakha, followed by Sohini and Rakha. Lakha cleans the latrines in the town of Bulashah (Bullandshahar). One day he falls sick and sends Bakha for cleaning the latrines. During the day, Bakha faces severe caste-based

oppression and untouchability. He is slapped and abused by a passer by when he accidentally brushes against him. When he goes near the temple to sweep, he is abused by the priest Kalinath for climbing the temple steps. His anguish is further aggravated when he discovers that his sister Sohini had just then been molested by Kalinath. Bakha and Sohini walk home where Bakha tells his father about him being slapped and abused but does not share the horror of his sister's molestation. Lakha placates the distraught boy with words of experience and after a while Bakha leaves home to play hockey with his friends. On his return, he sees a big hoarding the words on which he cannot read and wishes he were literate. He then meets the Christian missionary Colonel Hutchinson who tries to convince Bakha to convert in order to escape untouchability. Bakha walks away thoughtfully from Hutchinson and further on stops to hear Mahatma Gandhi addressing a crowd in a ground. Gandhi exhorts the Savarnas to embrace Untouchables and the Untouchables to be clean and to abstain from liquor. After listening to the speech, Bakha overhears a young poet Sarshar talking to a friend. Sarshar suggests that to a large extent, the introduction of the flush system can solve the problem of untouchability by eliminating manual scavenging. Bakha returns home impressed by Sarshar's suggestion and hopes that some day the lives of the Untouchables would be better.

Through this novel, Anand not only describes the impact of the caste system on society but also presents some of the remedies being debated at that time. Anand highlights the miseries of the outcastes when untouchability is practised blatantly with Bakha whose agony is accentuated by his extreme poverty. The influence of humanism makes Anand expose the feudalistic, communal, racist and capitalistic ideology of powerful people in his novels. Premchand exposes the exploitative practices of the moneylenders in *Godan*. He writes about how interest becomes more than the amount of loan Hori takes from Pandit Datadin and moneylender Mangru.

Premchand further elucidates the debilitating effects on Hori and other peasants of the village, debt lay on the village like curse. Despite his focus on class-based exploitation, Premchand is not caste-blind. *Godan* describes untouchability and caste-hierarchy as part of the village reality. Selia is a Dalit character portrayed by Premchand, he shows how Datadin's son Matadin not allowing Selia to touch his utensils and cook for him, even though he has no qualms in having sex with her. The rigidity of untouchability revealed when Hori's family is boycotted by his community for giving Selia shelter in their home.

In *Godan* caste walls in the village are insurmountable. On the other hand, description of Dalit life in *Untouchable* is realistic in this manner. Anand was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. He wrote *Untouchable* in the age when the freedom struggle was at its peak. Gandhi's influence is evident on Anand and in his depiction of the life of the deprived and Dalits. The setting of the novel highlights the filth that Untouchables were coerced

to live in: "The absence of drainage system had, through the various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive smell. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an uncongenial place to live in ". Through this novel, Anand not only describes the impact of the caste system on society but also presents some of the remedies being debated at that time. Anand highlights the miseries of the outcastes when untouchability is practised blatantly with Bakha whose agony is accentuated by his extreme poverty. Anand also describes the Dalit basti not merely as the background but in order to bring out the conditions to which Bakha and his community are unfairly confined; and consequently, to explicate Bakha's responses to the various incidents of discrimination and oppression that happen to him through the course of the novel. It is clear through Anand's substantive description of the Dalit basti that he had a deep understanding of Dalit life.

On the contrary, Premchand does not describe the Dalit basti in *Godan* at all, thereby making it difficult for the readers to understand his Dalit characters. Women exploitation is also a common theme which Premchand and as well as Anand illustrates in their novels *Godan* and *Untouchable*. Premchand also gives a realistic description of the misery of the women in the village owing to the patriarchal structure of society. In addition to indigence, Dhania faces abuse and violence from Hori. When Hori and Dhania find their cow dead, he lets slip that he suspects his brother Heera had poisoned the cow. Dhania wants to take the matter to the police but an infuriated Hori beats her for wishing to have his brother arrested. When she opposes Hori's decision to bribe the policeman, who comes to search Heera's house, Hori threatens to beat her again. Dhania is not the only woman who is beaten by her husband as her son Gobar also beats his wife Jhunia and Heera beats his wife Punia. Wife-beating is considered a normal everyday affair by both the men and women of the village. Selia is oppressed even more than Dhania and Jhunia. She is treated like a sexual object, exploited as a labourer and then ostracized by Matadin. Premchand traces her relationship with Matadin in terms of retrogression: "Earlier he cunningly exploited her love for him; now she was no more than a machine which worked at his bidding". Matadin is also pleased with the opportunistic and unfair relationship of Matadin with Selia: "As for Selia, we are happier with her than with a Brahmin's daughter. A Brahmin's daughter will sit in the house like a bride all the time. She may do some cooking. But Selia does the work of three men. And we give her nothing but two meals a day. Sometimes we give her a sari". Even as Selia stands silently listening to Matadin's abuse, her parents, brothers and a few other Chamars arrive suddenly on the scene. Selia's mother rebukes her: "You wretch, if you had to work you could as well work at home. If you are the keep of a Brahmin, live like a Brahmin! After bringing a bad name to our

cobbler's community what was the idea of still remaining a cobbler? Go and drown yourself for shame.

*Munshi Prem Chand
(Gift of a Cow)*

Premchand has often been criticised for biased portrayal of Dalit characters in his writings, including in this incident of Godan. He is accused of showing Dalit characters as animalistic and inhuman and the above incident lends credence to this charge. Omprakash Valmiki rejects Premchand's narrative in a personal interview by asking vehemently: "Dalit kya jeb me janvaron ki haddiyan lekar ghoomte hain?" "Do Dalits walk around with animal bones in their pockets?". In this context, Untouchable differs from Godan the sexual oppression of Dalit women by caste-Hindu men. Anand enmeshes their oppression as a thread contributing to the overall canvas of oppression of Untouchables. While cleaning the ground of the temple that morning, Bakha hears the arti being sung inside the temple. Fascinated by the prayers, Bakha is drawn to the temple and climbs the first five stairs leading up to it. As soon as Pandit Kalinath notices him, he begins to shout and castigates Bakha for defiling the temple: "Get off the steps, you scavenger! Off with you! You have defiled our whole service! You have defiled our temple! Now we will have to pay for the purification ceremony. Get down, get away, you dog!". On hearing Kalinath's tirade many people gather around and Bakha notices that Sohini is also standing there. In this long and powerful episode, Anand juxtaposes the practice of untouchability with the sexual oppression of Sohini. Kalinath had molested Sohini when she was alone 'cleaning the lavatory of his house' and the devotees led by another priest were busy performing arti in the temple. While returning home later, Sohini breaks down and tells Bakha that the priest who had abused him had also molested her.

• EXERCISE

1. Premchand is the writer who touch the nerve of the Indian society. Explain the comment in the light of Godan.
2. Describe the plot of the novel Godan.
3. Write the bio-sketch and works of Premchand in Literature.
4. Godan is the contrast of two worlds. Explain it.
5. Write down the treatment of women in the novel of Premchand in the light of the novel Godan.
6. Describe the contrast in the character of Hori and Dhanu. Whom you think is more powerful?
7. Godan is realistic and symbolic in nature.
8. What are the major themes in Godan.
9. Justify the title of the novel Godan.
10. Write down the major characters of urban society in Godan.
11. What are the major differences between the men and women characters in the novel Godan.

□

UNIT-III

Shrilal Shukla (Raag Darbari)

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Learning Objectives
- Life and Works of Shrilal Shukla
- (a) Biological Sketch of Shrilal Shukla
- (b) Awards and His Works
- Introduction
- The Plot
- Title
- Characterization and Characters
- Chapter wise Summaries
- Themes
- Exercise

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Considering the traditional meaning of the word satire, understand its significance as a synonym in English.
- Get acquainted with the satirical beliefs of various Western and Indian thinkers and know the difficulties of its unanimous definition.
- Considering the broad nature of satire, become familiar with the characteristics of its various components/shadows such as humor, ridicule, rhetoric, etc.
- Discuss the literary-social utility of satire.
- Consider whether satire is a genre or an independent literary genre.
- Considering the nature of satire used in 'Raag Darbari'.
- Examine the limits of satire used in 'Raag Darbari'.
- Understand the meaning of the title in the context of the content of 'Raag Darbari'; discuss the difference between subject and content.
- Unveil the true nature of the contents of 'Raag Darbari'; while considering the structure of 'Raag Darbari' discuss its novel craft.

- Introduce the linguistic features of 'Raag Darbari' with reference to its satirical style.
- Discuss the characteristics of specific characters of the novel.
- Discuss the representations of the characters in the novel and the characteristics of those other characters who, even after being present for a while, reveal their representative nature and importance.
- Inaugurate the value-vision of the novelist adopted in the characterization of 'Raag Darbari'.

Shrilal Shukla (Raag Darbari)

LIFE AND WORKS OF SHRILAL SHUKLA

Shri Lal Shukla has made his own identity as a satirist among the post-independence writers of Hindi. The solid basis of this identity is his deep identity with socio-political life, the freedom, equality and fraternal system for which India's freedom struggle was fought for, could not be achieved in the post-independence period. As a sensitive writer, Shrilal Shukla gives a deep dissatisfaction with the whole chaotic system and oppressed life. Creators like Kabir, BharatenduNirala, Nagarjuna etc. have given expression to their dissatisfaction with the social system in their sharply satirical style. Taking this tradition forward, Shrilal Shukla along with HarishankarParsai exposed the post-independence socio-political discrepancies with utmost skill in his satirical style.

Shrilal Shukla was born in 1925 AD in Atrauli village of Lucknow district. BA from Prayag University, Allahabad After receiving his degree, in 1949 AD, he was selected for the Public Service Commission, Uttar Pradesh. After being promoted to the IAS, he retired in 1983, working in the ministries of finance, health, cooperatives etc. He wrote eight novels. The writer form of Shrilal Shukla has started as a satirical writer and 'Raag Darbari' is a unique example of satirical novel.

Despite all the populist declarations of all-round development of life, the life of the majority common man has turned from bad to worse. Being an administrative officer and deeply involved in public life, Shrilal Shukla has been hurt by this situation. As a result, he has ruthlessly exposed the disability and disfigurement of the so-called achievements of twenty-two years of development in Raag Darbari. The main place of the novel is Shivpalganj, a village under Bhikhamkheda Gram Panchayat. But farmers are almost missing from this village. In this village suffering from various types of government-non-government diseases, there is Vaidya ji, who along with his medical, is the managing director of the cooperative society and the manager of Chhangmal Vidyalaya Inter College.

Awards:

1. 1970 : Awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for *Raag Darbari* (for 1969)
2. 1978 : Awarded the Madhya Pradesh Hindi Sahitya Parishad Award for *Makaan*
3. 1987–90 : Awarded the Emeritus Fellowship by the ICCR, Government of India
4. 1988 : Given the Sahitya Bhushan Award by Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthaan
5. 1991 : Awarded the Goyal Sahitya Puraskaar by Kurukshetra University
6. 1994 : Awarded the Lohia Sammaan by Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthaan
7. 1996 : Awarded the Sharad Joshi Sammaan by the Madhya Pradesh Government
8. 1997 : Awarded the Maithili Sharan Gupta Sammaan by the Madhya Pradesh Government
9. 1999 : Awarded the Vyas Sammaan by the Birla Foundation
10. 2005 : Awarded the Yash Bharati Samman by the Uttar Pradesh Government
11. 2008 : Awarded the Padma Bhushan by the President of India
12. 2011 : Awarded the Jnanpith Award for year 2009.

Novels

1. *SooniGhaati Ka Sooraj* – 1957
2. *Agyaatvaas* – 1962
3. *Raag Darbari* (novel) – 1968 – original is in Hindi; translated in 15 Indian languages.
4. *Aadmi Ka Zahar* – 1972
5. *Seemayein Tootati Hain* – 1973
6. *Makaan* – 1976 – original is in Hindi; a Bengali translation was published in the late 1970s.
7. *Pehla Padaav* – 1987 – original is in Hindi; translated in English
8. *Bisrampur Ka Sant* – 1998
9. *Babbar Singh Aur Uske Saathi* – 1999 – original is in Hindi; translated in English
10. *Raag Viraag* – 2001

Satires

1. *Angad Ka Paanv* – 1958
2. *Yahaan Se Vahaan* – 1970
3. *Meri ShreshthaVyangyaRachnayein* – 1979
4. *Umraonagar Mein Kuchh Din* – 1986
5. *KuchhZameen Mein KuchhHava Mein* – 1990
6. *AaoBaithLeinKuchh Der* – 1995
7. *AgliShataabdi Ka Sheher* – 1996
8. *JahaalatKePachaas Saal* – 2003
9. *Khabron Ki Jugaali* – 2005

Short Story Collections

1. *Yeh GharMeraNahin* – 1979
2. *Suraksha Tatha Anya Kahaaniyan* – 1991
3. *IssUmra Mein* – 2003
4. *DusPratinidhiKahaaniyan* – 2003

Memoirs

1. *Mere Saakshaatkaar* – 2002
2. *KuchhSaahityaCharchaBhi* – 2008

Literary Critique

1. *Bhagwati Charan Varma* – 1989
2. *AmritlalNaagar* – 1994
3. *Agyeya: Kuchh Rang Kuchh Raag* – 1999

Edited Works

1. *Hindi HaasyaVyangyaSankalan* – 2000

Shrilal Shukla (Raag Darbari)

INTRODUCTION

Raag Darbari is a very intense satirical novel. The novelist has used satire-style to provide effective expression to his mental reactions in relation to society. Satire does not mean humour, mockery or abuse. It has been used continuously in the tradition of world literature. It has a rich tradition in Hindi literature till now. A sharp satirist like Kabir shook the enemies of the majority of the public by the use of this weapon. Bhartendu and most of the litterateurs of his circle used it very carefully. After Bharatendu, powerful poets like Nirala, Nagarjuna have presented their bitter-spoken mental reactions in a satirical style. The real energy of these poets comes in front of the reader only through satire. Through this, these

poets had launched a vigorous campaign of socio-political reform. Till now Harishankar Parsai, Sharad Joshi, Rabindra Nath Tyagi, Kedarnath Agarwal, Nagarjuna have been carrying forward this tradition. Shrilal Shukla comes before us as a strong link in this tradition.

Due to its extreme sarcasm, some critics/readers have described 'Raag Darbari' as a novel full of jokes and ridicule and pointed to the lack of social vision, excess of negation and rejection feeling. Despite this, it is a realistic composition, which underlines the imperative of a new system by discrediting the universal corrupt system. The initiation of this new system has been left to the social concern of the reader. Premchand has also done the same in his realistic novel 'Godan' composed in his co-natural style. Later on, Shrilal Shukla in his novel titled 'Padav' through Satte alias Munshi and in 'Sant of Vigrampur' does indicate a system of change through Vivek, but it may be considered as a sign of social outlook after Shrilal Shukla. Reading 'Raag Darbari', no reader will think that the situation as it is will remain the same or that any change is possible in it.

Keeping all the above facts in mind, after considering various aspects from many angles, we will also consider the limitations of satire used in Raag court, its justification and impropriety.

Shrilal Shukla the author distinctly portrays socio-politico-economic conditions in the village life of India by representing it coupled with satire in a style of rural fiction and remarkable reality. The title Rag Darbari does not suggest one of the Ragas of Indian classical music, But as a song sung by a village politician, characterized by Vaidyaji in the novel, on whose tone all other in the village dance. The novel portrays gloomy depiction of social and political corruption and highly delicate dynamics of the same prevalent during postcolonial India.

Plot

The village has several characters, most notable of who is Vaidyaji – the big daddy of the village. He is assisted by his sons Badri Pehelwaan (or in English, Badri the Wrestler) and Rupan Babu. A few more notable characters are the teachers at the village school, and the principal (whose characteristic trait is to burst into Awadhi, his native tongue, whenever he is very angry or excited).

The story does not have a fixed plot – it is merely a series of anecdotes. It also does not have a hero or protagonist. Vaidyaji's nephew, named Ranganath, visits Shivpalganj after completing his M.A. in History. His health has been failing, and the doctors have advised a visit to the countryside for him to gather his strength. It is funny how Vaidyaji (which means "healer") heals the young boy's mind in more ways than one. After his masters, Ranganath, who is a big believer in high ideals and "poetic

justice", comes face to face with the hypocrisy and the meanness of the village gang. The very first incident highlights his innocence and blind faith. In order to travel to his uncle's place, Ranganath boards a truck. The driver is a rash fellow, who drives carelessly without regard for the pedestrians. After witnessing him nearly run over a few cows and sleeping shepherds, the young man is finally elated when a few police officials pull the bus over. From a distance, Ranganath watches them question the driver. Although they are trying to extort money out of the driver, it appears to Ranganath that the driver is being punished for his foul deeds. There are several such incidents, one after the other, that shatter Ranganath's high ideals and faith in justice. He is a mere spectator of the system – unable to make a mark or stand up for himself.

Shrilal Shukla (*Raag Darbari*)

Title

Shrilal Shukla the author distinctly portrays socio-politico-economic conditions in the village life of India by representing it coupled with satire in a style of rural fiction and remarkable reality. The title *Rag Darbari* does not suggest one of the Ragas of Indian classical music, But as a song sung by a village politician, characterized by *Vaidyaji* in the novel, on whose tone all other in the village dance. The novel portrays gloomy depiction of social and political corruption and highly delicate dynamics of the same prevalent during postcolonial India.

The front page of '*Raag Darbari*' reads, "*Raag Darbari* is related to the life of a village situated some distance away from a big city, which despite the slogans of progress and development after independence, is under the influence of vested interests and many undesirable elements. It is a document of that life. It is clear from this that the theme of '*Raag Darbari*' is Shivpal Ganj and Vaidya ji and his meeting hall. From this point of view, this meeting hall is the court, whose melody governs the whole village Society.

On the surface this novel may appear to be a document of village life. But the reality is that Shivpal Ganj, a village-town situated on the side of the road, a few miles away from a big city like Lucknow, may not be found on the map of India. Despite this, Shivpalganj of the novel can be found anywhere in the post-independence India. That is why the raga of Vaidya's meeting hall i.e. court transcends its zonal boundaries and becomes the raga of the whole country. Therefore, the real position of his court reaches within the boundary wall of the institutions established by the big establishments of the country, even the Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies.

This meaning of the title is expressed by the universality of the content of '*Raag Darbari*'. The scope of the content of this novel is so wide

that it gives a complete glimpse of the entire country's administrative system, judicial system and economy. Elections to Panchayats, Gram Sabhas, Co-operative Societies are followed by all the same tactics as in elections to Legislative Assembly and Parliament. As a result of national democracy, politics of power, politics of opposition, factionalism, corruption, manipulation, exploitation-oppression etc. are coming from top to bottom, not from bottom to top. Even by becoming the center of the village story, the novelist has never allowed the melody of the court to dim. Therefore, the meaning of the title lies in highlighting the symbolism of the novel. Because due to this the surface of the content has not been compressed but has become more wide. Therefore, 'Raag Darbari' becomes not only the melody of Vaidya's meeting (court), but also becomes the raga of the major power establishments of the whole country. The title of the novel in its form is very meaningful.

CHARACTERIZATION AND CHARACTERS

1. 'Raag Darbari' : A General Characterization

The structure of 'Raag Darbari' has been formed by the combination of many stories, anecdotes and commentaries of the author. Therefore, it can be termed as general characterization. In fact, the situations and themes of the novel have been present from the course of life. Almost all the characters who have come in it have their own different story. On one side is the story of the activities of Chhangmal Inter College and its election, on the other side is the story of embezzlement of the Cooperative Union and its election and on the third side is the story of the election of Gram Panchayat. To underline the importance of election to the Shivpal Ganj Gaon Sabha, there are three separate stories of 'elections' to the Gram Panchayats of Ramnagar, Mahipalpur and Nevada.

All the characters in the novel have their own unique story. Ruppan, Badri Pehalwan, Chhote Pehelwan, Gayadin, Ramadhin Bhikham Khedvi, Jognath, Sanichar, Langad, etc. all have their own story. In these, Vaidyaji and small pahalwal are present with the story of their entire family. Principal and Khanna Master have a different story. All in all, 'Raag Darbari' comes before us in the form of a great anecdote.

2. Main Characters

(i) **Vaidya Ji** : Vaidya ji, who makes identification between masks impossible, is not just an individual, but a complete organization. He is the village patriarch, a well-known Vaidya, the manager of Jangmal Inter College, the managing director of the union and is now there to grab the Gau-Panchayat. Purely urban in food and in dress, dhoti, kurta, sadri, are seen in the form of grand idols.

At the time of the rule, he used to recruit Indians in the army to fight against Japan by becoming a trustee of the British. By becoming a beneficiary of the government, he used to work as a jury and assessor in the court of the judge, as the custodian of the property in civil cases. He was accorded the status of lambardar among the village zamindars. In post-independence India, he became a firm servant of the native rulers and started making hundreds of members in his political faction overnight. In this way, he became an essential pillar of the present government.

Seeing from above, his main profession was that of a physician, in which apart from the manifest diseases, he had a perfect medicine for secret diseases. In this form, he was a message of hope to young people who were disappointed in life. But his indirect source of income was the management committee of Hungamal Inter College, the managing directorship of the cooperative union and government grants, loans and books received for development works. The Deputy Director School and the Deputy Director Cooperative used to work on his instructions. The result of the election of all the institutions was within his grasp. There is no such area of corruption in the society or which is beyond their reach. His sons were Rumpan, the representative of the student leaders, and BadhiPehalwan, the chieftain of the Bahari and village goons. Ranganatha, the representative of the intellectuals, was his nephew. The police and the Thanedar of the police station were compelled to follow his instructions. The principal of the college was his servant. He was an unshakable pillar for politics in the village and outside. In order to subdue the big officials, he had close contact with the famous astrologers and Babas of the country along with the surefire medicine for semen confirmation. He had the enchantment that shattered all the obstacles in the way of his unbridled selfishness. All in all, Vaidyaji was a symbol of that politico-cultural culture, under whose untrue weight, the country's democracy and the desire for public welfare was crippling.

As a real institution, this is Vaidya's external blueprint. His inner character has also been indicated many times in Raag Darbari. When the winter began to pierce his bones, even after wrapping the blanket tightly, he "remembered that the bed was colder when he was lying alone. This memory was followed by an influx of memories." This gives an indication of Vaidya's personal activities and inner character.

When Ranganath talks about Ruppan's love letter and tells him that Mamaji is very angry. At this, Ruppan reveals the character of vaidaya ji, he said "getting married at the age of fourteen and after the death of elder mother, not even a year was held back from him, and he remarried. All this was done by law. And will you want to listen what he (vaidaya ji) did unlawfully?" When Ruppan mediates in the fight between Badri Pehelwan

and Vaidya, Vaidya tells Ruppan that "I am also aware of your conduct." To this Ruppan's reply is- "I am also aware of your conduct." Because here the conduct has come in the context of immoral love affairs; Therefore, this indicates the misconduct of Vaidyaji. When Vaidya ji talks about having his nose cut off on the conduct of the Badri pahalwal, Badri immediately replies, "Don't talk about the nose. Where is the nose? It was cut off during the days of Pandit Ajudhya Prasad. You say that I am trapped in the bela. You are our father, how to explain to you. To be trapped is the work of a bird. Just like your father Ajudhyaprasad was trapped by the Mahantari of Raghuvansh in your family. This is called trapping." This exposes the characterlessness of not only Vaidya himself, but even his family.

These examples clearly show that the reader, seeing the satirical picture of Vaidyaji presented by the author, considers himself superior to him in material terms. Vaidyaji is shown to be small and weak by showing this triumph of morality, thereby instilling confidence in the reader that he can defeat Vaidyaji. This is the basic vision of the author in presenting the character of Vaidya. In this way, Vaidyaji is not the hero but the villain in the novel and the reader has to play the role of the hero himself, this message is also given indirectly in the novel.

(ii) Ranganath and Ruppan : In 'Raag Darbari', Ranganatha is presented as a sick representative of Indian intellectuals. The novel also begins and ends with Ranganath's entry and escape in Shivpal Ganj. That is why he is also the watcher of all the activities of Shivpal Ganj. He is the nephew of Vaidya, that's why he is asked and respected everywhere. Eighteen-year-old RuppanChhangamal is a student leader of class X of Inter College and is the son of Vaidyaji, the manager of the college. Except for his studies, he dominates all the areas, from the college, police station cooperative to the 'Ganjho' of the village. He suffers from the disease of arrogance and indiscipline and represents the rebellious youth. From the principal of the college to the police station, they used to agree with him at any point. Commenting on him, the novelist wrote, "He was so respected that the shopkeepers of capitalism did not sell his hand goods, but offered him and the ace, the symbols of exploitation, took him to the city and asked for blessings, not rent. The initials of his leadership and the last area was the college there, here hundreds of students were ready to follow his orders without thinking.

There was a fundamental difference between Ranganatha and Ruppan. Ranganath is much more experienced than ruppan. Despite this Ranganath is not ready to take any risk and often prefers to remain in the role of a neutral watcher. He had full sympathy for the Khanna master as against the principal. But he becomes indifferent. According to him- "Shivpalganj may have a good climate for maintaining good health, the lock-up there has

no good reputation in this matter." The indifference of an intellectual towards the duty is expressed here.

Unlike Ranganath, Ruppan is sympathetic in nature. He makes full preparations against the principal and Vaidya ji to face any situation in the meeting of the inquiry committee of the college. But when Vaidyaji, who is successful in his conspiracy, forces Khanna and Malviya to sign a pre-made resignation letter without investigation, he expresses his opposition with full enthusiasm and says that this cannot happen.

You cannot forcefully write resignation from them. He will not resign." Ruppan is unable to stop the resignation process, but when he walks away after hearing Vaidyaji's roar and abuses, his personality appears to be stunned, not annoyed or flustered. He appears to be ready to do something. He gives the impression of this in front of Ranganath long ago. When Ranganath asks if you have drunk alcohol, he replies, "Sometimes one has to start living in Shivpalganj, then it will remain like this." ... becoming Mahatma Gandhi here will not work."

Unlike Ruppan, Ranganath turns upside down on the very first attempt at protest. The music of exodus starts resonating in his mind - 'Rehnanahideshbiranahai'. Ranganath is the representative of most of the intellectuals. It seems that today every intellectual of India, having become a pathetic picture of Ranganath, is battling within the challenges of Congress socialism. Relatives are falling and there is no better way to deal with them than to leave the spectacle land and move silently.

(iii) Badri pahalwal and Chhootepahalwal : The Badri pahalwal of 'Raag Darbari' is the son of Vaidya ji and is the guru of the chootepahalwal. A large network of his disciples, who came out of his arena, is spread in the surrounding villages. He has to work hard to rescue and bail out his goon-rogue disciples who are caught in cases of theft, dacoity, adultery etc. They consider muscle power as the biggest power in the world. For them morality is a sign of lack of muscle power. It was his utmost duty to protect his foster children.

The chootepahalwal is Badri's ' foster -child'. But at the same time, his family is not reputed. The solid history of his family has been presented in his novel. His great-grandfather Bholanath had established a rough relation with his father and then with his son Gangadayaal, which was faithfully followed by Gangadayaal's son Husahar Prasad and his son ChhotePehalwan. In his family, father and son of each generation used to fight at high level. Until the younger did not become a wrestler, he kept answering his father Kushar Prasad's stick with pieces of stone, but when he became young, the father and the sons stopped using words. The incidents of fighting between them also started decreasing and gradually it

took the form of a ritual, which was celebrated regularly once a year like the anniversaries of big leaders, whether there was public demand or not.'

Once when the chootepahalwal injures his father Kushar Prasad a little too much, he comes to the meeting of Vaidyaji, covered in blood, to complain. Angered by this incident, Ranganath pointed out Badri for saving such people like chootepahalwal. To this Badri Pehelwan casually replies, this Kushar is also no less than anyone. When his father Gangadaya died, he was not even allowing his body to pass through; That he will be dragged to the ghat." Later, when Badri explains to him that he should not kill his father like this, the younger rejects the idea by saying that his father is not worthy. On this, Sanichar explains, "After all, the kusharis your father, he brought up you." On this, chhootepahalwal curse his father by saying that who requested him to give birth to me. This brings out the entire character of the chhootepahalwal. This type of clumsy brashness is characteristic of his character, which is introduced from place to place in the novel.

Badri Pehelwan is equally arrogant. Despite this, Badri Pehalwan is a steadfast pillar of Vaidyaji's strength. When the problems of embezzlement of the college's managing committee and co-operatives become serious, Badri pacifies Vaidyaji by calling it a game of his left hand. Vaidyaji is satisfied with the recipe he offers to solve the problems of Cooperative Inspector Deputy Director, Khanna Master etc. Badri further fulfills his promise on his muscle power without interrupting. Thus, both Badri and the younger wrestler carry forward their family tradition in their own way.

(iv) Sanichar : An important character of the novel 'Raag Darbari' is Sanichar, whose main work was 'Bhang. Ghotna' in the morning and evening of Vaidyaji's meeting hall. The novelist introduces him in the beginning as "a slender man, wearing a dirty vest and striped underwear... His name was Mangal, but people called him Sanichar. His hair was beginning to tangle. Next to him was Teeth had fallen out. His profession was to sit at Vaidyaji's meeting." Along with this, Sanichar considered Vaidya as the only man on earth and Hanuman ji as the only deity in heaven. Due to Vaidyaji's great favor, he used to interfere in the affairs of petty people.

When Ramadhin Bhikham Khedvigets his cousin's elected as Gram pardhan; Vaidaya ji decides to make Sanichar the head of the village-sabha. A month before his election, Kalika Prasad, the famous grantor of the village, takes him to the city. There ADO (Agriculture Development Officer) brings approval for the scheme of cooperative farming.

By arranging a cheap watch for the election officer, Vaidyaji pushed Sanichar to the post of Pradhan by the method of Mahipalpur. The novelist wrote, "On the day of Sanichar's victory, he (rangnath) thought a lot and

during that time he sees, many doctors and ministers and chief ministers were seen entering the queues in the state capitals. The novelist has taken a deep dig at India's democratic election system by the presence of Sanichar in the form of Indian democracy. In this form, Sanichar has become a representative character, representing a particular socio-political trend. Therefore, it can be called a character directly related to the purpose of the creator.

(v) Langad : Langad is the only character in 'Raag Darbari', who has received full sympathy from the author as well as the entire readership community. At the beginning of the novel, the sketch of the lame is presented as follows, "Kabir Panthi Tilak on his forehead, Tulsi groves around his neck, Bearded face with a storm leaf, Slim body, wearing Mirzai. One of his legs was amputated near the knee. The shortfall of which was filled with a stick. The expression on the face of those ancient Christian saints, who every day dragged their hands on their backs and beat themselves a hundred.

Langad had to take a copy of an old trial in connection with a civil suit. For this, Naklanbis asked for five rupees, then the Langad said that the rate is two rupees. On this, both of them got angry, Nabis took a vow that he would give the copy according to law without bribe and the langad also swore and promised that he would also copy it by law. He continues the fight for his 'Satra', the fight for 'Dharam'. He keeps on making rounds of the Shivpalganj court, five miles away from his village. But the action remains incomplete by showing a mistake or the other. He has full faith that copy will definitely be found one day. But in the end when Kale is unable to find it. Here the climax of his torture is realized.

In fact, the Langad sacrifices himself to protect the ideal of not giving a bribe. It also underscores the fact that the common citizen of the country is becoming a 'lame' and suffering day by day increasing plundering of the courts. In this way, through Sanichar the novelist has exposed the reality of the distortions of the Indian electoral system, and through Langad, the orgy of the Indian judicial system has been presented. Both come before us as representatives of different communities from each other.

(vi) Principal Sahib and Khanna Master : Shri Lal Shukla has presented Chhangmal Inter College as a major center for 'Raag Darbari' as an educational institution. The Principal Sahib and Khanna Master fully exposed the reality of the post-independence education system. But the whole circle of education system is completed only by including the college manager Vaidyaji. The principal attends Vaidyaji's meeting regularly, agrees to the demand, flatters him and complains about Khanna and the masters of his group. His biggest merit is a well-managed proper system of factionalism, beating, abusing, hooliganism, notice dismissal, terror, nudity

etc. in the college. He has put the teachers in the line of thieves and bandits by suing them for 107. Vaidyaji has given complete freedom to the principal for all kinds of work. Also, Badri and the chhotepahalwan act as a protective shield for them.

Khanna Master is a representative of the general teacher community, who do not accept the excesses of the principal. Due to their active opposition, they are not able to give proper attention to the students. They somehow garner the sympathy of student leaders Ruppan and Ranganath, son of Vaidya. With the help of this, they build a barricade against the principal and his faction. But not a single one of them moves in front of a consummate like Vaidyaji. By holding a meeting under the pretext of investigating the Deputy Director, Education, they force Khanna and Malviya to sign a pre-prepared resignation letter at the insistence of Badri and the chhote wrestler through a deep conspiracy.

Through the conflict between the principal and Khanna, the novelist has successfully exposed the grim reality of the post-independence education system. Teachers are appointed amongst the relatives of the principal and manager. Half the salary is given by signing the teachers on double pay. Those who raise their heads too much are thrown out of educational institutions like Khanna, Tripathi, Malviya etc. The students leave their studies and become victims of the factionalism of the teachers. The government grants received by the schools heat the pockets of the principal and manager by not engaging in the education work. All these facts are presented very efficiently in 'Raag Darbari' in the dispute between Principal and Khanna. Through his character the authentic reality of the education system comes in front of the r Character representations and other characters

MINOR CHARACTERS

Most of the characters of Raag Darbari have come as representatives of a particular community rather than their individual characteristics. Some other characters like Jognath, Gayadin, Pt. Radhelal, Kalika Prasad, Shatrughan Singh, Ripudaman and his brothers Sarvadaman Singh, Thakur Balram Singh etc. also reveal their class characteristics in the novel.

(i) Jognath : Jognath, in the novel, appears as the representative of the anti-social elements of the village. He is famous as a gambler, drunkard and a known thief. In the night, gives voice to the policemen and soldiers engaged on fake patrol and also abuses them. By the way, he works as a painter on the walls of the village. As soon as it is dark in the evening, he joins two or four companions outside Shivpalganj to do Raahjini and drinks

heavily on contract. He is not caught red handed during the theft in Gayadin's house, so is taken prisoner by the SHO in a fake encounter, in which the chhoteepahalwan becomes a police informer and takes the side of Jognath with great deceit and acquits him. He is considered a man of Vaidaji.

Shrilal Shukla (Raag Darbari)

(ii) Gayadin : Gayadin was a bania whose occupation was usury. Along with the transaction of money in the form of loan at his shop, clothes were also sold. Co-operative union also used to give money on interest and used to shop for clothes, due to good relationship with Vaidyji, there was a peaceful co-existence between Gayadin and Co-Operative and he was also the vice-president of the college's managing committee. He was favored by the police, local MLA, and the tax collector of the district board because of his money and prestige.

He was so sattvik in his conduct that he did not even eat urad dal, because of which he was prone to anger. His biggest weakness was his healthy, beautiful and well-versed daughter Bela. Both Ruppan and Badhi had their eyes on him. Not being deceived by Khanna and the teachers of his group, he did not join the factionalism. Being fed up with the slander being brought about by his daughter, after marrying her in the city, he left the village and went to settle in the city. He represents the innocent moneylender moneylenders.

(iii) Pandit Radhe Lal : Pandit Radhelal was famous in the village as a 'never uprooted' witness. Commenting on them, the novelist wrote, "Just as a judge can deliver a verdict in any case before him, any lawyer can advocate any case, so Pt Radhelal can be an eyewitness in any case." But looking at the splatter, taunts etc. of the people of the village, it seems that most of the people's opinion about him was not good. The novelist, Pandit describes Radhelal as follows - "A priestly old man, with puffy cheeks, a beard without buttons. A disorganized Gandhi cap on the head... Red sandalwood vaccine on the forehead. Rudraksh garland around the neck. "

But in spite of this, when Pt Radhelal went to some eastern district and dragged the wife of a watchman to remarriage, he became famous among the villagers as a 'never uprooted witness' as well as a 'man who never missed'. It is clear from this that in the novel Pt. Radhelal has been presented as a typical character of a false witness of the village-society, Makkari, making fraud his business. He has established his disciple tradition in the whole area, the proof of which is Vaidyanath, who appears as a police informer in the case of Jognath's punishment.

(iv) Kalika Prasad : Kalika Prasad was a person who lived for government money through government money. His reputation as a grant-bearer was unmatched. He had three assistants in this profession. After

digesting all the grants received for poultry farming, leather earning, manure pits, setting up stove without smoke, making new type of sandas, he sent a proper report of everyone's performance. His five bighas of farmland alone was taking care of fifty types of loans and taqabis. As the Planning Commission thinks about any new scheme of giving grants or loans, he gets all the information about it. For this he used to prepare the application in advance. He became assistant of Sanichar before he became the head of gram sabha. Not only becomes assistants, but also ADOs. The deal comes to an end with the cooperative farming scheme. This completely exposes the reality of the multifaceted development plans of the Planning Commission. All in all, Pt. Kalika Prasad has been presented as a representative of not only the Grant Khors but also the debt-thieves.

THAKUR BALRAM SINGH

Thakur Balram Singh appears on the plot of the novel only once on the election of the college's chairman. Commenting on his arrival a boy says, "Now no one can stand against Vaidya ji. Thakur Balram Singh has arrived." Under his influence, the opposing members go back and Vaidyaji is unanimously elected as the chairman.

Through the above-mentioned characters, the novelist has exposed the fact that now the village has come completely under the grip of goons and miscreants and there is no participation of common farmers in the development of any area.

CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY

Chapter 1

Ranganath, a boy from the city, goes to Shivpalganj for healing purposes (as suggested by the doctor). He misses his train and requests a truck driver to give him a lift. Taking him a place officer, truck driver readily gives him lift. On knowing that Ranganath is a student (M.A. History), the truck driver feels irritated.

On the way, Police appear and fines the truck driver as every part of the truck is worn out. While travelling, Ranganath explaining the education system of India and compares it with a bitch which can be kicked by everyone. According to him, money has become the aim and goal of everyone, from student to a saint.

Chapter 2

A man arrives at the police station and tells the police that he has been threatened by some dacoits. His application has already been rejected for grammatical errors.

The people of Shivpalganj blindly believe that Policemen have magical powers and on the other hand, policemen also consider themselves the kings of the village. However, they never lend a helping hand.

RuppanBabu, (son of the director of Shivpalganj College {Vaidyaji}), also comes to the police station telling the policeman that some dacoits have asked for money to Ramadhin (who is from another village). Both the policeman and RuppanBabu try to guess who could have written the letter.

Their doubt travels from policemen to students. Inspector tells Ruppan about the story of Bakhtavar Singh (a policeman during the British rule). He was beaten by some hooligans who asked for forgiveness and Bakhtavar Singh adopting them beat the enemies of those hooligans instead.

As a result of a number of other hooligans also offered to beat him but the latter refused to parent more hooligans. RuppanBabu after having a heartily laugh asks the policeman if he is a follower of Bakhtavar Singh. The policeman replies that these days he is a follower of Ruppan's father instead.

The author tells about RuppanBabu. He is a grown-up lad who is in the 10th class for the last 10 years as he does not want to leave college. But the real motive of Ruppan to be so is that he wants to keep his rule over the college students intact.

Chapter 3

Shukla tells about the college (Changamal Vidyalaya Intermediate College). A number of miraculous stories revolve around the establishment of the college. In the college Motiram, while taking class talks less about the books and more about his flour mill and that of his rival's.

Meanwhile, principle orders a teacher namely Malaviya to take a class. Malaviya is a supporter of Khanna Master who aspires to become vice-principle (which made him a foe of Principle).

Khanna Master is taking an English class. The Principal appears in the class and scolds Khanna as he sees students reading obscene things.

In real, principle fears that he will lose his powers if Khanna Master becomes the vice principle. He thus leaves no stone unturned to abuse and exposes the faults of Khanna Master and his friends.

Chapter 4

Shukla describes the view of Vaidyaji's house (the director of the college). RuppanBabu (son of Vaidyaji) returns back from the police station.

Ranganath (cousin of Ruppan) also reaches there. Mangal (servant of Vaidyaji) who is known as Sanichar in the village, is sitting on the veranda of Vaidyaji's house.

Ranganath enquires about the Badri Pahalwal (elder brother of Ruppan). Sanichar tells him that Badri has gone to bazaar adding "ganjaha" as a title of respect with the name of Badri.

Vaidyaji who is an Ayurvedic by profession is attending his patients. He provides "free treatment for the poor and money back if not satisfied".

Ironically he has his own philosophy of diseases. According to him, there are two types of diseases-public and secret. He believes that all the diseases are caused by the loss of chastity. He also shows his support for the preservation of semen.

Chapter 5

In the chapter Shukla introduces us to Langar who has filed a case for some land case. His application has often being rejected. While in the office, he quarrels with the clerk as both decide the different amount of bribe to settle the case.

No compromise is made even after the interference of other officials. Langar returns back and hopes that his case will be settled someday by Divine. A discussion is held between the Principal and Vaidyaji. The former expresses his fear over the demand of Khanna.

Chapter 6

Badri Pahalwal (elder brother of Ruppan) returns back to the village on Rickshaw. On the way, he irritates the rickshaw-walla by asking him to sing a song.

Suddenly Ramadhin (resident of the village adjoining Shivpalganj) appears before the rickshaw. Ramadhin was arrested for his opium business for 2 years. Badri had installed a flour mill in Ramadhin's village that flourished thus making Ramadhin jealous of him.

Ramadhin stops Rickshaw and says to Badri that he received a letter from dacoits demanding money and he doubts that RuppanBabu might have written a letter for them. Saying this he asks Badri to keep Ruppan under his control. Badri assured his safety and goes away.

Chapter 7

A room having books that belong to Ruppan is given to Ranganath. Ranganath is told about the story of a thief whose existence is not sure. This makes Ranganath conclude that generation gap has entered in villages also because in earlier times every thief was more fierce than the other but the thieves of today cannot fight anybody.

Sanichar tells Ranganath about the story of a robber Durbin Singh (his parents wanted him to go far in scientific knowledge; so he was named Durbin) who like Gandhi's Dandi March, used to commit crimes in order to break British laws and everybody feared him in the village.

However one day after independence, a gang of hooligans captured Sanichar and started beating him. When he told them that he is a friend of Durbin he was beaten more and told that days of Durbin are over now. Consequently, he had to run away in order to save his life.

Chapter 8

Shukla tells how advertisements became subjects of discussion among the villagers of Shivpalganj. The literates would read them and the illiterates would try to find out which person is portrayed in it.

E.g. in one advertisement that asked the villagers to grow more crops as India is an agricultural country, people start saying that the man in it resembles Badri.

However, they failed to find the identity of the girl who is standing beside the man. Some advertisements would become so famous that they become the headlines of the newspaper (like Treatment of Piles by Vaidyaji).

Shukla tells that the letter that Ramadhin got was not by dacoits but was an attempt by Vaidyaji to tackle his influence. This method is quite common in the village.

However, Police set out to the place on the hills where Ramadhin was asked to leave the money. Finding nothing, policemen return back. On their way back they find Jognath (one who makes advertisements posters) drunk and abusive. However, he is spared as he is the man of Vaidyaji.

Chapter 9

Once embezzlement is done in the cooperative union. Union supervisor Ram Swarup loads sacks of wheat (that were for the villagers of Shivpalganj) and runs away to another village.

The director of the union, once, while having head massage finds Ram but does not catch him. On reaching Shivpalganj he tells Vaidyaji about the incident and the latter decides to arrange a meeting to discuss how to catch the convict.

Sanichar while watching three young men tells Ranganath about the story of a man Kana (as he is blind in one eye). His real name is Pandit Radhelal. While doing the job of the watchman in another village, he made friends with another watchman.

He used to dine at his house. He liked the food so much that he brought the wife of that watchman to his own village. The woman used to be called a bit ch afterwards in the village.

One of the three young men namely ChotePahalwal comes to Sanichar and asks about Badri. Sanichar tells that he has gone to the meeting held

by Vaidyaji. Chote gets angry and tells Ranganath that nothing is done in such meetings.

All the men just beat about the bushes. In the meeting, it is decided that the government should either recover the stolen wheat or provide compensation to the villagers.

Chapter 10

In Shivpalganj, factionalism dominates the college. It is believed that factionalism is a tradition from Vedanta. Thus everybody uses factionalism for his own selfish purposes.

In Shivpalganj an incident happens every four days. Thus people have always something to discuss. e.g. A boy is caught writing a love letter to a girl and is expelled from the college. He is admitted only when his father agrees to provide 50,000 bricks for the construction of the new college.

The issue of having vice-principal is raised and Vaidyaji says that college committee will decide on the matter. This makes the principal restless and he thus becomes irritated with everything. A quarrel also takes place between Khanna Master and principal in the office of the latter.

In the evening Ranganath and Badri discuss the incident in which the term 'humanity' was used again and again. It converses how the term humanity has been used both by looters as well as winners to meet their ends.

While talking both of them sleep. Suddenly cries of 'Thief, thief, thief' are heard that wake-up both Ranganath and Badri. After long chase thieves are driven away by the police. Badri who had also gone before the thieves return back to home.

Chapter 11

Ranganath hears the hauling of Kausahar Prasad-the father of ChotePahalwal (disciple of Badri Pahalwal). He is quite wounded and has come to Vaidyaji to complain against his son who has beaten him.

He says, "Maharaj, this time Chote has murdered me. I can't stand this anymore. You have to keep us apart or sometime soon I will kill him with my own hands."

Vaidyaji remains unaffected and advises him to visit the hospital. This irritates Kausahar who goes away abusing his son. Shukla tells how ancestors of Chote used to beat their fathers and thus this practice is common to them. Chote's great-grandfather beat his father and Gangadayaal (Chote's grandfather) used to beat his father.

Kausahar Prasad's brother "had learned the art of insulting their fathers." and "Kausahar's hand's wires accustomed to raising a lathi to his

father once every week that when Gangadayaal dies they began to go numb for several days every month."

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When Kaushar goes away, Chote comes. Vaidyaji gives him a degrading look and asks him to leave. However, Bardi shows some sort of support to him when Chote defends his beating.

Chapter 12

We are introduced to Gayadin who is the vice-chairman of the college managing committee and also owns a shop. He has a beautiful daughter-Bela with whom Ruppan is in love.

Ruppan had even written a love letter to her which was caught. Gayadin is rich and respectable because "he had the favour of Vaidyaji, the police, Ruppan, the local MLA and the district Board's Tax Collector."

Once a robbery took place in the house of Gayadin and his daughter and sister purposely hid the identity of the robber when police try to investigate. For Gayadin, every teacher is a fool.

Once a discussion starts regarding arranging an election in the college by those who are not on good terms with the Principal. However, Gayadin defends the will and the action of principle.

Malaviya says that principle wastes government's money. At this Gayadin says, "It's not right to get so upset over the public money. In any case, it's bound to be wasted."

Shukla then describes a place called Chamrahi where untouchables live. He tells that even after the abolition of untouchability, such notions still exist in society. Some masters passing by the Chamrahi find Langar there who tells that he is about to get the copy without any bribe.

Chapter 13

Shivpalganj, like any other village, has an agha or Pradhan. Currently, Ramadhin's brother is the Pradhan and people are quite dissatisfied with him.

Vaidyaji and all others present there to announce that they want Sanichar to be the next Pradhan of the village. Sanichar feels very happy and starts dreaming of being Pradhan.

Chapter 14

A mela is held in Shivpalganj and all people go there. Ruppan also hopes with Jognath (the one who makes advertisement posters). On the way, they meet policemen.

Jognath fears being teased by them. In the mela policemen tell Ruppan that they doubt that the latter (threat letter received by Ramadhin) is written by some student and thus they want his cooperation.

At this Ruppan says, "You have our full cooperation. If you don't believe me, go and see what happens if you arrest any student from the college."

Sanichar behaves like Pardhan when an argument starts between Jognath and Chote. Ranganath meets Langar who tells him that his file still in the office.

Chapter 15

Ranganath visits the temple for Darshan in a temple. He had been told that "the temple had been built in Sat Yug, millions of years ago." However on examining he concludes that in reality temple is not very old.

He goes inside the temple and seeing the picture of the assumed God, he questions its authenticity to the priest and is thus abused badly.

He would have been beaten as well but Ruppan handles the situation and takes Ranganath out and later says to him, "It's not your fault, it's your education's."

Inspector Singh appears in the market who demands Rs 5/- as a bribe to every shopkeeper accusing them of adulteration. But shopkeepers declare that they will give only Rs. 2/- each.

An argument begins and both parties remain unchanged. However, Ruppan interferes and ultimately it is agreed that every shopkeeper should pay Rs. 2.5/-

After a while, Singh exclaims, "In earlier days people used to give money and be grateful to you for taking it. Now they bring someone with them like RuppanBabu."

Meanwhile, a fight begins between Chote and a sweet-vendor. Chote gives him good blows. When the police come, Chote says that he had given money, still, he is demanding money.

On the other hand, the shopkeeper says that Chote has not given him any money and has also beat him. Finally, Ruppan settles the matter by paying Rs. 5/- to the shopkeeper.

A whore attracts Ranganath and a man also tries to make Ranganath take interest in her. However, Ranganath goes away. In the way, he asks Ruppan about the love letter he wrote to Bela but the latter ignores.

Chapter 16

Kausahar Prasad has filed a case against his son Chote and a meeting is held. For two hours, Sarpanch beats about the bushes and even calls Kausaharbastard. At this Chote loses his temper and abusing Sarpanch and his justice drags his father to home.

Chapter 17

The election is held in the college. Principal having the support of students and police makes the arrangement of the even in his favour.

All those supporting principles and Vaidyaji are allowed to participate in the meeting and those opposing are threatened and driven away by police and college students. Vaidyaji wins unanimously for the post director.

Outside the college, slogan are raised "Victory to Ram Chandra, spouse of Sita!" "Victory to Mahatma Gandhi!"

Chapter 18

In the room of Vaidyaji. Principal, while talking about justice, narrates the story of a young prince to Ranganath. A Nawab's prince falls ill and cannot be cured by anybody.

Ultimately saint comes to whom queen reveals that the prince is in reality, son of a Water-Carrier. Thus Hakim makes a joule of Kaurilla plants and prince recovers after taking it.

The principal says that in village kaurilla-brand justice exists. He says, "Whatever kind of court you require, you can find." and adds, "If a kaurilla brand, low bred man once gets to a court that is higher than his status, he will be led in destitute" For him, only village courts can provide him fair justice.

Ranganath becomes aware of the unfair means used by Vaidyaji by which he and his men won the election. He doesn't like this and talks about it to Ruppan.

Ruppan tells him that he too hates this and desires to make Khanna vice principal. It is about one month left to elections and like any other politician Sanichar too desires to arrange money and spend it in the name of welfare.

For this, he considers Kalika Prasad suitable as his "profession was spending government grants and loans. He lived in government money and for government money."

Thus he has a lot of money and can also arrange money for him by unfair means. Sanichar tells Vaidyaji that he has heard that cooperative farming will help my grain production. So he is thinking of opening a cooperative farm in the village with the help of Kalika Prasad. Everyone is astonished by his plans.

Chapter 19

A complaint is made to the Education Minister against the unfair means used during elections. In order to handle the situation, Principal tries to "improve the appearance of buildings."

While he is guiding the labour I digging a pit, Khanna Master appears before him with the leave application. Principal ignores him it appears that a fight will soon begin.

Khanna Master, in order to gain support, starts abusing Principal loudly and a number of people gather there. Principal rejects the application because of grammatical errors. A fight breaks out and by the time of day, the matter reaches to police.

The principal goes to Vaidyaji to tell about the incident. A man comes from the city in a car who cannot live without delivering a lecture. Finding college students, he assembles and starts throwing words on them.

When lecture ends "The boys and master wended their ways home imitating the way he'd kept saying 'Brothers and Sisters'."

Chapter 20

Badri Pahalwal goes to the neighbouring district to bail out a young man. While he is away, Ranganath thinks of Bela and about the love letter Ruppan wrote to her.

When the letter was caught a number of rumours spread throughout the village against the character of Bela. "He thought of Bela a lot. So much in fact that hundreds of breasts and buttocks all of different shapes and sizes began to rise and fall in his mind.

The next night, while he is thinking of Vaidyji and Sanichar and the inauguration of the cooperative farm by Sanichar, he sleeps and feels as if a girl has hugged him.

He suddenly wakes up and finds a girl who sighs, "Oh Mother!" on seeing Ranganath. When he gets up she runs away leaving him in chaos.

Chapter 21

Police arrests Jognath accusing him of the shelf (at Gayadin's house). His house is searched and along with the ornaments, a number of other things are magically produced.

Vaidyaji and Ruppan investigate the matter and try to find the politics behind his arrest. They conclude that the Police is favouring Ramadhin over Vaidyaji. Hence when the latter tries to appeal for Jognath's bail, the inspector rejects his request.

At Ramadhin's house, bhang is made. Ranganath and Sanichar, while on the way go to his house and find Langar there who tells that he is about to get his copy. On the way back, Sanichar and Ranganath find some gamblers and describe how they live in their own world with their own language.

Chapter 22

Ranganath narrates his encounter with a girl in the night while he was sleeping. On the other hand, Ruppan tries his best to prove that the person would not be a girl.

Ranganath goes to a neighboring village to buy some almonds. On the way, he meets a man who introduces himself as the father of a lawyer and tries to prove his son's profession more successful over all other professions.

While on the way, Ranganath grasps point tips of long grass and ties them into a large knot to clear the path. When the man asks about it, Ranganath, on seeing his curiosity jokingly says, "Uncle told me that on the way there's a forest of Kans grass. Tie a knot in the tips of the grass. Lord Hanuman will be pleased."

After trying another knot Ranganath says loudly, "Victory to Lord Hanuman!" The person and an old lady seeing him doing so also start doing the same act.

Ranganath does not find any almonds there and returns back with Sanichar who had gone for a haircut. On way back, they find the whole forest in the knotted condition.

A person passing by tells Sanichar that he has done this like others to praise Lord Hanuman. Ranganath tells about the dream of his uncle and finds Sanichar also doing the same.

Chapter 23

In a village, a person murders someone but he is liberated and all charges are taken off after by bribery and thus he arranges a party for his supporters. A number of people go from Shivpalganj go there. Thus Ranganath remains alone with Vaidyaji. The latter bores Ranganath with his boring lectures throughout the day.

In the evening Ranganath goes out and meets Principal. An argument arises between the two and soon gets heated. The principal tries to boost his position and narrates how he was once given unfair marks when he tried to ask a question to a professor and offended him.

Ranganath tries to calm down the matter by agreeing to what he says. Principal then narrates the incident with Khanna and defends his actions. On the way, they find sub-inspectors luggage being loaded as he is going to the city because his daughter wants to study in a convent school.

Chapter 24

Sanichar starts campaigning for election and begs for votes to everyone whom he meets. On the other hand, Ramadhin's brother who had become rich because of this position also starts campaigning.

On Gandhian Platform (near Chamrahi) Ramadhin haves a well dug which has already been dug, however this time it is registered "officially as 'Well Constitution Scheme'. It has apolitical plot to extract good seized grant."

The election takes place in Pardhan, Shukla then tells three different methods- the Ramnagar Method, the Nevada Method and the Mahipalpur Method).

- **Ramnagar Method** : One of the two election contestants was arrested along with his men as the other contestant bribed police for doing so. Later the one who bribed the police announced that he is working for them who have been arrested.
- **Nevada Method** : When election contestants were to be contested between a Brahmin and a Harijan, the Brahmin made the people vote him by bringing a Baba who predicted that Brahmin will win.
- **Mahipalpur Method** : It was the scientific method. The one who won the election had kept his watch faster. As a result, he made the time of his watch to be the official time of the village. His men voted and when others were supposed to vote at the right time, voting was over and he won. A case was registered against him, however, no outcome was made.

Sanichar using this method wins the election making all others shocked.

Chapter 25

A love letter falls on the roof and Ranganath reads it doubting that Bela might have written to Ruppan. Badri comes and Ranganath tells about the letter and the former feels restless.

It is the hearing of the case of Jognath and most of the people go to the city as "they get heartfelt satisfaction from seeing the hooligan humiliated. And the hooligan to gets heartfelt satisfaction from thinking as many people have come from the village to support him."

In the court, Chote comes to "testify for Police against Jognath". Langar who have also come narrates that he is about to get his copy and is thus ridiculed.

Hearing of the case begins and the conversation turns towards the daughter of Gayadin. However, Jognath's lawyer opposes the relevance of Bela and starts questioning the witness who is a disciple of Radhelal who is famous for bearing false witnesses.

The lawyer tries his best to prove him false but fails. Next Chote is called in the witness box. An argument begins and in the end, it is told by Chote that Jognath and Bela are in love and thus to take revenge, Gayadin wants him to be involved in the case.

Sub-inspector also comes and tries to avoid being humiliated for making a case against Jognath. Ultimately Jognath gets bail and returns back.

Chapter 26

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The hearing is held against the Principal in the court. After that, he visits Vaidyaji to express his anger but Vaidyaji remains cold to him. A cyclist reaches a peepul tree in Shivpalganj which is believed to be haunted by spirits.

Suddenly he hears unusual sounds behind bushes and at once takes them for the spirit. But he soon learns that there are some drunkards.

Two more cyclists come and start listening to their conversation. One of them is Jognath who is telling about recent events associated with him.

A drunkard who has been robbed goes to Police Station and is made to return back to constable making by making him aware of his karma.

Chapter 27

Shukla tells how the young generation is becoming lazy and workless. Politicians build colleges to prepare their ground "for the next state assembly or parliamentary polls and their main achievement was to exploit teachers and government grants."

In addition to these schools, there are wrestling pits. "Badri had flattened Chote with the dhobi-slab throw. Chote would have cursed him but can't as Badri is his teacher. Both return back.

On the way, Badri inquires about the statement that Chose had given against Bela in the court. Chote remains unserious to all the questions. Ultimately Bardi says, "This Bela is about to become your mother."

Chote is stunned and asks, "Guru you're a Brahmin, she's a Benia...If Vaidya Maharaj objects, your scheme will fall to pieces." Badri assures safety and asks him to keep his secret disclosed. Chote thinks about the rumours revolving around Bela. Badri taunts him for making her match with a fool like Jognath.

Chapter 28

Shukla tells how Ruppan is sad because he had heard about the affair of Bela and Badri. Ranganath is also amazed to know how people like Sanichar win and criminals like Jognath get bail and roam freely.

Khanna Master and Malaviya come to Ranganath and Ruppan to talk against the Principal. Khanna Master tells how Principal assassinated Malaviya's character by writing a letter narrating about the affair of Malaviya with a college boy whom he took with him in a hotel.

Ruppan tells that he too heard about it. The conversation turns towards Badri and Bela, their love affair and all the incident that happen. Ruppan is heart-broken as he too loved Bela and even wrote love letters to her.

Ruppan, Principal, and Vaidyaji go to District School Inspector to complain against Khanna Master. The office of Inspector is "office kam/ residence yada.

On the way back they visit a bazaar and while talking about bringing uniform in the college, the discussion turns to the issue of Khanna Master. Principal after raising issue tries to turn away when Ruppan gets angry.

Vaidyaji prays to Shiva to get rid of his enemies and on opening the eyes, he finds Ruppan screaming on Principal. The argument gets serious when Ruppan talks about the affair of Badri and Bela. In anger, Ruppan leaves their company.

Chapter 29

The argument begins between Vaidyaji and Badri over Bela. When Vaidyaji calls him low charactered (for having affair with a girl of low caste), Badri reminds him of his grandfather who married a sweeper.

Ruppan gets punches from Badri when he tries to interfere and thus starts seeing stars. At a sweetshop, Ruppan finds Langar sitting and inquires about his copy.

Langar tells that he is about to get it and adds that he was attacked by Malaria but has recovered now. On the way back, Ruppan goes through Chamrahi (place of Chamars) and doesn't get that welcome which a Brahmin used to get on visiting a place inhabited by people of low caste. He meets Churriya who why he had visited the place as elections are over now.

Ruppan continues on his way and sees a man forcing an old woman shopkeeper to sell him a chicken that she doesn't want to sell as she has raised it to offer to a Baba. However, he succeeds in buying it.

Ruppan guesses that some officer might be visiting his house. Ruppan meets Ranganath and Principal and offers the former to watch the movie for free that Sanichar is offering as a part of his success. Ranganath refuses and both go their ways.

Chapter 30

Sanichar opens a shop. Ranganath suggests him to put someone to run the shops it doesn't suit a Pardhan doing so. Sanichar says that he is merely a tenant as he considers Vaidyaji Pardhan.

A young man comes to the shop of Sanichar and talks about birth control. Gayadin is impressed by his behaviour and his caster (he is an Aggarwal) bringing to his house, introduces him to his daughter Bela.

Chote finds Sanichar meddling with something in the fields and tells him that Vaidyaji is waiting for him. However, he shows he is busy and refuses to obey his order.

The sub-inspector, who had had Jognath arrested is now forced to pay a fixed amount (which is quite high) to Jognath. He visits Vaidyaji for compromise. However, Vaidyaji suggests him to discuss the issue with Sanichar.

Inspector is surprised to know that Sanichar has become Pardhan. At Sanichar's shop, Jognath and sub-inspector argue. Sanichar can't decide and suggests that they should again pay a visit to Vaidyaji.

Ultimately sub-inspector pays some amount. Jognath had arranged a party in which a fierce fight starts among drunkards and whole village echoes with the sounds of lathis and stones.

Chapter 31

Badri had gone to pay for bail of a man in another village who is accused of the illegal possession of weapons. Badri returns back and Vaidyaji tells him how Khanna Master and his allies have initiated a case against him and Principal.

Badri tells him that he will resolve everything by might and requests him to consider the matter of Bela. "On the other hand, his (Ranganath) health had improved, but on the other, his mind had become polluted.

Vaidyaji gradually loses his political influence and soon gets assured about it when the new inspector is not transferred on his recommendation. He decides to resign from the director's position. The annual meeting of Cooperative Union takes place and Badri takes the position of his father and thus becomes the new director.

Chapter 32

Vaidyaji goes to Gayadin's house and asks for Bela's hand. He comes to know that Gayadin has fixed her marriage with some Aggarwal who belongs to another village.

He returns back unaware of the fact that Gayadin was collecting money that he is supposed to give to Aggarwal as his price, so that he may marry his daughter. Gayadin prepares to leave for the city (to pay the amount) and sees Ranganath and his allies coming towards him.

The conversation begins that develops from buffalo to artificial insemination to Bela to Khanna Master's case. It is also narrated that in recent hearing judge took the side of Principal and scolded Khanna Master and his friends.

Ranganath requests Gayadin to make Vaidyaji help Khanna Master, but Gayadin narrating the story of a leader of their village (the first-ever leader), says that he doesn't like to hear taunts of leadership.

Chapter 33

Shukla tells about the worst condition of the bus stand of Shivpalganj. Deputy Director of Education is about to come. Ruppan and Ranganath visit Khanna Master.

On the way they meet Langar who tells that he copy reached the office, however, he was attacked by Malaria. As he couldn't collect the file in time, it was thrown away. While telling this he starts crying. Ruppan and Ranganth try to console him and suggest him to start farming.

Chapter 34

Khanna Master catches a boy copying in the exam. However, as he is a member of Principal's faction a quarrel starts between Khanna Master and Principal. The former is forced to leave college.

Later on, allies of Khanna Master encourage him to raise voice against Principal but he refuses. The principal goes to Viadyaji's house and comes to know that Bela is marrying someone else and exclaims, "Good God! What an amazing place this village is!"

Sanichar tells that Jognath has again been arrested as he was drunk, thus he does not "get a chance to open shop two days in now."

Chapter 35

The main motive of the Deputy Director of Education was not coming for inquiry of college but to fulfil the desire of his wife to stay there. Preparations are made in the college to welcome Deputy Director but he does not come.

Master Motiram comes in the evening and announces that Deputy Director will not come. The discussion begins among Ranganath, Principal, and Vaidyaji that turns to the case of Khanna Master. Vaidyaji decides to resolve the matter. He calls him and his allies and forces them to resign.

Ruppan doesn't like this and Vaidyaji, in anger disinherits from his property. In the night, Ranganath wonders where Ruppan would have gone as he has not seen him since evening.

The next day Ranganath meets Principal who offers him the post of Khanna Master and he refuses angrily.

THEMES

Politics and government are the two main themes of the novel. Having lived a majority of his life in Uttar Pradesh and being a cog in the wheel of government, an Indian Administrative Services officer, Shrilal Shukla describes the politics and the bureaucracy at the very rudimentary level in a satirical manner. He exposes how politicians, businessmen, criminals and policemen collude to exploit society for selfish reasons. The title itself alludes to the political emphasis of the plot. Raag Darbari is one of the most majestic melodic modes used in Indian classical music. It literally means the melody of the court. In the novel it refers to the melody sung by the

courtiers of a contemporary raja, viz. a village politician, Vaidyaji. His sitting room (baithak) is the 'darbar' of his camp-followers.

Shrilal Shukla (Raag Darbari)

The story is set in Shivpalganj, a fictional village typical of the Raebareli district, near Lucknow. The action takes place over a period of six months during which Rangnath, a young research student in history, comes to stay with his uncle, Vaidyaji, to recover after an illness. It is narrated in third person from the point of view of Rangnath. Much of the action revolves around the extended family with which Rangnath lives in Shivpalganj and its struggle for power. The patriarch is Rangnath's maternal uncle Vaidyaji, a Machiavellian leader who controls the grain co-operative and the intermediate college, and is the apex of the village's feudal structure.

EXERCISE

1. Throw light on the literary importance of Shrilal Shukla as a novelist.
2. Despite the absence of political characters and events, 'Raag Darbari' is a powerful political novel. Explain this statement with example.
3. In the novel 'Raag Darbari', which distortions prevailing in the society have been exposed by making the educational institution the center?
4. Why did the all-round development of rural areas not take place in spite of full financial support by the Government Planning Commission? Highlight the main reasons.
5. Consider the meaning of the title 'Raag Darbari'.
6. Explain the difference between the subject and its content covered in 'Raag Darbari'.
7. "Raag Darbari" has got a new novel dignity in spite of some neglect of the traditional novel creation-craft." Explain your views in the context of this belief.
8. Throw light on the characteristics of 'Raag Darbari' from the point of view of language usage.
9. Write an essay on the satire of Raag Darbari.
10. Raag Darbari is a general character anecdote; throw light on the significance of this statement.
11. Describing the character of Vaidyaji of 'Raag Darbari', tell what purpose has the author fulfilled through him.
12. Explaining the characteristic features of Sanichar, state to which community the author has presented him as a representative.
13. Shrilal Shukla has inflicted a severe blow on the Indian judicial system through Langed. Explain this statement with example.

14. Most of the characters in 'Raag Darbari' appear to represent more of a community's characteristics than their personal characteristics. Consider for example the significance of this statement.
15. Which value-view has the author introduced in the character-formation of 'Raag Darbari'? Explain with example.
16. Write comments on the following :
 - Judiciary depicted in 'Raag Darbari'
 - Rigging of gram panchayat elections
 - Grant or grantee Kalika Prasad
 - Police-administration portrayed in 'Raag Darbari'.

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UNIT-IV

Udupi Rajagopalacharya
Ananthamurthy

Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy SAMSKARA: THE NARRATIVE

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Objectives
- Life and Works of Dr. U.R. Anantha Murthy
 - (a) Biological Sketch of Dr. U.R. Anantha Murthy
 - (b) Awards and His Works
 - (c) Dr. U.R. Anantha Murthy as a writer
- Introduction
- The Plot
- Title
- Characterization and Characters
- Chapter wise Summaries and Comments the Narrative : Three Important Features
 - (a) Focalization
 - (b) Intertextuality
 - (c) Structure
- Samskara as an Allegory
- Themes
 - (a) Some Preliminary Considerations
 - (b) Quest for Identity - Journey towards a New
 - (c) Asceticism and Eroticism
 - (d) Brahminism and Anti-Brahminism
 - (e) Tradition and Change
- Literary Criticism of Samskara
- Contemporary Relevance of Samskara

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- To know the text of Samskara intimately;
- To be able to answer about U.R. Anantha Murthy and his works.
- To examine the 'Samskara' critically.

- To understand the plot and summary completely.
- To know the characters.
- To analyze 'Samskara' as an allegory
- To understand the Contemporary Relevance of Samskara.

• LIFE AND WORKS OF DR. U.R. ANANTHA MURTHY

A. Biographical Sketch of U.R. Anantha Murthy

Udupi Rajagopala Acharya Anantha Murthy was born on December 21, 1932 at Melige, a remote village in Tirthahalli Taluka, in Shimoga District of Karnataka State. Anantha Murthy had his early Sanskrit education in a traditional pathashala later he completed his B.A. Honours from Maharaja's College, Mysore and Post-graduation in English from the University of Mysore in 1956. He earned his Ph. D (English & Comparative Literature) from the University of Birmingham, U.K. in 1966.

He began his career as a Lecturer in English in 1956 and continued till 1963. Later he joined the Regional College of Education, Mysore, as a Reader in English and served there till 1970. From 1970 till 1980 he was Reader in English at Mysore University. During 1980-92, he was Professor of English at the University of Mysore. He became the Vice-Chancellor of the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala in 1987 and continued till 1991.

He has been a visiting Professor at a number of foreign and Indian Universities like the University of Iowa (1975), Tufts University (1978), University of Hyderabad (2001), University of Cornell (2000), University of Pennsylvania (2000), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (1993), University of Tübingen, Germany (1992), and Shivaji University, Kolhapur (1982).

He was Chairman, National Book Trust of India, Delhi in 1992-93; President, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi in 1993-98; and Chairman, Indian Institute of Social Sciences, Delhi in 1998-2002.

Awards

U.R. Anantha Murthy has received numerous awards from the Government, Akademis and other academic institutions for excellence in different fields.

- (a) These include the Masti award in Literature,
- (b) Jnanpith Award in 1994
- (c) Padma Bhushan.

Lectures

He has lectured on a wide variety of subjects including politics, culture, literature and art. Some important lectures of his are :

- (a) "Culture and Destiny" at Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal;

(b) "Indian Literature" in the University of Madison and Chicago in 1985.

(c) "Indian Society, Culture, Politics, and Literature" at the University of Birmingham, Alabama in 1987

(d) "Colonialism and Indian Literature" at the University of California in.

(e) "Art in the Modern Age" at Bangalore University in 1989.

His Works

In Kannada, Anantha Murthy's works can be classified into short stories, poetry, plays, novels and essays. The list of his publications given below :

1. Short stories

- (a) Aidu Dashakada Kathegalu, 2001
- (b) Suryana Kudure, 1995.
- (c) Mooru Dasakada Kathegalu, 1989
- (d) Akasha Mattu Bekku, 1981
- (e) Prashne, 1962
- (f) Mauni, 1972
- (g) Endendu Mugiyada Kathe, 1955

2. Poetry

- (a) Eevaregina Kavithegalu (collected poems) (2001)
- (b) Mithuna (1992)
- (c) Ajjana Hegala Sukkugalu (1989)
- (d) Padyagalu (1970)
- (e) Bavali (1963)

3. Novels

- (a) Divya (2001)
- (b) Bhava (1994)
- (c) Avasthe (1978)
- (d) Bharathipura (1973)
- (e) Samskara (1965)

4. Play

- (a) Avahane (1971)

5. Essays and others

- (b) Kannada, Karnataka, 2001
- (c) Yuga Pallata, 2001

- (d) Daw Da Jing, 1994
- (e) Poorvapara, 1990
- (f) Samakshama, 1982
- (g) Prajne Matta Parisara, 1974

6. Journal

(a) Rujuvathu, a cultural and literary quarterly in Kannada, started in Jan 1981.

Publications in English/English translations :

1. English

- (a) Literature and Culture (2002),
- (b) The Concept of Man in Kannada Literature (1979).
- (c) Why Not Worship in the Nude?

2. English translations

Many of his works in Kannada have been translated to English. Details are as follows :

- (a) 'Initiation' a Kannada story translated by Gary Wills.
- (b) 'Avasthe' a novel, translated by Shanthinath Desai (1990).
- (c) 'Bhava', a novel & 'Twenty Vachanas from Shunya Sampadane'(a set of twenty poems) translated from the Kannada by Judith Kroll.
- (d) 'Bharathipura', a novel has been translated by P. Shreenivasa Rao(1998).
- (e) 'Sooryana Kudure', a short story, translated by A.K. Ramanujan and Manu Shetty.
- (f) Five stories from his five collections translated by Narayan Hegde (1999).
- (g) His novel Samskara (1965) has been translated into English, Russian, French, Hungarian, German, Swedish, Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi, Urdu, Tamil and Gujarati.

3. Film versions

- (a) Samskara was made into an award-winning film in 1970.
- (b) 'Bara' and 'Ghatashraddha' have also appeared in film versions.

Anantha Murthy as a Writer.

U.R. Anantha Murthy is one of the most significant writers in contemporary India. Much of his work is a severe indictment of brahminical orthodoxy and evinces a spirit that is restless for change. Samskara (1965) expresses his rage at the oppressive tradition of brahminism that is decadent and burdensome and describes the spiritual struggle of an individual as he tries to forge a new identity for himself. In Bharathipura

(1973) his central character Jagannatha, a Brahmin landlord newly returned from England after completing studies there, wants to usher in a social revolution by leading a group of untouchables into the temple. If we accept this character as an alter ego of the writer, his characters also give us an idea of the mind of the dreaming revolutionary as he writes :

"An Indian would attain real dignity only when it became possible for a Brahmin boy to desire a dark-skinned untouchable girl with flowers in her hair, only when a Brahmin girl longed to be hugged by a coarse-haired and dark-skinned untouchable boy. (Bharathipura: 203-204)

He interrogates the notion of an ideal revolutionary. The social revolution envisaged by Jagannatha fails and in depicting this failure, Anantha Murthy is writing 'a critique of the limitations of the radical middle classes, claiming an exclusive and sympathetic right to change the nation, as Professor Nagarajan puts it in his introduction to the English translation of the novel.

In his essay 'Being A Writer' (1992), (Literature and Culture: 139), Anantha Murthy declared himself "A truly critical insider would have boundless compassion for the poor and disinherited in India, would passionately engage himself with the present in all its confusion of values, and only with such a mind and heart would he know what is usable in the rich past of India for a creative present" (139). Talking about how others have viewed him, he says: "I am described as a rebel against the caste system, a votary of individualism, a modernist against traditions for which I am either praised or disliked. Nowadays ... I am also either attacked or praised as a traditionalist, as a lapsed revolutionary, or as one growing soft (or wise?). In the manner of all writers past their middle age. People don't seem to respond to the passionate critique of religion in my earlier works, and the critique of modernization which follows, in my later works" (140).

He was the writer of the society and voiced against the orthodox ideas and customs.

• INTRODUCTION : SAMASKARA

U.R. Anantha Murthy's 'Samskara' was first published in 1965 and it was made into a film in 1970. Since then, it had created a lot of controversy in academic and non-academic circles. The theme of the novel is the story of a decaying brahmin agrahara in the old Konkan region.

The central theme of the novel is the death of Naranappa and the complications connected with the issue of his cremation. Naranappa was an anti-Brahminical Brahmin who spent all his life in defying Brahmin beliefs and lifestyles. He brought a lower-caste prostitute to the agrahara and lived with her in his house. He even invited Muslim friends to the agrahara

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and openly consumed alcohol and non-vegetarian food so as to insult the other Brahmins.

When Naranappa died, his cremation became a complicated issue. The Brahmins did not want to do the last rites of Naranappa because they were afraid that the guru at Shringeri might excommunicate them for cremating a heretic. At the same time, they wanted the cremation to be over as soon as possible because they were not even permitted to eat or drink anything while a Brahmin corpse awaited cremation in the agrahara. Finally, they left the issue to Praneshacharya who was the head of the village.

Praneshacharya searched all the holy books to find a solution to this problem. Chandri, the concubine of Naranappa, submitted all her jewels at his feet to meet the expenses of the burial rites. This act of Chandri further complicated the issue because all the Brahmins suddenly turned greedy on seeing such a large quantity of gold. Now they all wanted to do the rites so as to get the gold. Praneshacharya became afraid that the love of gold might corrupt the whole Agrahara.

Praneshacharya couldn't find a solution to the dilemma of the burial issue even after consulting Manu and other holy texts. So, he went to the Hanuman temple and prayed for some divine direction. But the God Hanuman refused to enlighten him in anyway. While he was returning from the Hanuman temple, Chandri tempted him in the darkness. He fell to the temptation and made love to her then and there.

The sexual relationship with Chandri totally transformed Praneshacharya. He felt that he no longer had any moral right to continue as the spiritual leader of the agrahara. So, he refused to direct the Brahmins in the issue of the burial.

Chandri became desperate and she approached the lower caste people to do the burial. But they refused "to meddle with a Brahmin corpse even if she gave them all eight kinds of riches". Finally, she went to the Muslim section and pleaded to Ahmed Bari, the fish merchant. Ahmed Bari accepted the challenge and secretly cremated the dead body at midnight. Chandri wept for her dead lover and returned to Kundapura, her native village.

• THE PLOT

Samskara begins with the death of a sinful Brahmin, Naranappa, in Durvasapura, a close knitted community of Brahmins. Naranappa has renounced brahmanical ways and spent his time with Muslims; enjoying his time drinking, fishing in the temple pond and eating meat. The most apostate of his actions, however, was breaking up with his lawfully wedded wife to take a lower caste woman, Chandri, as his concubine. Despite his blasphemous ways, the Brahmins never excommunicated Naranappa, and

he remained one of their own. In death, this becomes a problem because only a Brahmin can perform his last rites and nobody is willing to do that.

The polar opposite to Naranappa is Pranesacharya, who is highly revered by everyone in the community for his knowledge of vedas and religious texts. Though not yet forty himself, he is thought to be too wise for his age and everyone in the agrahara consults him for any decision. No one can eat until the body is disposed of and nobody is willing to perform the rites for the fear of inheriting his sins. He retreats to his holy books to find answers to the problem at hand.

Ananthamurthy portrays a society full of superstitions and a total lack of compassion that is on the verge of collapse.

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• THE TITLE

The word samskara in the title has multiple meanings. So has the title in the novel. The dictionary meanings of the word are explained before the novel begins. It reproduces the different meanings taken from A Kanimada-English Dictionary by Reverend F. Kittel (1832-1903), Mangalore, 1894 as follows:

Sam-s-kara.

1. Forming well or thoroughly, making perfect, perfecting; finishing, refining, refinement, accomplishment.
2. Forming in the mind, conception, idea, notion; the power of memory, faculty of recollection, the realizing of past perceptions.
3. Preparation, making ready, preparation of food, etc. cooking, dressing.
4. Making sacred, hallowing, consecration, dedication; consecration of a king, etc.
5. Making pure, purification, purity
6. A sanctifying or purificatory rite or essential ceremony (enjoined on all the first three classes or castes).
7. Any rite or ceremony
8. Funeral obsequies.

The subtitle of the novel-A Rite for a Dead Man makes use of what Ramanujan calls the most concrete meaning of the word given above. Ironically the dead man, Naranappa, is disposed of unceremoniously by his mistress Chandri with the help of a Muslim friend of his. This unceremonious disposal of the dead remains unknown to the person who is most concerned with it. Pranesacharya. As the novel proceeds, the title acquires other meanings and other connotations till it has gathered to itself a rich resonance.

Obviously, the most important of these meanings of the title is the transformation of Pranesacharya, a kind of rebirth. The novel begins with a

frantic search for an answer to the question of whether the community of Brahmins should perform the funeral rites of the heretic Brahmin and if so, who should do it. The attempt fails but the accidental mating with Chandri in the forest as he makes his way back to the agrahara begins the process of his rebirth. A rite for a dead man becomes a rite of passage for the living.' Like any birth, it is a most painful process and it is not complete when the novel ends. But there is hope.

The title Samskara acquires a further dimension of meaning when Naranappa's professed anti-brahminism is contrasted with the unbrahminical conduct of the Brahmins of the agrahara. They are guilty of the sins of avarice and gluttony and are superstitious. In this, the novelist questions the notion of brahminism itself. While Garudacharya and Lakshmanacharya covet Naranappa's gold, Naranappa's mistress Chandri offers all her gold to pay for the funeral expenses of her lover. She has no learning nor any inherited samskaras but she shows a greater refinement of spirit than either Garuda or Lakshmana.

On the other hand Putta is a favourable character in the novel and he initiates the Acharya into the ordinary world of passion and cruelty and sensation, but he is a half-caste and is without samskaras. In this way, Anantha Murthy interrogates the entire idea of samskaras or an inherited refinement of spirit.

Ramanaujan suggests yet another significance of the word samskara. He says that the novel is structured like a samskara it has three stages of 'separation', 'transition' and 're-incorporation'. These three stages can roughly be seen in the Acharya's passage through life. He goes away from his agrahara (separation), travels through the forest and the fair where he has a new orientation (transition), and is finally shown moving towards re incorporation.

• CHARACTERIZATION AND CHARACTERS

The characters in Samskara are somewhat simplified and represent polar opposites like Pranesacharya and Naranappa, Bhagirathi and Chandri. If Pranesacharya is the Brahmin ascetic who takes his asceticism to extremes, Naranappa is the pleasure seeker who is out to destroy brahminism-root and branch. There are other characters who could be grouped with either of these characters. Mahabala and Shripati among the males and Belli and the unnamed prostitute etc would fall among the pleasure seekers/pleasure givers while Naranappa's discarded wife and Lilavati, Shripati's sex-denying wife and the other Brahmin wives are among those who deny themselves/others sexual pleasure.

There are those like Dasacharya who is guilty of the sin of gluttony and Garudacharya and Lakshmanacharya and their wives who are guilty of the sin of avarice and greed.

Characters

Praneshacharya	– learned scholar and priest of Durvasapura
Naranappa	– a Brahmin who leads a non-Brahminical life
Chandri	– a dalit woman who lives with Naranappa
Garudacharya	– a relative of Naranappa
Lakshmanacharya	– a relative of Naranappa
Dasacharya	– a poor Brahmin of the agrahara
Durgabhatta	– a Smarta Brahmin living in Durvasapura
Anasuya	– wife of Lakshmanacharya
Manjayya	– a wealthy Smarta Parijatapura Brahmin
Shankaraya	– Priest of Parijatapura
Shyama	– Son of Garuda
Shripati	– Son-in-law of Lakshmanacharya
Sitadevi	– wife of Garudacharya
Lilavati	– daughter of Anasuya and wife of Shripati
Belli	– Shripati's concubine
Lakshmiddevemma	– The oldest woman living in the agrahara
Chinni	– She is from the lower strata of her society
Abdul Bari	– the Muslim fish merchant

(i) Pranesacharya

Pranesacharya is a learned man : Pranesacharya represents asceticism carried to an extreme. He is also an example of the distortion in values that takes place when asceticism is overvalued as it has often been in the Indian tradition. He, for twenty years he has dedicatedly looked after his invalid wife and practiced asceticism in order to gain merit and achieve salvation. The Acharya is a learned man, the Crest Jewel of Vedant Philosophy and has won many awards in recognition of his learning.

Pranesacharya fails in practical aspects : Though he a leaned man and renound brahmine but he has no solution to the crisis facing his agrahara. Instead of trusting his instincts, he has tried to go by the books and the books fail him.

Pranesacharya is compassionate : His compassionate nature is evident in his concern for Chandri as she sits outside waiting for his decision. The Acharya's concern for Naranappa. however, doesn't originate in compassion alone. His attitude is a blend of his egotism and willfulness and compassion. Trying to reclaim Naranappa has been a kind of challenge for him. If he is allowed to get away with his rebellious ways, the Acharya thinks, how will fair play and righteousness prevail?

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Pranesacharta is self-analyzer : The Acharya is highly introspective both before and after his centrally important sexual union with Chandri and his self-analysis is characterized by complete transparency and a rare honesty. If he has been harsh with his adversary Naranappa, he is even more unsparing about himself. The entire process of soul-searching and self-analysis is painful and bristles with uncertainty and anxiety and fear. He thinks of himself as a lost soul in limbo. We see him turning his back on his brahminical past; moving away from god and into the world of ordinary men and women and realizing the need to stand alone and finally taking a decisive step. He becomes aware of his physical needs of pleasure and hunger and those of other senses and he wants a share in all the good things of life. He has also had a close look at the violence and cruelty and passion in ordinary life. At the end there is a sea change coming in his thinking. He overcomes his fears about his exposure and starts back to his agrahara in order to make his confession. He hopes to give up his public identity and is at the threshold of forging a new identity for himself. But there is one thing that is common to both his consciousness that he belongs to the community and is fully responsible to it for his actions.

(ii) Naranappa

Pleasure Seeking : If Pranesacharya stands for asceticism, Naranappa stands for pleasure-seeking. This is how he once expressed his hedonistic doctrine to the Acharya: "Just keep your dharma to yourself we've but one life I belong to the "Hedonistic School" - Borrow, borrow and drink your ghee, as they say.

Anti-Brahminism : Naranappa was a sworn enemy of brahminism and didn't consider the brahminism as practised in Durvasapur as worth anything. The only person he made an exception of was the Acharya. And he had broken every known taboo he kept a low-caste mistress, he drank. he caught sacred fish and ate its meat with Muslim friends and much else. Not satisfied with defiance, he challenged Pranesacharya.

Creative and live : But he wasn't just an iconoclast. He had a creative side to his personality also. He was the inspiration behind the founding of the Parijata Drama Group and he donated a harmonium to the group and he himself was a good drummer.

Troublesome : While Naranappa was alive, he was troublesome. But he was more troublesome when he was dead. What is said about Shakespeare's Julius Caesar that he was more powerful dead than when alive is also true of Naranappa to quite an extent. The major problem that proved insoluble so far as was who should cremate him. This was a problem to which the Acharya with all his learning had no answer.

Eye opener to Pranesacharya : Naranappa also causes the Acharya to introspect. At times he begins to wonder whether there's a route to salvation other than the route of dharma and whether the quickest way to salvation was through conflict. The second occasion when he pondered over Naranappa's words was when he told him about how his description of Shakuntala had excited a young listener and made him go and take a woman on the river bank.

Fearless : Later, after his sexual union with Chandri, the Acharya thinks of him in a more positive context. He recalls his fearlessness and finds himself wanting. Still later, while fears of polluting the temple assail him, he thinks: But didn't Naranappa manage to eat the holy fish in the Ganapati tank and get away with it? He would never have the courage to defy brahmin practice as Naranappa did'.

(iii) Chandri

Low caste women : Chandri is Naranappa's voluptuous, low-caste mistress who later mates with Pranesacharya and initiates a process of radical change in him. In accordance with the allegorical scheme of the novel, she and Belli are pitted against the Brahmin wives.

Perfect beauty : She is described as a perfect beauty (A 'real' sharp type, exactly as described in Vatsyayan's manual of love' [8]), the choice object' that Naranappa had brought from Kundapura, and is compared to Matsyagandha painted by Ravi Verma. This reference to the classical heroine is repeated in the text several times and is meant to hallow and romanticize Chandri.

Full of romance : The lovemaking scene in the forest brings out her femininity to the full. The mere touch of her full breasts triggers off a union that brings out all her tenderness and compassion and mother love and that also opens up the beautiful world of the senses to the Acharya. No words are spoken, but then no words are needed. The writer has made this sexual union centrally important. But if Chandri is hallowed and romanticized, she is also earthly and amoral'. While the Acharya agonizes over who made the first move in lovemaking, she remains untroubled by her sexuality.

Generous and true lover of Naranappa : Chandri is also shown to be generous. In contrast to the avaricious Brahmin wives, she hands the gold that Naranappa had given to her to the Acharya to meet the cost of her lover's funeral.

The cremation of Naranappa illustrates yet another feature of her personality her commonsense. As soon as she realizes that his body has started rotting she decides to cremate it and proceeds to do so with the help of a Muslim friend of her lover. Next morning, she packs up her belongings and leaves for her home in Kundapura.

Representer of nature : Chandri may be physically away from the Acharya but she is never far from his consciousness. Time after time as he wanders around the fair in the company of Putta, he recalls her. The suggestion is that joining her is one of the options open to him.

If the Acharya represents culture, she represents nature. As nature, Chandri is undefileable. She is compared to a running river which can never go dirty (Born to prostitutes, she was an exception to all rules. She was ever auspicious, daily-wedded, the one without widowhood. How can sin defile a running river? It's good for a drink when a man's thirsty, it's good for a wash when a man's filthy, and it's good for bathing the god's images with;... Tunga river doesn't dry... (43).

(iv) Putta

Putta is a special creation of Anantha Murthy : He said-'It is of course a mystery, the way I created Putta. Putta is a half-caste, he has none of the inhibitions of a Brahmin, and he is a free man too. That also is possible within the Indian structure, you see, as some of these people are born out of what you call varnasankara, or the hope of mankind in India. ...Putta appears at a particular point precisely because without him the novel seems to be incomplete. I sit down and say "Acharya is walking. I write. He hears footsteps. Whose footsteps? What happens now? And then Putta appears' (Literature and Culture: 119).

True fellow of Pranesacharya : If Chandri revitalizes Pranesacharya through her 'touch', Putta ushers him into the ordinary world and he is able to do so because he has no hang-ups of the kind that a Brahmin like Pranesacharya has. He is a man for all seasons and he takes the Acharya on what Ramanujan calls a 'guided tour through temple-festival and fair, whorehouse and pawnshop' where he sees 'a demonic world of passion and sensation and violence and cruelty. This is an essential part of the Acharya's transformation.

At first he wants to get rid of him and makes an attempt to do so several times. But finally the Acharya comes to look at him with affection-fatherly affection [115] and later treats him like a bosom-friend of the present'. He in fact contemplates making a trial confession before Putta, before his final confrontation with the Brahmins. This change of feeling suggests that the process of transformation is on.

Versatile personality : Putta seems a holdall character. In the words of Ramanujan, 'Putta is riddle master, expert bargainer, pimp without any samskara; he is so completely and thoughtlessly at one with this world that he is a marvel.' (Afterword: 140) But if he appears 'a marvel', we need to remember that he has to fit in the overall allegorical mould of the novel. He has to carry on the process of redirection of Pranesacharya's life, a task that

Chandri had begun. As Anantha Murthy himself says, the novel would be incomplete without him. The final responsibility is, of course, the Acharya's.

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• CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Chapter I : Problems arise due to the death of Naranappa

The first chapter begins narrating the routine activities of Praneschacharya. His activities are divided into domestic and religious. He begins a day by doing his regular duty of helping his wife in getting bathed. It is understood from the first line, "He bathed Bhagirathi's body...", that she is almost a vegetable. It is he who bathes her, dresses her up, feeds her with the essential food and administers with regular medicine.

After completing his domestic duties, he then crosses a stream to worship at Maruti temple and comes back home for his recitation of holy legends. The Brahmins of the agrahara (the place a Brahmin community lives) regularly assembles in front of his house to listen to his recitation, both in the morning and in the evening. He is a scholar and his recitations are new every day.

Praneschacharya sacrifices his life for the sake of his wife and she understands his pain and the marital bliss that he lacks. Therefore she asks him to marry again and bring forth children, to make his house a home. Nevertheless, Praneschacharya refuses to marry, believing in Lord Krishna's will, that one should not expect reward for his/her toil. Moreover everyday when they eat, both of them request the other to eat first. These instances show the mutual love and concern they have for each other.

One day before eating his meal, he places fodder in front of his cow, Gowri and is about to get into his house. At that time, he hears the sound of Chandri behind him calling 'Acharya'. Chandri is a dalit. If Praneschacharya talks to her, he would be polluted and should take bath before eating his meal. Nevertheless, he listens to her and she informs that Naranappa is dead after having fever for four days.

There is a belief that it is wrong to eat food before doing the funeral rites for the dead. So, Praneschacharya runs to Garudacharya's house to stop him from eating his meal and then both of them inform others in the agrahara. Everyone in the agrahara thinks, "Alive, Naranappa was an enemy; dead a preventer of meals; as a corpse, a problem, a nuisance."

The men and their wives assemble in front of Praneschacharya's house to hear his directions to solve the problem of Naranappa's rites. The women are with fear that their husbands should not accept to do the funeral rites. Praneschacharya informs the people that there are two problems to be solved. The first problem is doing funeral rites for Naranappa and second is deciding the person for doing the rites, since Naranappa doesn't have children. Garudacharya, Dasacharya – a poor

Brahmin of the agrahara, and Lakshmanacharya acknowledge to the words of Praneshacharya.

When Praneshacharya says that only relatives should do the rites, everyone starts looking at Garuda and Lakshmana. Lakshmana, not wanting to do the rites, closes his eyes but Garuda gives explanation for not wanting to do the rites. He says he and Naranappa's father had quarrel over an orchard and the Dharmasthala Monastery decreed in his favour but Naranappa defied the order. Therefore he says that he severed all relationships with him. Moreover he also says that Naranappa cannot be considered a Brahmin because of his relationship with a low caste woman, Chandri.

Durgabhatta immediately reply to Garuda that a Brahmin will not lose his identify because of his relationship with a low caste woman. This he says to test the orthodoxy of the Madhva Brahmins, as he is a Smarta Brahmin.

Praneshacharya, noticing that the discussion is moving away from the central point, asks Lakshmanacharya why not he does the rites. Immediately Lakshmana quotes the reason Garuda has given. He says that he cannot do the rites as Naranappa had relationship with a low caste woman, Chandri and also ate the food she cooked. Then he says that Naranappa abandoned his legal wife and when she died he did not attend her funeral. Moreover, he says that he does not observe the death anniversary of his parents. In addition to all these sacrileges acts, he has also brought Muslims to the front yard of the agrahara to eat and drink forbidden things. Anasuya, wife of Lakshmana, feels proud of her husband for his reply, and curses Chandri for all the problems she has caused in her family.

Praneshacharya is confused whether to proclaim Naranappa as Brahmin or non-Brahmin. Fearing that the Brahmins might not do the funeral rites for Naranappa, Chandri places all her gold ornaments in front of Praneshacharya, to be used for the expense of Naranappa's funeral rites.

The wives of those Brahmins present there avariciously look at the ornaments and their husbands think that some other Brahmin should not do the funeral rites and take away all the ornaments. Durgabhatta, on the other hand waiting for an opportunity to expose the Madhva Brahmins, keenly observes whether they would do funeral rites for Naranappa, lusting after the gold ornaments.

While everybody thinks of a way out to do the funeral rites for Naranappa, Dasacharya suggests the idea of requesting the Parijatapura Brahmins to do the funeral rites for two reasons. The first reason is; Naranappa was friendly with the Parijatapura Brahmins and the other reason is that the Parijatapura Brahmins are not as orthodox as the

Madhvas. The Parijatapura Brahmins are pleasure lovers and some of them are rich as they run betelnut farms.

Durgabhatta being a Smarta does not like the idea of requesting the Parijatapura Brahmins to do the funeral rites. Durgabhatta identifies himself with the Parijatapura Brahmins, as he is also a Smarta. Therefore he does not like the Madhva Brahmins looking down upon the Smarta Brahmins. He reacts that the Smarta Brahmins are not inferior to the Madhvas. In order to stop the Madhvas from requesting the Smartas, he says that it is wrong to ask someone to do something that the other would hesitate to do. But Praneshacharya requests Durgabhatta to be silent as it is necessary to inform about the death of Naranappa, since he was their friend.

The family of Lakshmanacharya and Garudacharya are perturbed by the decision of Praneshacharya because the golden ornaments would be taken away by the person who does the funeral rites. Lakshmanacharya's wife Anasuya begins to claim the ornaments for her family as they are her dead sister's jewelry. But Garuda says according to the verdict of Dharmasthala guru(chief), the ornaments should go to him. Praneshacharya silences both of them saying that cremation of Naranappa's body is more important and asks them to be patient about the ornaments.

Chapter II: Description of Agrahara and Rejection of Naranappa's rites by Smarta Brahmins

The second chapter describes the houses in the agrahara – the place dominated by houses of Brahmins. Most of the houses resemble the same except for the kind of flowers grown at the backyard. The Brahmins go to each other's house and get flowers for worship and they also get to know the welfare of others. Naranappa's house differs from other houses in this aspect. No one goes to his house and neither does he go to others' houses. Moreover the flowers grown in Naranappa's house are only for Chandri's hair. Unlike other houses, Naranappa grows a bush in front of his house which is a favourite of snakes. Some people believe that Naranappa keeps snakes in order to protect the gold in his house.

Naranappa's house is the biggest of all the other houses in the agrahara. The Brahmins lead a very simple and contended life. The Tunga river runs at one end of the agrahara and during summer when the water dries to a trickle, they cultivate cucumber. It is a favourite vegetable of their diet. All through the year, they have some function or the other and thus their life move in a cycle every year.

The name of this agrahara is Durvasapura because of a legendary story behind it. It was believed that Durvasa, a sage did penance on a hillock in the river, Tunga. The place became famous because of the legendary story and also because of Praneshacharya.

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The Madhwa Brahmins, sent by Praneshacharya from this well known place of Durvasapura, go to Parijatapura to inform about Naranappa's death and also to know whether they would be willing to do the funeral rites for him. They go first to Manjayya's house and he receives them warm and asks his wife to treat them as their guests.

When Garuda informs about Naranappa's death, the Parijatapura Brahmins are happy to do the rites because he moved with them without any caste pride and also they considered it a pride doing rites for a high caste Brahmin.

Shankaraya, the Parijatapura priest also shows interest and displays his knowledge of their religious texts. He says according to a Brahmin, even snakes are born twice and so proper funeral rites should be done. And so, he stresses that it is important to do the rites immediately for a Brahmin. But when Durgabhatta subtly raises the question whether Naranappa is a Brahmin, Sankaraya hesitates because he does not want his people to do anything non-brahminical. Therefore he says that they can do the rites according to Praneshacharya's instruction. And Manjayya offers to pay money for the funeral rites.

Chapter III : Pranesacharya's attitude to Naranappa

While the Brahmins were away at Parijatapura, Praneshacharya goes through the palm leaf texts to find a solution to Naranappa's funeral rites.

Naranappa had always been a problem for the agrahara. The Acharya had promised Naranappa's mother as she lay dying that he would look after her erring son and even fasted two days a week for him. Once when the Acharya visited to counsel him, Naranappa told him irreverently that since the Congress was coming back to power, they would have to open the temples to all outcastes. When the Acharya told him not to separate Shripati from his wife, he laughed loudly saying that only barren Brahmins lived with women who gave no pleasure. He too had discarded his hysterical wife for the same reason. He said he belonged to the hedonist school.

He was critical of Garuda's greed that had made him rob a poor widow of her property. The thought of Naranappa makes Praneshacharya realize how he has been a problem all through his life. Three months before his death, the Acharya visited Naranappa again in response to a complaint that he had fished in the sacred temple pond along with his Muslim friends. The Acharya feared that this desecration might set a bad example for the lower classes, who he thought, followed the right path out of fear. On that occasion Naranappa asked his concubine Chandri to bring liquor and had the effrontery to offer it to him. He also challenged him again saying that he would destroy brahminism. He in fact, accused him of telling juicy tales that excited his listeners and corrupted them. He went on to tell a thinly veiled story that paralleled the Acharya's own practice of reciting legends of

Shakuntala and other women from the Puranas, and the erotic effect they caused in a young listener. This young listener was so sexually aroused that he went and took a young outcaste woman bathing in the river in the moonlight. Naranappa drew the conclusion that it was he, the Acharya who had corrupted brahminism. The Acharya scolded him but later stopped reciting luscious puranic stories to his listeners. Naranappa advised them to discard their sick wives and take those that gave them pleasure.

Chapter IV: Naranappa's relatives vying with each other to do funeral rites for him

The Brahmins come back from Parijatapura. There are different views prevail for Garudacharya's son Shyama deserting his home. Garudacharya's enemies blame him for punishing Shyama severely. Naranappa's enemies blame Naranappa for inciting Shyama to run away from home. Lakshmanacharya blames Garudacharya for the black magic Garuda used against Naranappa's father. He believes that the black magic Garuda used against Naranappa's father boomeranged on himself.

Shyama's parents Garudacharya and Sitadevi are left in the lurch, not knowing the whereabouts of Shyama. Sitadevi, Shyama's mother, fasts on Friday nights hoping that he would become a better person but Garudacharya is furious about his son. After a gap of about three months, they receive a letter from him informing that he has joined the army and if he has to be relieved a penalty of six hundred rupees has to be paid. Thus only through his letter they come to know about his whereabouts.

Sitadevi does not have sufficient money to pay the penalty and get her son relieved from the army but her hope brightens as she thinks that her husband might get a chance to do the funeral rites for Naranappa and legally get Chandri's golden ornaments.

Garudacharya does not want his situation to become like that of Naranappa. He hates his son for running away from home. Nevertheless he needs to redeem his only son so that on his death his son would do funeral rites for him. Hence he sneaks into Praneshacharya's house and tries to persuade him to allow him to do the funeral rites for Naranappa. If so, he would get the golden ornaments of Chandri and that would help him to redeem his son from the army. Hence on entering Praneshacharya's house, he tries to cajole and persuade Praneshacharya and make him say that he could do the rites for Naranappa. He cites what Praneshacharya once said, that even though it is not proper (for a Brahmin) to eat cow's meat, one can be fed with that if his life is depended on that. He tries to make him understand that for the sake of dharma, a requirement could be fulfilled. He speaks about dharma and life because "The motive: gold". But Praneshacharya is stubborn in going through the texts to find a solution.

Meanwhile Anasuya also tries to get the golden ornaments. Anasuya is related to Naranappa as he is her maternal uncle's son. Moreover,

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Anasuya's sister is Naranappa's first legal wife. Anasuya does not want her husband to do funeral rites for Naranappa earlier but after knowing that she would get Chandri's gold, she sheds tears saying, "O God, O God, whatever he (Naranappa) might have done, how can we cut the family bond that binds?"

Anasuya harbours anger against Naranappa because he has spoiled her son-in-law, Shripati. Shripati was an orphan but she married him to her daughter, Lilavati. But soon he takes to the life style of Naranappa and gets spoiled. He roams everywhere and stays at home about two days a month.

When Lakshmanacharya, her husband, comes home tired from Parijatapura, Anasuya urges him to go to Praneshacharya's house and convince him to get the permission to do the funeral rites for Naranappa. Lakshmanacharya is an epitome of parsimony. He tries to get even oil for his head without spending money. He also has the habit of stealing banana leaves from others farms, dries them up, makes them into cups and sells them. Now he fixes his eyes on Chandiri's gold.

Lakshmanacharya and Garudacharya vie with each other in getting the gold. Lakshmanacharya tries to get the permission for doing funeral rites quoting that Naranappa is his wife's uncle's son. Garudacharya thinking that he should not get the gold, agrees with Lakshmanacharya's argument but says that the gold should be submitted to the court or given to him according to the decree given by Dharmasthala (local court)

Meanwhile Dasacharya comes there and urges Praneshacharya to do something to dispose Naranappa's body as he could not stay in his house due to bad smell coming out from the decaying body. He suggests that Praneshacharya can use the gold for the Maruti God and they could dispose the body. Garudacharya who does not like Dasacharya's suggestion but fears to object it openly says that executing such an idea might bring bad name to Praneshacharya. Praneshacharya then asks all of them to go home saying that he would go according to the ancient religious texts. Then he asks Chandri to come inside the house and sit and gives medicine to his wife. Then with the help of a kerosene lantern, he begins to read ancient religious books to find a solution. It becomes evening.

Chapter V: Shripati makes love to Belli, an outcaste, discovers Naranappa's death and runs out.

Shripati does not know about Naranappa's death as he is out of Durvasapura to Shirnali. He shows interest in associating himself with an itinerant drama troupe from Kelur. During Naranappa's death, he is with this drama troupe.

After spending time with the drama troupe, on the night of Naranappa's death he walks through a dense forest to Durvasapura. While nearing Durvasapura, he sees a hut burning and in the light of the fire, he

sees Belli walking to a bush, half naked after having bath in warm water. He tries to make love with her but she prevents him saying people die due to some supernatural power. She says Pilla and his woman died and they burned their bodies in their hut. Belli attributes their death to some unknown demoniac power. Although he is tempted to make love to her, he has never seen her talking like this before and preventing him to make love to her. Shripati came to her to make love to her but being disappointed, he goes to Naranappa's house, thinking of spending the night at his residence. But to his surprise there is no voice to welcome him. Since the door is open, he enters the house and sees dead rats lying on the floor. Then when he sees Naranappa lying on the floor, he thinks he is asleep but when he removes the blanket, he finds his body as cold as a dead rat.

Chapter VI: Lakshmiddevamma curses Garuda for robbing her; Pranesacharya returns Chandri her gold.

Lakshmiddevamma, above 70 years old, is the oldest living person in the agrahara. She was given in marriage at the age of eight but at the age of ten, she became a widow. At the age of fifteen, she lost her father-in-law and mother-in-law and at the age of twenty, she lost her parents. She is a fatal lady to all those who associate with her and hence the people of the agrahara keep away from her. But after Lakshmiddevamma became an orphan, Garudacharya's father in order to take her property, took her into his house and took care of her. After the death of Garudacharya's father, the responsibility of taking care of Lakshmiddevamma fell on him. But Garudacharya's wife is very stingy and never feeds Lakshmiddevamma properly. The incessant quarrel between Garuda's wife and Lakshmiddevamma makes Garuda keep Lakshmiddevamma in a separate dilapidated house and gives one rupee every month for her sustenance. Lakshmiddevamma takes the matter to Pranesacharya but Garudacharya does not relent. Therefore whenever she gets angry with Garudacharya, she stands in front of his house and curses him from the bottom of her heart.

As she curses him on a particular night, she sees somebody running out of Naranappa's house and she thinks, it is Naranappa's ghost fleeing out of his house. Lakshmiddevamma bangs at the door of the houses in agrahara and tries to inform the people. But it is Shripati fleeing out of Naranappa's house after seeing Naranappa's dead body. He is shell-shocked, crosses the Tunga river and reaches Nagaraja's house at Parijatapura.

Chandri, lying in the verandah of Pranesacharya, notices that it is Shripati fleeing out of her house. She is able to notice him as she is awake and unable to sleep due to hunger. She has never slept without having food at night, hence she goes to the backyard and eats ripe plaintain left on the tree. Then goes to the Tunga river and drinks water. She, being afraid of

going to her house, goes back to Praneshacharya's house and curls up on the veranda to sleep, covering her face with her sari.

Praneshacharya, meanwhile, ruffles through the religious texts but he does not find any solution. He walks up and down the veranda and thinks to himself the reasons for not excommunicating Naranappa. There are two reasons for not excommunicating him. The first reason is Naranappa threatened that he would convert himself to a Muslim and the other reason is Praneshacharya's compassion toward Naranappa. Compassion is a trait of Praneshacharya which is obvious in his family life as well. He is so compassionate towards his invalid wife. His mind then shifts to another solution, as going through religious texts for a solution has gone in vain. He thinks of going to the temple of Maruti God early next morning and fall at the feet of God to get a solution to Naranappa's funeral rites. The thought of going to Maruti temple relaxes his stressed mind. Then he gives Chandri, who is in the verandah, a mat and a pillow to sleep and he gets inside his house. Again he gets another thought that he should give all her jewels back to her and he acts accordingly. Then he goes to his bed.

Chapter VII: Pranesacharya visits the Maruti temple for divine guidance.

The stench of dead rats and Naranappa's dead body makes the night sleepless for many in the agrahara. In Dasacharya's house, except him, everybody smells the stench. Belli is also not able to sleep in her hut. After they burn the hut of Pilla in order to cremate him and his wife, there is darkness. Belli, as she needs light in her hut, goes to a nearby bush where she sees fireflies (glowworm) twinkling in the dark night. In order to catch the fireflies, she removes the only piece of cloth on her body and remains naked collecting fireflies and brings them to her hut. She finds dead rats in the feeble light, illuminated from the fireflies.

In the morning of the second day of Naranappa's death, the women, thinking that Naranappa's ghost roams the agrahara and it might touch their children, keep them inside their homes. But then Venkataramanacharya's children disobey their mother's order and they are excited seeing rats dying.

The Brahmins of the agrahara, meanwhile, gather to find a quick solution to Naranappa's funeral rites. They are unable to bear the stench emanating from dead rats and from the decaying body of Naranappa. Durgabhatta and Dasacharya blame the rest of the Brahmins for the delay in Naranappa's funeral rites. Therefore, Garudacharya decides to set aside the problem of claiming Chandri's gold in order to give funeral rites for the dead Naranappa.

The Brahmins depend on Praneshacharya for every decision. Hence they gather in front of his house and when he comes out, he expresses his

desire to visit the temple of Maruti, the monkey god, in the forest. The Brahmins accept his decision, hoping he will do the best for the agrahara.

Praneshacharya then goes to the forest to visit the Maruti temple. He takes with him Jasmine and Champak flowers and basil leaves. After a bath in the Tunga river, he changes his old sacred thread for a new one and walks two miles into the forest. At the temple, he cleans the idol and smears sandal paste all over it. Then sitting in front of the idol, he presents his conflicts in his mind to the idol. To go ahead with funeral rites as an answer from the idol, he asks Maruti god to give the flower at its right. And if the answer is 'no' for the funeral rite, then he asks the idol to give the flower at its left. He sits in front of the idol for a long time, without an answer.

Chandri, meanwhile, unable to face the angry Brahmins in the agrahara follows Praneshacharya to the forest. While coming to the forest, she takes bananas in the lap of her saree. She also takes a dip in the Tunga river and her body is completely wet. She sits at a distance from the temple, watching Praneshacharya.

Chapter VIII: Dasacharya goes and eats at Manjayya's house in Parijatpura.

Dasacharya is unable to bear the law that adults should not eat food until proper funeral rites are given to the dead Naranappa. He is unable to control the temptation to eat, and added to his woe, the smell of food being prepared for children in the agrahara teases his tongue. In order to yield to the temptation of tasting food, he goes to the Tunga river without being noticed by anybody. At the river he takes bath and goes to Manjayya's house in Parijatapura.

The time when Dasacharya meets Manjayya is eating time for Manjayya. Manjayya eats uppittu that aggravates his hunger further. Nevertheless unable to ask him food, he pretends as if he has come to discuss the nature of his people. In order to please Manjayya, he degrades Garudacharya, Lakshmanacharya and also all men who visited Parijatapura the previous day to know whether any Smarta Brahmin would be willing to do funeral rites for Naranappa. Dasacharya points out to Manjayya that such act shows that his people (Madhva Brahmins) look down upon them. (Smarta Brahmins).

Manjayya knowing that Dasacharya would be willing to satisfy his hunger asks him whether he has had a bath and Dasacharya says that he had a dip in the river. Therefore Manjayya asks him to eat food with him. Dasacharya's desire to eat food and the fear that his people would not invite him for any meal, if they come to know that he has had food before Naranappa's funeral rites, brings forth irritability against his people and remarks that they are 'rascals'. When Manjayya gives a promise that he would not tell anybody about it, he accepts to eat. Nevertheless he says that

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he would not eat cooked food and asks for plain flat-rice mixed with sugar and milk. But then when he is offered four spoonful of uppittu, he eats that as well and then he closes the plantain leaf for courtesy sake saying that he must leave some food for Manjayya's family.

Chapter IX: The Brahmins, waiting for Pranesacharya

The author gives the reason for Belli not going to pick up cow dung in the agrahara. The readers understand that Belli is regular in picking cow dung in the agrahara and that she has not come as her parents become victim of the ongoing mysterious malady of Durvasapura. When Chinni returns back to her hut, she hears the sound of Belli's parents crying out loud in agony. When Chinni enters Belli's hut, she sees Belli sitting near her parents. As they don't know the reason behind the sickness, they attribute that to demoniac power. Chinni and Belli's talk reveal that Pilla, his wife, and Chowda are also dead.

The time is around 2 pm when the Brahmins of the agrahara were waiting for Praneshacharya to return from Maruti Temple but then there is no sign of his return. Meanwhile, Sitadevi finds a dead rat in her house and throws it out of her house on to the street. The dead rat attracts a vulture which sits on the roof of Sitadevi's house. She considers vulture on her house top as an oman of death and she is afraid that something might happen to her son who has joined the army without the knowledge of her and her husband Garudacharya. Garudacharya thinks in his mind that God Maruti is trying to punish him for thinking in his heart that Chandri's gold should not go to Maruti temple but come to him. But as they were trying to chase the vulture, many vultures descend on the agrahara and they perch in pairs on each house top. This brings solace to Sitadevi as she thinks that the oman is not only to her house but something common to the agrahara. According to the suggestion given by Dasacharya, the people bring sacred gongs and conches. The loud sound of gongs and conches scares away the vultures.

Chandri meanwhile sits under the shade of a tree, quite far away from Praneshacharya and watches him worshiping God Maruti to get an answer from the god whether to do funeral rites for Naranappa according to Brahmin rituals or not. Chandri is tired and hungry. Though she feels like eating the bananas that she has with her, she hesitates to eat when she thinks of the pain Praneshacharya undergoes all for her sake. Nevertheless hunger overpowers her decision of not to eat, and she eats a banana and justifies her situation. It begins to get dark and Chandri remains in the forest and the people in the agrahara continue to wait for Praneshacharya.

Chapter X: The Unpriestly Act of Praneshacharya

This short chapter talks about the unpriestly act of Praneshacharya with Chandri. The second day after Naranappa's death, Praneshacharya is

in the forest late in the evening imploring God Maruti to give an answer whether to have funeral rites according to Brahmin rituals or not. After a while, he is so frustrated and becomes tired as the god does not give him any reply. Praneshacharya wonders whether the god thinks that he does not deserve any reply. Being a highly respected priest in Durvasapura, he does not want to face his people without an answer from god. Nevertheless when it is pitch dark he gets up and thinks of returning home as he realizes that he has to give medicine for his ailing wife.

Chandri who was sitting behind Praneshacharya, without his knowledge while he was imploring God Maruti, now gets up and follows him and the sound of bangles in the dark night attracts him. When he turns back, he sees Chandri. She followed him to the forest as she could not face the angry Brahmins in the agrahara in the absence of Praneshacharya. She, now, out of gratitude bends to touch his feet but in the dark her breast hits his knee making her blouse open revealing her breasts. The priest who never had such an experience being alone with a young lady begins to touch her hair and Chandri responds positively leading to physical act which the author puts it decently, "Then she took off her sari, spread it on the ground, and lay on it hugging Praneshacharya close to her, weeping, flowing in helpless tears."

PART TWO

Chapter I Chandri cremates Naranappa with the help of Naranappa's Muslim friends.

Pranesacharya woke up in the forest at midnight, his head in Chandri's lap. At first he thought he was in a dream and wondered where he was and how he had got there. When he was fully awake, he asked her to tell all the Brahmins what had happened in the forest. He said that he himself had not the courage to tell this to them. He also added that he was ready to perform Naranappa's funeral rites for he had lost all authority to ask anyone else to do it. Then they walked back together.

Chandri, however, did not want to do what the Acharya had asked her to do. She went to her master's house but finding that his dead body had changed beyond recognition, rushed out in fear to the farmer's section and approached Sheshappa to help her cremate the dead body. Sheshappa however refused. Then she went to the Muslim section where Abdul Bari, the fish merchant, agreed to do the job. They went and cremated Naranappa. The dead body, as she thought, was 'neither Brahmin nor Shudra. Thereafter she collected her things and the gold ornaments that the Acharya had returned to her and set out for Kundapura without touching the Acharya's feet.

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Comments

1. Note that Pranesacharya doesn't reproach either Chandri or himself for what happened during the night. There is no feeling of guilt in him for what has happened.
2. Notice also that the omniscient narrator withholds information from the Brahmins and Pranesacharya about the cremation of Naranappa. What purpose does this serve?

Chapter II: Plans of the Parijat Drama Group members to cremate their mentor Naranappa go awry.

Shripati and other members of the Parijat Drama Group were holding at rehearsal of a play in Manjappa's house. Naranappa had been the prime mover of the Group. He had donated a harmonium. He was an expert drummer and was a source of inspiration for it. After the rehearsal, the five members of the Group went to the riverside and drank liquor. They acknowledged that Naranappa was a dear friend of theirs, that Chandri was a matchless beauty. The least that they could do was to take his body and cremate it secretly. With this intention in mind they went up to Naranappa's house but found that the dead body had disappeared. They all ran away in fright. The sleepless Lakshmidēvamma saw what she called demons running away.

Chapter III: Pranesacharya's new self-awareness

The Brahmins tormented by vultures, hunger and dread came to Pranesacharya but he admitted that he couldn't get Lord Maruti to say anything and asked them to do what they liked. At Dasacharya's suggestion they decided to go consult Pt Subbannacharya at the Kaimara agrahara. Since the journey would take them three days, they would send their wives and children to their in-laws.

Pranesacharya's world had changed suddenly. All old beliefs seemed topsy turvy. At sixteen he had sought to achieve salvation through self-sacrifice and had deliberately married an invalid woman so that he could serve her and thus earn merit. But his unforeseen experience of sex with Chandri changed everything. He had lost the old certitude of brahminism. Instead of a clear path he saw only an abyss.

The experience also gave him a new self-awareness. While giving a bath to his wife, he became aware of her ugliness. Flowers, female beauty and sexual pleasure all had earlier been associated in his mind with divinity but now he wanted a share in them for himself. He still looked for Chandri. He felt light that he was no longer the guru. Part of his mind wanted Chandri to confess but he was also relieved to find that she was not there to shame him. But he was still confused about his real identity.

Chapter IV: The Brahmins go to Kaimara and monastery without Pranesacharya.

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The Brahmins went to Kaimara without Pranesacharya. He stayed back because of his wife's periods. At Kaimara, Pandit Subbannacharya offered them food and they ate to their fill. But he had no clue to their dilemma. The monastery was their next destination. But at the insistence of the Kaimara people they spent the night there and started the next morning. They had to leave Dasacharya there, for he fell ill. They walked twenty miles to reach another agrahara where they dined spent the night. In the morning they started for the monastery, which was ten miles away but without Padmanabhacharya who had also been taken ill.

Chapter V: Death and cremation of Pranesacharya's wife.

Pranesacharya is all alone in the agrahara - except for his ailing wife and some crows and vultures. The horrible stench in the atmosphere was unbearable. He saw a rat die and threw it out of the house. He felt extremely hungry and took some plantains with him, bathed and crossed the stream and sat and ate the plantains there.

He then tried to analyse his love episode with Chandri and found that perhaps he took her out of compassion or because of the body's tigerish lust. He realized that it was he and not Naranappa who had turned the agrahara topsy turvy. He had heard that a young man, inspired by his description of Shakutala, had gone to the river and slept with a low caste girl. In his fantasy he did what he had never done before he stripped all the untouchable girls and looked at them. Who could it be? Belli, of course. He urgently wanted to caress her breasts.

Pranesacharya then enjoyed himself swimming around in the water and came out and dried himself in the sun. Later he went to the spot where they had made love. He abandoned himself to his surroundings and pulled out part of sarsaparilla creeper and smelled it, the smell 'sinking into his fivefold breath of life.

Later he went into the stream again and swam some more. It was time for him to give food to his wife and he went back to the agrahara.

He found his wife to be hot and feverish. There was also a swelling on the side of her stomach. He gave her medicine but it did not go down her throat. He didn't know what to do. Soon his wife let out a shriek that struck him dumb. He rushed headlong towards Naranappa's house, shouting for Chandri. Then he remembered that there was a corpse there and he ran back to his own house and found her dead.

He cremated her with the help of four Brahmins from Kaimar agrahara. His tears flowed unchecked till all his weariness had dropped from him.

Chapter VI: All Naranappa's property must go to the monastery, says the chief.

At the monastery, all the Brahmins ate the big meal prepared for the occasion. Later when they all sat around with the chief in the midst of them, he announced that Naranappa was still a Brahmin even if he had left brahminism and that it was their duty to cremate him. He also ruled that all Naranappa's property must go to the monastery. Garudacharya and Lakshmanacharya both tried to press their claim to the property but the chief rebuked them harshly. They apologized and hurried back to the aghara for the cremation.

Pranesacharya on the other hand after his wife's cremation didn't return to Durvasapura. He didn't think of either the fifteen gold lace shawls that he had won in arguments, or the basil bead rosary done in gold given by the monastery. He set out to go wherever his footsteps took him.

PART THREE

Chapter I : Pranesacharya's self-analysis continues. A half caste young man Putta joins him in his journey.

Pranesacharya is in restless state of mind. He had decided to go wherever his feet took him. His mind was overactive and he wanted to still it. Earlier, whenever he had to still his mind he would recite the name of Vishnu but now he had to stand alone, without god. He wanted to be like a kite in the sky a mere awareness, floating still and self-content. He thought of the illiterate saint Kanaka for whom God was an urgent awareness, a wonder. But for him God had been a matter of routine, a set of multiplication tables, learnt by rote. So, he tried to distance himself from god.

He sat under a jackfruit tree and tried to sort things out. He was hungry and the question remained unanswered. He thought if he met a farmer he would bring him fruit and milk. So, moved on. Later, he met a young farmer herding buffaloes to the tank. He had one fear-fear of being recognized. Fortunately, the farmer had not recognized him. The farmer mistook him for a mendicant going around on his collection. This implied the loss of all his lustre and influence. This was his first lesson in humility. He asked the farmer to get him some milk and plantains. The farmer wanted him to give him something with a spell on it to bring round a new bride who sat sullenly in a corner but having left everything. Pranesacharya decided to make an excuse and not perform any more brahminical functions. The farmer told him of a three-day car festival at Melige some ten miles away, where he could go for his collection.

He again thought of chandri and naranappa. God had never been an urgent need for him as it had been for a fellow student at Kashi, Mahabala. For Mahabala God was a hunger. He himself had never experienced such

love for God. He was still confused about where to go, he was a veritable Trishanku. So, he decided to walk away, unseen, unidentified.

It was at this point that he was joined by a young man named Putta. At first, he tried to shake him off but Putta wouldn't leave him.

Chapter II : The story of the Durvasapura Brahmins - Pranesacharya decides to confess to his fellow Brahmins.

In Parijatpura, Manjappa realized that the deaths of Naranappa, Dasacharya and Pranesacharya's wife indicated the outbreak of plague. He immediately went to the city to inform the municipality to send in doctors and take other measures to stop the epidemic.

The Brahmins, disappointed at the monastery, made their way towards Durvasapura. Gaurdacharya voiced the general reluctance of the Brahmins to cremate the decomposed body of Naranappa. Subbanacharya tried to put heart into them. They also realized that the cows were alone there, with none to look after them.

In Durvasapura, Belli lost her parents to plague. The neighbours set the thatched hut with the dead parents inside on fire. Belli, frightened, ran away from the village.

Putta stuck to the Acharya like sin. The Acharya wanted to be alone and think but Putta wouldn't leave him. Putta didn't know that he was Pranesacharya. He thought he was merely a mendicant Brahmin going on his beggarly rounds. He asked him a riddle. Pranesacharya was able to solve the riddle but he didn't want to tell him the answer, for that would mean becoming friendly with him. He chose to be called dull-witted, much to the amusement of Putta.

Putta started becoming more familiar with the Acharya. He asked him about his marriage and told him that he had two children. But his wife was always clamouring to go to her parents. He beat her but that didn't seem to have any effect on her. But for this one weakness, she was very clean and good in everything. They both laughed. Putta then compared the ways of women with the track of a fish darting in the water.

As a responsible person, he wants to take on the responsibility for his actions on himself. This marks an important stage in his spiritual development. He takes an important decision - not merely to go where his legs take him but to do what he wants. Going to Kundapura and starting to live with Chandri was one such idea.

Meanwhile Garuda, Lakshmana and the other Brahmins returned to Durvasapura. Fortunately, there were no vultures on the roofs anymore. Performing the death rite for Naranappa was the first priority. But they didn't find Pranesacharya there. He had probably gone to the river. They were afraid to go into his house. So, they decided to wait for him and started making a stretcher for the body.

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Pranesacharya at the Melige Tank with Putta

Pranesacharya stopped at the Melige tank with Putta to wash his hands and feet.

The Acharya was afraid lest people in Melige should recognize him. But there was comfort in the thought that all the Melige Brahmins were Smartas and they were unlikely to notice him in the bustle of the festival. But fear dogged him still. He wanted to root it out completely. Naranappa had lived with Chandri fearlessly. But if he were to live with her, he would probably cover his face.

Putta disclosed that his father was a high-class Brahmin who kept his mother better than he did his wedded wife.

At the Melige Festival

Melige looked quite a colourful place because of the festival. The temple chariot had been pulled by ropes and stationed in the middle of the town for offerings of coconut and fruit. Putta and Pranesacharya also bought coconut and bananas to offer to the god.

There were noises of reed-pipes and smells of camphor and joss sticks everywhere. A man showed various scenes in what he called the Bombay Box. Putta paid money to have a peep but told Pranesacharya not to go away leaving him behind. The Acharya tried to slip away but Putta caught up with him.

Putta seemed interested in everything he saw. He threw a coin at the girl performing a feat. He bought ribbon for his wife and coloured pipes for his children. At the soda shop while the Acharya declined to drink anything, Putta drank a bottle of orange soda. The whole thing was a round of expectation, experience and contentment. But the Acharya stood outside this world of ordinary pleasures. It seemed that he was caught in this play of opposites.

They came to a coffee shop where Putta forced the Acharya to have some coffee. Since the Acharya was thirsty, he even enjoyed the drink.

Putta then suggested that he should go and have meals at the temple. He felt tempted to do so—he hadn't had any meal for days but the period of mourning was not over yet and he was afraid of polluting the temple. The Acharya's brahminical fears assail him again. The point of comparison, as always, is Naranappa. He realizes that the only way to liberate himself from fear is to do a thing fully. His mind told him to fulfill his resolve to live with Chandri fully or else give up the whole thing.

The Cock fight

The two went to see a cock-fight. There were two roosters leaping at each other with knives attached to their legs. People sat watching the bloody spectacle with absolute concentration. Pranesacharya felt as if he had suddenly dropped into a demonic world.

The cocks were wounded but after stitches had been put on their wounds they were ready to fight again. Putta even wagered with a stranger and won the bet.

Pranesacharya suddenly felt a fatherly affection for Putta. If he had a son, he would have brought him up lovingly. Ironically it was at this point that he asked Putta to let him go his way. Putta felt disappointed but still offered to go part of the way with him. Pranesacharya then said he had to go to a goldsmith to sell the gold ring on his sacred thread. He needed the money to go to Kundapura. Putta said he knew one and took him there. There while he kept insisting that the goldsmith should not settle for less than fifteen rupees, the Acharya agreed to sell it for ten rupees.

Visit to Padmavati

Putta then took him to someone he knew who turned out to be a prostitute, Padmavati. The sight of her aroused his desire. But he wasn't ready to take the plunge. Putta suggested that he stay the night there and could leave for Kundapur the next day. But later, sensing his confusion, he said that they would come back after he had had his dinner at the temple.

The Acharya's cogitations again

The Acharya was torn inside. In between he must decide, here, now. Decide to give up a quarter-century of discipline and become a man of the world?

At meals in the temple

At the temple when Putta asked the Acharya to go in and have meals, the latter suggested that he should come in too and have his food. He needed his company. But Putta said that he was a Malera and he was likely to be discovered. So, he sent the Acharya inside alone.

Pranesacharya's one great fear was of being detected. The discovery of his identity and that he was still in the pollution period after his wife's death would create a scandal. The festival might have to be cancelled. He felt dizzy and sat down quite reluctantly.

His mind was in utter confusion. What should he do to overcome his dread? Should he sleep with Padmavati? Or should he start living with Chandri?

The Brahmin who sat next to him was looking for a suitable groom for a young girl who was yet to reach puberty and he asked him to help him find a suitable match. One of those serving the feasting Brahmins said that he had seen him (Pranesacharya) somewhere, perhaps in the monastery. This alarmed him no end. The only way for him to overcome his fear was to take responsibility for the funeral and make a clean confession. He had to come to a final decision. If he didn't tell the agrahara Brahmins and didn't cremate Naranappa properly, he wouldn't be able to escape fear. If, on the other hand, he decided to live with Chandri without telling anyone, the

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decision wouldn't be complete, wouldn't be fearless. Either way the decision was agonizing. He prayed God to take the burden of decision from him.

The man who had partially identified him, recalled his name and went in to tell the Sahukar about it. Pranesacharya saw his chance and ran out for his very life.

Putta thought that the Acharya was running away from the temple to answer an urgent call of nature. The Acharya thought of what he had to do at the agrahara. He would reach the agrahara by midnight and would come clean about everything without a trace of repentance or sorrow. So, he told Putta that the real reason for his getting up suddenly from dinner was his decision to go to Durvasapura at once. Putta reminded him that Padmavati would be waiting for him. At this he lied to him saying that his brother was deathly ill in Durvasapura. At this Putta offered to go with him to meet Naranappa in Durvasapura for a business deal. Finding it impossible to shake Putta off, he resolved to confess to Putta and see the effect it had on him.

Just then, a covered wagon came along which was going to Durvasapura. The wagon had only room for one person. At Putta's persuasion the Acharya agreed to go alone. The journey would last four or five hours. Pranesacharya was anxious, expectant.

• SANSKARA AS AN ALLEGORY

The term allegory is derived from Greek *allegoria*, from *allos* 'other' + *agoria* 'speaking speaking otherwise'. An allegory is a story, a poem, or a picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning. Allegory has been considerably employed in literature, particularly in ancient and medieval literature, and it is sometimes used even now. For students of English literature, the best known examples of it are John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* (1589, 1596). The *Ramayana* is popularly talked of as exemplifying the victory of good over evil, of *punya* over *paap*.

A.K. Ramanujan, the eminent translator of the novel, in his *Translator's Note*, has described it as an allegory rich in realistic details'.

Anantha Murthy commented-"The impulse expressed here is to absorb reality into myth.

Cuddon says "Allegory appears to be a mode of expression so natural to the human mind that it is universal". The choice of this universal mode of expression must have appeared attractive to Anantha Murthy particularly, because the idea of asceticism and eroticism as being adversaries is ancient and is deeply rooted in the Indian psyche. So, it was natural that Anantha Murthy should have chosen to present this ancient opposition through the use of allegory.

In Samskara Anantha Murthy uses both the ways; he is at once illustrative and representational, allegorical and realistic. The effect of this dual treatment will be clear in the portrayal of the major characters in the novel.

Allegory permitted the writer to state his theme sharply and it enabled him to draw upon the wealth of associations in myth and legend. This helped to strengthen the basic theme. Besides, the allegory not only affected the presentation of major male and female characters, but also the kind of flowers grown in the gardens of the dissenter Naranappa and all the other Brahmins.

As in an allegory, the characters in Samskara are somewhat simplified and represent polar opposites. The fundamental opposition posited is between the ascetic and the pleasure-seeker, between control and self-denial on the one hand and indulgence in sensuous pleasures on the other, between Pranesacharya and Naranappa. Two other characters, Mahabala and Naranappa's protégé, Shripati could be grouped with the latter. Garudacharya and Lakshmanacharya are guilty of the sin of avarice and greed and Dasacharya of the sin of gluttony. All the three of them are primarily illustrative.

However, the major characters don't remain simplified for long. For example, Pranesacharya's penance in having married the invalid Bhagirathi is an illustration of his asceticism. So is the fact that he recites sacred legends but himself remains completely unaffected by his own descriptions of beauty in them. But his concern about Chandri waiting in his verandah, awaiting his decision about Naranappa, is an example of conduct that humanizes his character and makes it representative. Later his self-analysis right till the end, makes him a very intense and intimate character.

Similarly, though Naranappa, is a pursuer of pleasure who belongs to the 'Hedonist School', he is not entirely an iconoclast. He has been a real source of inspiration for the young enthusiasts of Parijata Drama Group. He had donated a harmonium to the group and was a fine drummer himself. This drama group is a symbol of his creativity. This adds complexity to his character and makes him very life-like.

The women characters are similarly seen in binary terms: low-caste mistresses like Chandri and Belli on the one hand and withered brahmin women on the other. The references to Matsyagandha, Menaka and Urvashi in relation to Chandri and Belli help to strengthen the allegorical opposition. Of the two characters, Chandri breaks the allegorical mould and because of her compassion and her motherly instinct and her perfect understanding of the Acharya's need, becomes a memorable figure. On the other hand, Padmavati too, like Belli is a figure of temptation.

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The allegorical split extends even to the flowers that grow in the gardens of the brahmins of the agrahara. In the agrahara homes the flowers were used for worship and never for beauty or fragrance but the flowers that bloomed in Naranappa's yard were reserved for Chandri's hair and for a vase in the bedroom.

As Meenakshi Mukherjee has pointed out, the basic polarity between direct involvement in the sensuous aspects of life and a detachment through the denial of the senses is indicated as early as on page (Samskara: A Critical Reader: 86).

The allegorical nature of the novel can be seen in the lines :

'As far back as he [Pranesacharya] could remember Naranappa had always been a problem. The real challenge was to test what would finally win in the agrahara: his own penance and faith in ancient ways, or Naranappa's demonic ways' (19-20).

In the novel, the opposition between asceticism and eroticism is part of a larger opposition between brahminism and anti-brahminism. A belligerent Naranappa says:

'Let's see who wins in the end you or me. I'll destroy brahminism, I certainly will. My only sorrow is that there's no brahminism really left to destroy in this place - except you' (23).

The opposition is thus not only between asceticism and eroticism and between brahminism and anti-brahminism, but also between virtue and sin.

The allegorical mould in which the principal characters have been cast does not, however, remain inflexible for long. For by the end of Part One, the Acharya has taken Naranappa's mistress, Chandri. This is the key moment in the book, the major turning point. This changes everything. The accuser becomes the accused. The opposition between asceticism and eroticism gets diluted. This is where the realistic details start coming in increasingly.

We are taken inside the mind of Pranesacharya and see how it works in view of the sea change that has taken place. The Acharya's journey is both real and symbolic, with the writer exercising control over what he is to see and where he is to go. So is the guided tour on which he is taken by Putta. Putta is a protean figure who performs so many multiple roles he is riddle-master, expert bargainer, pimp without any samskara - that it strains the readers'credibility. The last decision that the Acharya takes to travel alone is again symbolic: ultimately, we are all alone and all our crucial decisions have to be our own.

At times, the allegory flies in the face of realism. As Ramanujan has pointed out, it was unrealistic that a learned Brahmin like the Acharya should not have been able to sort out the problem posed by the death of

Naranappa (143). Secondly every villager is supposed to know that no crow or vulture would touch a plague-ridden rat (143). However, both these factual inaccuracies would have remained unnoticed without being pointed out.

The use of allegory and the numerous references in the book, serve as a means of economy as well. If the novel had been written without the allegory and these references, it would probably have been bulkier.

The old oppositions between asceticism and pleasure-seeking, between brahminism and anti-brahminism and between virtue and sin are utterly change. The novel converges on to the Acharya and his great need to evolve a new, more rational and more individual identity for himself. Firmly rooted in the Indian tradition, it becomes a modern man's quest for a new self.

• THEMES

Some Preliminary Considerations

The most obvious theme seems to be a quest for the right moral choice. The central character is an ascetic Pranesacharya, who is also the spiritual leader of a small Brahmin community. Initially, he is confronted with a situation in which he has to decide what he should do in regard to the cremation of a heretic Brahmin, Naranappa, who is a pleasure seeker. Should they cremate the heretic? And if yes, who should do it? Naranappa had no children of his own. So, someone else would have to undertake the task. Later he accidentally meets and mates with Naranappa's mistress, Chandri. This experience turns all his ascetic and brahminical beliefs upside down and he is confronted with the need to find answers to new and bigger moral questions about himself and his relationship with Chandri and his erstwhile Brahmin followers. He is thus faced with the challenge of having to forge a new identity for himself.

The biggest question arouse- How is this identity to be defined? Is this identity determined by the caste or the community of the individual? Or whether the individual carves out an identity of his own? In 'Samskara' the central character's identity as an ascetic and scholar has been given to him by the Brahmin community of which he is the leader. But later this identity proves unsatisfactory and he tries to forge a new identity for himself as an individual. The identity is explored by arising certain questions in the mind of the reader-

1. Would you like to be described as a good Hindu, a good Muslim, a good Christian, a good Sikh?
2. Would any of these descriptions be adequate?
3. Would you like to describe yourself in more secular, more humanistic terms?

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When you begin to ask questions like these, you will perhaps discover that the novel deals with concerns that are very real, very Indian, and also, very universal. Is the central character in the novel a rebel against tradition? In what sense does he move towards modernity?

Quest for Identity-Journey towards a New Birth

The salient theme of the novel is quest for identity. This quest for identity takes the form of a journey and it is a journey of self discovery by Pranesacharya. Pranesacharya, after his experience of sex with Chandri in the forest finds himself in a spiritual turmoil. Following the death of his wife he thinks there is nothing to hold him back in Durvasapura and he sets himself adrift and is ready to go where his feet take him.

In the course of the journey he experiences what he had not experienced so far in the cloistered Brahmin community of Durvasapura. He has his lessons in humility for he is taken to be an ordinary mendicant Brahmin on his beggarly rounds. He meets a half-caste young man Putta, who offers him a bidi (which he refuses) and later offers him some eatables, which he accepts. He moves around with his young companion in the car-festival in Melige, is persuaded to drink coffee, watches a fight between two roosters who get bloody in the process, and also visits a prostitute, barely managing to get away with the promise to return later, and finally sitting down to meals among the poor Brahmins in the temple. The last three experiences that are particularly frightening are the cockfight, the visit to the prostitute, and sitting down to meals in the temple. In the cockfight he has his first brush with life in the raw, with violence and cruelty in the ordinary world and in the second he experiences the stirrings of lust when he is face to face with Padmavati. The third experience that proves the most frightening and that precipitates matters is the experience of being identified in the temple.

This journey also gives him an opportunity to analyze himself or rather to continue his self-analysis that had begun after mating with Chandri. He seeks answers to several questions: Why did he not go back to agrahara after the death of his wife? Was it because of his fear of being caught? Then, what was the extent of his responsibility for making love to Chandri? Initially he believes that his union with her was 'undesired, as if it was God's will' and that he was absolutely not responsible for making love to her' (95). But he keeps wrestling with himself and feels himself to be in a Trishanku-state till he has finally decided to accept full responsibility for his sexual union with Chandri (In that moment, decisive of which way I should turn, the decision was taken to take Chandri. Even if I lost control, the responsibility to decide was still mine. Man's decision is valid only because it's possible to lose control, not because it's easy' [96]). He also agonizes over his realization that his individual action affects others also

(...there's this deep relation between our decisions and the whole community [106]).

He realizes that he can free himself from this Trishanku-state through a free, deliberate wide-awake, fully willed act (107). Earlier he had decided to go where his legs took him (85). But now he decides to act and to remake myself in true wakefulness' (107).

During self-analyzing, he thinks of going to Kundapura and living with Chandri. Pranesacharya has no sense of regret and naturally no feelings of guilt. But he is constantly haunted by the fear of his old identity as the spiritual leader of Durvasapura Brahmins being discovered. In the temple he is recognized but before he is exposed, he runs away from the temple and decides to proceed to Durvasapura in order to make a complete confession before the Brahmins and to cremate Naranappa's dead body. Only then will he be free from fear and be really free to do whatever he wants to do'.

'In full view of the frightened Brahmins, I'll stand exposed like the naked quick of life; and I, elder in their midst, will turn into a new man at midnight.... When I tell them about myself, there should be no taint of repentance in me, no trace of any sorrow that I am a sinner (132).

Asceticism and Eroticism

The Hindus believe in four ashramas or four distinct stages of life: that of the student, the householder, the hermit and the ascetic. A related concept is that of the four ends (pursharthas) of life:

1. dharma (righteousness, duty or virtue)
2. artha (material gain)
3. kama (love or pleasure)
4. moksha (liberation from worldly life)

Samskara represents a society where asceticism is prioritized and valorized beyond what is due to it and is opposed to the pursuit of pleasure. There is a need to understand the term 'eroticism' broadly to include not only pursuit of sex and pleasure but also the whole engagement with the affairs of the world.

Asceticism and eroticism are represented allegorically and in opposition to each other. The opposition between the two ideals is stated in extreme terms. Pranesacharya is a householder in name only because at sixteen he married an invalid wife who was incapable of bearing children and has been living the life of an ascetic. He tells others but remains unaffected from the sexually exciting stories from puranas and other ancient books. On the other hand, Naranappa is a heretic Brahman who has rejected his own wife, who has broken every known Brahman taboo and who has been living with a whore for ten long years.

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The turning point comes when Pranesacharya has his first experience of sexual pleasure with a low-caste voluptuous woman. It marks the fall of Pranesacharya, but it is a fortunate fall. His long-suppressed hunger for sex leaps up and bewilders him. He becomes aware of his physical needs of pleasure and of hunger and those of the other senses. Now wants a share in all the good things of life.

The interior monologue of Pranesacharya that he terms with his past and endeavours to deal with the real world around him shown by Putta. He owns complete responsibility for his mating with Chandri and is possibly thinking of living with her.

Pranesacharya emerges as a fully autonomous human being who accepts complete responsibility for his actions - his responsibility to cremate Naranappa and also explain his liaison with Chandri to his community of Brahmins.

Brahminism and Anti-Brahminism

Brahminism and anti-brahminism is another important thematic strand in the novel.

Anantha Murthy is himself a Madhava Brahmin reared in an agrahara. The writer's presentation of brahminism as being decadent is almost savage. The novel describes Brahmins as greedy and gluttonous, and lead a parasitic existence. They are ignorant and grossly superstitious. The only exception is Pranesacharya. Naranappa is anti-Brahmin who knows the different sins the Brahmins are guilty of and who brazenly indulges in all those things that are held sacred' by the Brahmins. He rejects the life of Brahmins as it is circumscribed by taboos and the fear of pollution. The whole novel revolves between brahminisms and anti-brahminism. The two characters contrast and they both have some part of each category. Naranappa's defiant anti brahminism is clearly stated in the novel while Pranesacharya follows Brahminism.

Tradition and Change

Samskara captures amoment in India's long, ongoing struggle with tradition and change. Anantha Murthy had a strong kind of feeling against Brahmin orthodoxy' and in this novel his critical gaze is directed towards the brahminical tradition represented by a set of Madhav Brahmins in a remote Karnatak village during the thirties or the forties. The vitality of a tradition depends, on the ability or otherwise of any system or worldview to deal with a crisis effectively and legitimately. The moribund community fails this test.

The brahminical tradition embodied in the inhabitants of the small Brahmin colony of Durvasapura is in a state of decay, except its ascetic and scholarly leader, Pranesacharya. The colony is faced with a grave crisis, which even its learned leader fails to resolve. Brahminism doesn't seem to

offer a solution. Yet there is a solution, which is a product of fresh thinking and it comes through the low-caste but clear-eyed Chandri. While the Brahmins are busy debating about who should cremate the childless heretic Naranappa, Chandri finding that the body has started rotting, takes the matter in her hand, treats the dead body as a dead body and with the help of a Muslim friend of Naranappa cremates it in the darkness of the night.

The brahminical society has lost its capacity to question itself and to adapt itself to changing circumstances, which implies that it has lost its capacity to renew itself and needs the re-vitalizing touch of someone who lives on the periphery of the brahminical world.

This touch that will revitalize the best Brahmin in the agrahara, Pranesacharya, also comes through the low-caste Chandri. If Chandri reawakens all his senses, Putta, half-caste Maler, continues Pranesacharya's education by opening up the sublunary world to him in all its varied hues, including the world of ordinary pleasures, passion and violence and cruelty.

When the novel closes, Pranesacharya's confession is still several hours away. The novel's message seems to be that change can come in tradition through a critical insider.

• LITERARY CRITICISM OF SAMSKARA

According to its translator A.K. Ramanujan, Samskara was popular with critic and common reader alike since its publication in 1965'. One hopes that that is true or so we would like to believe.

The first critic of the English translation was the translator himself and he has added a fine Afterword to the translated version that forms part of the book and that first appeared in 1976. In a sense, Ramanujan has set the lines along which criticism of the novel was to take place. He called it a religious novella, a contemporary reworking of ancient themes' (141) and drew attention to the allegorical form of the novel and also the ancient dichotomy between asceticism and sensuality, saying that the characters were somewhat simplified and represented polar opposites' (141). The novel, he pointed out, sometimes sacrificed realism to enforce its allegory. He also talks of the several meanings of the word samskara and goes on to suggest a threefold process of initiation or a rite of passage separation, transition and re incorporation through which Pranesacharya is passing.

Dissent came very early and it came very strongly, for in 1976. V.S. Naipaul in his comments on Samskara that later on formed part of his A Wounded Civilization (1977), dismissed Samskara as a portrayal of what he called a barbaric civilization. It was a civilization where the books, the laws are buttressed by magic, and where a too elaborate social organization is unquickenened by intellect or creativity or ideas of moral responsibility. These

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people's, he goes on, are all helpless, disadvantaged, easily unbalanced; the civilization they have inherited has long gone sour; living instinctive lives. crippled by rules...they make up a society without a head. (Vagartha 15: Oct 1976, 21) The obvious reference was to the decadent Brahmin agrahara. Naipaul concedes that it is a difficult novel, and even that the narrative is hypnotic and also that 'the brilliance of the writing in the original Kannada can be guessed'. But he charges Indians to have an underdeveloped ego' and believes that the Acharya even after he enters the demon world' would continue to be self-absorbed. A changing society, he holds, requires 'sharper perception'.

Not long afterwards, in 1981, an anthropologist, T.N. Madan published a paper (written in 1978) entitled 'Moral Choices: An essay on the unity of asceticism and eroticism', which is reproduced with minor changes in his book entitled *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture* (1987; 2001). The revised title of the paper simply is 'Asceticism and Eroticism'.

Madan's essay, it should be made clear, is not exclusively on Samskara: it discusses three literary texts on the theme, the other two being Bhagwati Charan Verma's Hindi novel *Chitralkha* (1933) and Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar's Marathi novel *Yayati* (1959). Recognizing it as 'the fundamental moral dilemmas treated for very long in Hindu traditions, he tries to develop 'the notion of the tension between the two extremes of asceticism (tapas) and eroticism (kamukta) which the life of the householder has to overcome" (12). The ideal Hindu solution is not a simple harmonization of opposites, but the cultivation of a moral sensibility which carries one beyond having to make moral choices and coerce oneself into a particular course of action' (13).

Madan examines the three texts in the context of culture-nature dichotomy. The human being as a fully conscious or autonomous moral agent (a Socrates-like figure) is the ideal Samskara puts forward; but it is an ideal difficult to realize, for no human being living in society may hope to make all his or her own moral choices without taking away from the autonomy of others. Moral choices thus generate moral dilemmas with no easy solutions' (*Non-Renunciation*: 96).

Rajagopal Parthasarathy's essay on 'Samskara : The Passing of the Brahmin Tradition' (1998), written in a sympathetic vein, is 'an elegy for the passing of the once resonant Brahmin tradition' (190). He suggests that the novel in which the writer has tried to come to terms with his own oppressive Madhava Brahmin past', could be read 'as an initiation story focusing on an individual's movement from innocence to maturity through contact with experience' (191). Like the Rishyashringa of the Mahabharat, Pranesacharya enters the real world after his baptism of passion with Chandri. But the central question of his spiritual regeneration, the author

says, is left unresolved and with it 'the question of the regeneration of Brahman India. He ends his paper by saying that the questions that the Acharya asks of himself are the questions Brahmans must ask themselves if they expect to continue to preserve their identity' (198).

Meenakshi Mukherjee's lucid essay (1985) begins by repudiating Naipaul's charge that Samskara dealt with a barbaric civilization,' saying that the significance of the novel lies in the attempt to exploit the tension between an ethos 'where identity is determined by karma and varna on the one hand and a new awareness of self.' (Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India: 167)

In the course of her long essay she offers a very perceptive critical commentary on the novel, noticing the use of allegory and also of the metaphors of the serpent and the tiger and that of the journey. She also draws attention to Lukacs's useful distinction between the epic hero and the problematic hero of the novel, saying that the epic is always about the destiny of a community and the epic hero is 'never an individual' (170). The Acharya, she says, moves from being the epic hero to the problematic hero of the novel. Also, she does not think that the novel is 'a repudiation of Hinduism and refers to the character of Putta who though unreflective and unphilosophical, is a Hindu and whose acceptance of the caste hierarchy has not hampered his 'zest for living' (180).

Heidrun Bruckner's 30-page long essay (1994) on intertextuality in Samskara is intended to pay attention, among other things, to an area neglected so far, namely the intertextual dimension of the novel. He tries to show that this dimension constitutes a kind of 'mythological subconscious' of the novel. "The novel is pervaded by images and comparisons stemming from ancient and medieval Indian mythology and literature, which do not serve a limited function in their respective context but provide an alternative conceptual framework (154).

A useful volume of criticism on Samskara has come out recently. Entitled U.R. Anantha Murthy's Samskara: A Critical Reader (2005), it offers a critical survey of the criticism on the novel and also selected essays by different scholars following a variety of approaches. You will do well to sample it.

For a change let us now hear what the author has to say not about his own work but his report of how others have responded to his novel. Here is what he said in Part II of his lecture on Tradition and Creativity (1990):

*In my village everyone thought Samskara was a totally realistic novel and they identified every character with a living person in the agra-hara. And when I went back to my village the woman next door said, 'O Anantha, you have created Chandri perfectly. Each and every character was real. And the novel was considered against some people in the village. Now you come to Shimoga, the district headquarters, and see how the novel is read

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there. There it was seen as a novel against the Madhava Brahmins. It became a little abstract. Not against some characters, but against one set of characters. They said it was anti-Madhava. In Bangalore it was anti-Brahmin. It became more abstract. When Naipaul read it, he found it anti-Hindu. Again more abstract. And to Erie Erickson the novel was a representation of the crisis of middle age. It became totally universal.' (Literature and Culture, 121-22).... 'And now many of my radical friends say that it [Samskara] is a Pro-Brahmin novel, that I have really championed the cause of Brahmins' (122).

Anantha Murthy's comments don't end there. In an interview in 1996, he reported much the same things and added the following questions: "What I want to ask here is this: Which is my novel? Whose response is truer from the point of view of the printed text-my own people in the agrahara who read it literally, or the people from other cultures who read it symbolically? (Meenakshi Sharma, ed. Wordsmiths [1996], 58)

Anantha Murthy's are valid questions. But these questions in turn further raise the question of the reader response theories. As Vanamala Vishwanatha, the co-translator of Samskara into Swedish says, 'meaning is not something that inheres 'as truth' in the text but something that is tenuously created by the active mediation of readers, who deconstruct the text based on their own location and ideological make-up.' (Samskara: A Critical Reader: 235) So if you find yourself disagreeing with what has been suggested in the study material or by any of the critics, take heart. Only be prepared to buttress your reading with arguments and examples from the text.

A final word. As adults you should be able to devise your own strategy of reading and coming to grips with the text. But whatever you do, remember that a thorough grounding in the text is indispensable for any independent understanding of it.

• CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF SAMSKARA

The plain question is: what is the relevance of Anantha Murthy's novel Samskara today? The novel is grounded in a small orthodox Madhav Brahmin colony in a remote Karnataka village. The timing of the events is the 1930's or the 1940's. Much of the caste rigidity depicted in the novel is perhaps gone. But caste hierarchy is still far from being extinct and Brahminism, though not as predominant as before, still enjoys enormous prestige. That being the case, it is good to see the wholesome spectacle of a Brahmin writer subjecting a decadent brahminism to a ruthless, sometimes even savage criticism. Such ruthless literary self-examinations need to continue if we are to keep moving towards the idea of equality of castes. Samskara provides an excellent example.

The novel is relevant also because the vision that its writer has seen, which is glimpsed in this novel but articulated sure definitely in another novel *Bharthipura* (Eg. Transl 1996), still remains unrealized today. I am referring to the ideal of a casteless society envisioned by its leading character, Jaganatha Rao, in *Bharthipura*. Giving details of his dreams, the character says: An Indian would attain real dignity only when it became possible for a Brahmin boy to desire a dark-skinned untouchable girl with flowers in her hair, only when a Brahmin longed to be hugged by coarse-haired and dark-skinned untouchable boy (203-04). In *Samskara* we see a preview of this dream in the union between the ascetic and learned Brahmin Pranesacharya and the low-caste Chandri in the forest. As has been pointed out earlier, this sexual union, modeled on the union between sage Parashara and fisherwoman Matsyagandha, has been given central importance in the novel. It has in fact been romanticized and valorized and the suggestion is that unless such a paradigm shift takes place, the desirable change will still be far off.

• **QUESTIONS**

1. What are the major works of Dr. U.R. Anantha Murthy?
2. Write a note on the significance of the opening scene of the novel *Samskara*.
3. Discuss how the narrative of *Samskara* has been organized.
4. Write a note on the love-making scene in the novel.
5. Discuss the importance of Putta's role as a focalizer.
6. Which is the major theme in the novel asceticism and eroticism or brahminism and anti-brahminism?
7. Discuss. In what sense do you think the author is rooted in the Indian tradition?
8. Are you satisfied with the way the novel ends? Discuss with concrete arguments. What is the importance of the sexual union between the Acharya and Chandri?
9. Why has the writer chosen Chandri and Putta to catalyse the change in the Acharya? Discuss their role in the Acharya's efforts to redefine himself as an individual.
10. What are your personal views about the contemporary relevance of the novel? What are the major things that the Acharya thinks of during his journey?
11. Which character(s) do you like most in the novel? Why?
12. Do you agree with the view that the novel is a complete repudiation of the brahminism? Give arguments in favour of or against the proposition.

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सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणिः पश्यन्तु माकष्टिद् दुःख भागभवेत् ॥

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