CHAPTER IV

COUNTRY AND CITY
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The opposition between city and country is one of the recurring themes in Premchand's works. He associated city culture with capitalist culture. The cities, according to him, are abodes of the rich. He felt that city life led to "mental and emotional strangulation" and a total dissipation of health and life.

In contrast, Premchand idealised village life. His desire was to "live in a village, foster a few animals for cultivation, and spend life in service of the villagers." He believed

1. Rangbhumi, p.7.
3. Premchand to Upendranath Ashak, 9 July, 1936, ibid, p.241; also see Premchand Samiriti, op.cit, p.29.
4. Premchand to Shri Ram Sharma, op.cit, p.211; also see Premchand to Jainendra, 18 Feb, 1931, ibid, p.20.
5. Premchand to Upendranath Ashak, op.cit,p.241; also see Premchand Samiriti, op.cit, p.29.
that village life is full of contentment. He also looked upon village as the bastion of traditional Indian culture. City on the other hand, represented western culture. Therefore, the opposition between country and city was for him the opposition between traditional Indian culture and western culture. The first section of this Chapter seeks to examine the nature of this opposition. The second section focusses on

6. Premchand to Jainendra, 28 Nov, 1934, Chitthi Patri, Vol.II, p.51. Premchand sought consolation in the village life. He could not adjust himself to the commercial culture prevalent in Bombay. Also see Rambhumi, Allahabad, 1981, p.303. Vinay loses himself in reverie. He dreams of settling in a village and lead a peaceful life in Sofia's company. He would water the plants and nurture them. Sometimes he and Sofia would ferry in a village boat prepared by the villagers than in a motorboat because its noise pierces into ears...Thus Vinay flights in romantic imagination. Also see Karambhumi. Amarkant, too, loses himself in a romantic dream of settling in a village. Rural areas seem to be an idyll state to Amarkant and he craves to settle there. pp.127-128.
the changes taking place in the rural society. Premchand was sensitive to the changes being taking place in the rural society. The introduction of private property in land brought about certain transformation in agrarian relations. The new relations of production gave rise to new patterns of social relations, new values and norms and new cultural ethos. This new social and material existence made a powerful impact on the structure and organisation of rural society. Premchand has depicted in his works, how new social and material conditions destroyed old forms, old practices and old ways of feeling.
TRADITIONAL INDIAN CULTURE
VIS-A-VIS WESTERN CULTURE

(A) TRADITIONAL INDIAN CULTURE

The traditional culture of India, according to Pramchand, is the antithesis of western culture and in turn of the capitalist culture. The basis of Indian culture was Dharma or religion. In fact, the entire social and political system was derived from this basic source.

The two precepts: "non-violence as the supreme duty" ("Ahimansa Parmo-Dharma") and "the entire earth as one family" ("Vasudhaiv Katumbakam") were the hallmark of this system. Instead of


According to Pramchand "In spite of the deformation the ancient Indian culture has undergone, these two precepts are still predominant (paramount) in our society. In spite of heavy material losses by the Indian society, these two principals have been to us like the pillars of light and compensating our losses." Ibid, p.205.
class struggle, the Indian culture emphasised
harmony among the classes.\textsuperscript{10} This emphasis on
non-violence was a means to attain positive quali-
ties: contentment, renunciation, self-sacrifice,
service, humility, self-abnegation, altruism,
selflessness, self-effacement etc.\textsuperscript{11} Premchand

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, pp.205-206; (also see "Shri Krishan Aur
Bhavi Jagat", \textit{op.cit}, p.143; "Mansik Pradhinta",
\textit{op.cit}, p.193.
(also see "Jagiriti", \textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II,
pp.206-205.
\textit{Indian culture was basically the culture of
harmony of different classes, instead of class
struggle there have been class compromises.
The essence of Indian culture is selflessness,
a synthesis of collectivism and individualism."

\textsuperscript{11} See all the articles quoted above;
also see "Varatman Andolan Ke Raaste Mein
also see "Rasheed-ul Khairi Ki Kahaniyan",
also see \textit{Premchand Samriti}, \textit{op.cit}, p.69.

Premchand was invited by the Patna Hindi
Sahitya Parishad. Talking to the visiting
students, he said that:

"Contentment is the greatest wealth in
life." "But the contentment would be fatal to
the basic motivation for life," said the Secre-
tary of the Parishad. "It is aspirations, and
discontentment in life, that lead to revolution,
contentment would rob life of zest; and there
is little difference between life without zest
and death."

"From the point of view of collective life",
Premchand rejoined, "discontentment is good.
For the individual, however, discontentment is
bad. Look at the leaders of mass movement.
They know that the movement may not bear results
in their life time. But to give their all for
the liberation of the country brings them con-
tentment. And this contentment is their
greatest strength." English translation by
was of the opinion that all these qualities were advocated by ancient Indian culture as opposed to that of western culture. He firmly believed that the world would not be redeemed by irreligious principles of materialism. It has to be infused with the agility of spiritualism. He believed that modern industrial and technological progress cannot lead mankind to salvation.

13. Ibid.

Premchand puts the question: "who would make a claim that the twentieth century civilisation is more righteous, generous and selfless than that of the age of Budha, Ramyana and Christ? Do we come across today the ethical values prevalent in the times of Budha and Ashoka? Is it possible that Christ would incarnate today...In an age where contentment and decadence are synonymous there is no possibility of character building/character development." Ibid, pp.26-27.


Premchand "knows where lies the heart of our culture, and knows in what direction flows the life-stream which emanates from it...Where the West has placed before us many roads of knowledge and science, it has sucked the juice from our souls. We have slowly been moved from our ideals...He wrote historical stories in order that through them he might place before us the specialities of Indian culture...Soul above body, love above the sword, truth above untruth, and virtue above sin...This is the seed (basic) advice of Indian culture." - Quoted by Robert O. Swan, op.cit, p.67.
Therefore, he wanted to draw attention to the importance of natural life:

It is said with contempt: Do you want to follow Maouri, Julu or Kafir communities? Have these communities given any proof of ethical or intellectual development? These communities may be uncivilised, savage, illiterate, and naked but it is our firm belief that they were better than the ferocious carnivorous beasts, wolves in lamb's guise (hoaxes), political hunters, atrocious, tyrannous and blood sucker traders and merchants of the present (capitalist civilization). They kill and eat the animals but do not suck the blood of their fellows...True, they live in caves and on trees but do not live in big bungalows and palaces causing millions to live in stinking lanes and roads. They remain naked but do not wear such gorgeous clothes which incite jealousy and sow the seeds of arrogance among others and by wearing such clothes they hoodwink the innocent people. 15

Premchand, however, differentiated the ancient Indian way of life from a state of savagery and underlined golden past when India had a high state of civilization:

We aspire to revive that golden age when Vedas were created, philosophical works were written, when Mahatmas (saints) like

Budha and Christ could be born, when Torah was completed.16

(B) WESTERN CULTURE

One of the most prominent features of western culture is its all pervading selfishness.17 Its ideal is to live and die for oneself.18 Premchand contended that all ills of the world was a result of selfishness.19

    Also see "Mahajani Sabhayata" in Premchand Samvad, op.cit., p.257.
    In contrast to the present, the feudal past evoked Premchand's sympathy. Strength and courage were valued in the feudal civilisation, Intelligience, a courteous speech, and the capacity to obey were the virtues and basis of that civilization...
    Though there was some evil along with the good... a man's humanity was never destroyed. A feudal landlord would often sacrifice his life for his friend and patron.

17. In an article titled "Naveen Aur Pracheen", Premchand wrote:
    "The most noxious dictum bequeathed by West is the creed of selfishness. This demon of selfishness has trampled over the rights of the entire world. It knows not the tender feelings of heart. It is not moved by pain or affliction. Its only Bible is the selfishness", Vividh-prasang, Vol.III, p.197.
    Also see "Shri Krishan Aur Bhavi Jagat", ibid, p.142.


This selfish-mentality has turned the world into an arena of struggle. In fact the fundamental principle of western civilization is **sangharash** (struggle for existence). According to Premchand it is sheer madness to regard life as an arena of conflict where one is born to knock down one's rivals. This struggle for existence has generated a mania among individuals to compete with each other.

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22. "Dukhi Jeevan", **Vividh-prasang**, Vol.III, p.88. Premchand attacked Darwin's theory of evolution, since it has taken mankind to beastliness. Instead of leading mankind to more humaneness, the evolution has lead it to more savagery, beastliness. The struggle is the symptom of beastliness and cooperation that of humanity. Exploitation is the most destructive aspect of this principle. Cooperation rather than the struggle ought to be the basis of life."
Everyone is ready to prey on others. In this process, all the nobler feelings of sympathy, forgiveness and humility are eliminated from the society. This struggle for existence has taken a terrible form in the West as a result of the disjunction between religion and everyday life. This godless civilization is also infecting the rest of the world. It has permeated the entire body-politic to such an extent that it is difficult to escape.

The ideal of western civilization is the enslavement to worldly needs. It is the Mammon who is worshipped in the West.

24. Ibid, p.87. "This hunger is more intense and deep than even the pacific ocean and it cannot be satiated.

25. Ibid.


30. "Jue Ka Yug", ibid, p.455.
There seems to be a synonymity between western culture and capitalist culture in Premchand's understanding. In his perception the values attributed to western culture were precisely the values generated by bourgeois society. At places he used the category 'capitalist culture' and at other places the category 'westernism' was replaced by it.  
Premchand launched a crusade against capitalist culture.  

32. Premchand wrote an article 'Mahajani Sabhyata' three weeks before he died. It was published in Hans magazine in Sept., 1936, after his death. He attacked the capitalist culture in this article vehemently. It is to be noted that in the articles written before this Premchand used the category western and capitalism synonymously. But in this article i.e., 'Mahajani Sabhyata' he directly attacked the capitalist culture per se. Here he did not confuse the terms westernism and capitalism. This article can be treated as his testament on capitalism.
In capitalist system everything is measured with the standard of money.\textsuperscript{33} All human relationships are commoditable.\textsuperscript{34} Even the soul of a man is weighed and measured as if it were some saleable commodity.\textsuperscript{35} The sole value of a human being lies in his usefulness as an instrument for making money. The capitalist system "values a human being like a butcher in terms of the price his flesh and hide would fetch".\textsuperscript{36}

The greed for money completely shadows all human feelings.\textsuperscript{37} One's nobility, one's goodness, one's talent is decided by money.\textsuperscript{38} If you possess money you become a god, however

\begin{itemize}
\item[34.] 'Mahajani Sabhayata', \textit{op.cit.}, p.258.
\item[36.] \textit{Ibid.}
\item[37.] 'Mahajani Sabhayata', \textit{op.cit.}, p.258.
\item[38.] \textit{Ibid.}, p.258.
\end{itemize}
black be your heart. 39 Ability and talent are judged according to their market value. 40 The capitalist civilization has engendered new rules, ethics and precepts and dictums. And the society today is being governed by these principles. 41 One of these principles is: 'Time is money.' In olden times the time was life. Life was meant for achieving education and culture and the noblest use it could be put to was the service of the poor. 42 But in capitalist civilization the meaning of life is exclusively measured in terms of material acquisition. 43 The money-cult has stripped

39. Ibid, p.258; Also see 'Juac Ka Yug!', op.cit, p.455. In this article he pointed out "If one is adept at procuring money by whatever foul means: be it insolvency, forging currency or making false documents, one would be respected and worshipped. One may be a gambler, eve-teaser, hard drunkard, a chain smoker he would be regarded as a gentleman if he possess money."

40. 'Mahajani Sabhayata', op.cit, p.258.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid, p.258.

43. Ibid, p.259.
friendship and humanity of all meaning.\textsuperscript{44} It does not mean that one should waste his time in idle gossip. However, the craze for money should not eliminate the feelings like friendship, love and sympathy.

Another axiom of capitalist civilization is 'business is business'.\textsuperscript{45} There is no room for human feelings and emotions.\textsuperscript{46} The deadliest and the most bloodthirsty of all the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid}, p.259.
  \item \textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ibid}, p.260.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid}, p.260
\end{itemize}

Thus Rai Sahib a Taluqdar in \textit{Godan} approaches Mr. Khanna, his friend and a banker for loan and the later demands a commission. Rai Sahib is shocked. "His face dropped. Khanna was one of his most intimate friends. They'd been in school together and had stuck together later. Yet now he was being so heartless as to expect a commission."

He said dejectedly, "but I had thought of you as a brother."

"That's very kind of you", Khanna said gratefully. "I've always thought of you as my elder brother too, and I still do. I've never kept anything from you, but business is something else again. Here no one is a friend or a brother to anyone else. Just as I can't ask you to pay more commission than others do because, you're a brother, so you should urge me to make concessions in my commission." \textit{op.cit}, p.288.
principles and precepts perpetrated by capitalist civilization is this 'business is business' principle.\textsuperscript{47} The relationship between husband and wife, and father and son and between teacher and the taught are governed by this principle.\textsuperscript{48} All human, spiritual and social relationships between human beings are subservient to this principle.\textsuperscript{49} It has eliminated the nobler feelings like humanity, sympathy, consolation, magnanimity, generosity, love etc.\textsuperscript{50} The individual is the soul of this civilization, that is, each one for himself.\textsuperscript{51} It is as the result of this capitalist culture and consequent struggle for existence that the world is divided into the rich and the poor, into the ruler and the ruled.\textsuperscript{52} The majority consists

\textsuperscript{47} "Mahajani Sabhayata", \textit{op. cit.}, p.261
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, p.261.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{51} 'Mahajoni Sabhayata', \textit{op.cit.}, p.260.
of those who work with the sweat of their brow and the tiny minority who hold power hold the majority in their grip. It has engendered conflict in the society and the resultant class struggle. The recurring revolutions in European society are the result of this struggle.

All evils like jealousy, coercion, dishonesty, lying, false charges and accusations, prostitution, adultery, and thieving and robbery are the result of the quest for money created by capitalist society.

53. Ibid., p.258; also see the article 'Hindu Social League Ka Fatva', Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.226. He pointed out in this article "The infinite number of beggars and mendicants are the victims of this system and are roaming the streets and thus are a great burden on this earth. It has made the life of innumerable persons miserable. The world has lost so much because of this system that even Brahma himself cannot imagine."


55. Ibid., p.261.

But Premchand did not blame individuals for harbouring all these evils. In fact, it is the system that engenders certain illusions and the individuals follow these as ideals. In fact the dominant ideology of the ruling class has hegemonised the ruled with the result that each individual becomes a beast of prey and considers society as its object of prey. He thinks of himself as distinct from society.

(D) ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE STORY "SHAHTI" AND AND NOVEL RANGBHUMI

The opposition between country and city, between Western culture and traditional Indian culture is well brought out in the story 'Shanti' and novel Rangbhumi.

The husband in the story 'Shanti' is a follower of western culture. He is very fond of reading English books. When he sees his wife reading Tulsi's Ramayana he explains to her that this book stands nowhere as compared to English

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57. Ibid., p.258.
58. Ibid., p.258.
59. Ibid., p.258.
and French writers in depicting human nature.
He does not like his wife's way of life. She
is traditional and abides by traditional Hindu
culture.

Although he was fascinated by the philo-
sophy of Hindu religion, he considered it as
obsolete. He regarded Vedanta as the basic
cause of India's downfall. It is because of
the influence of Vedanta that Indians considered
material world as trivial. Contentment as
advocated by Vedanta has ruined India. Con-
tentment is another name for poverty (contentment
and poverty are synonymous terms).

But husband feels uncomfortable by his
wife's uncouthness and traditional way of life.
He feels that his wife's hindrance in his way of
progress. He believes that the women are not

60. *Shanti*, Mansarovar, Vol.7, Allahabad,
1979, p.85.
62. Ibid, p.86.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid, p.82.
66. Ibid, p.82.
just meant to be confined to cooking food, bear children, serve their husbands and keep Ekadashi fast. The purpose of their life is noble. They have full rights to participate fully in all the social and mental world of men. They too have equal rights to lead independent life. He bewails that his wife cannot fulfill social and mental needs. Their way of living is different from each other. He feels that his life has become miserable because of this.

But his wife, on the other hand, is the embodiment of service and sacrifice. He moulds his wife according to his own ideas, gives her western education and grooms her according to western culture. She develops self-confidence and is conscious now of her own self-respect.

67. Ibid, p.82
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid, p.83
She does not obey her mother-in-law meekly and is less concerned about her household chores. Finally, the husband and wife settle in the city of Allahabad. She starts mixing with other women in society, attends club regularly and even takes to drink. The feelings of service and sacrifice are gradually drained out from her.

But now there is a change in her husband's temperament. He generally gets depressed and worried. He falls ill but his wife remains indifferent to him. She keeps visiting clubs and play tennis with her friends. Now the husband gets disgusted with western culture and yearns for the good old days

72. Ibid, p.83.
73. Ibid, p.88.
74. Ibid, p.89.
of the village life. And he along with his wife resettled in their village and gave up the

75. He says to his wife: "Now I am realizing that the pure, limpid water I had been running for was nothing but an illusion. I had been fascinated by its outward appearance but now I am getting conscious of its inner state. In these four years I wandered (roved) in this garden to my hearts' content and finally find it thorny. Neither there is mental peace nor spiritual ecstasy (bliss) here. It is an intoxicated (wild), unrestful, selfish, moanful life. There is neither ethics nor dharma, sympathy, humanness here. (The feelings of ethics, dharma, sympathy and humanness are absent here)...I wish to lead again the village life. I hate life now and this is the chief cause of my illness. I have mental sickness and not a physical one. I want to see you again as a coy, shyful, devoted, religious-minded, god-fearing, house-hold worker and full of devotion to husband...Now I have realized fully that the real happiness lies only in that simple and pious life...You have entangled yourself in the whirlpool of superficial make up and luxury, and you have not even a modicum of awareness about it...I would prefer the old excess than this new one. The result of the old excess was physical, spiritual progress and piety of heart while the result of this new excess is frivolity, shamelessness, ostentation and wilful conduct...Shamelessness is the prime element (aspect) of this life...I have decided to liberate myself from this illusion where money is respected, sensuality is culture and corruption is synonymous with independence...It is true you have made progress in fashion and ornaments. You have become conscious of your own interests, you have more ability now to indulge in luxury. Now you have become more proud, hard-hearted and educated. But your spiritual strength is vanished now because you have forgotten your duty."

Ibid., pp.92-96.
city life for good.

In Rengbhum the opposition between western/industrialist/capitalist culture and traditional Indian culture is embodied in the polar opposition between the two central characters of the novel i.e. Surdas representing the latter on the one hand and John Sevak representing the former on the other. Confrontation of these two

76. His wife narrates: "Babuji burnt all of his old books in the fire, yesterday. It contained many of the writings by Oscar Wilde. Now he rarely reads English books. I don't see him reading any other writer except Carlyl, Ruskin and Emerson. I have again started enjoying reading Ramaayana and Mahabharata. I spin on Charkha now more frequently because it has been propagated more during this period." Ibid, p.96.

Also see the story 'Unmad', Mansarovar, Vol.II, p.125. In this story, Manhar migrates from village to London for higher education. The city of London creates in him new aspirations and new ways of satisfying them. But finally he got disgusted and returned to his village:

"This golden mansion appeared to him now a mirage (illusion) as compared to the tattered hut he had discarded. He begins to remember the same dilapidated hut where he had drank nectar of peace, love and blessings. All these magnificences here now seemed to him trivial in front of the affection received in that hut." Ibid, p.125.
characters in fact is the confrontation of traditional Indian culture on the one hand and the western/capitalist culture on the other.

Premchand has depicted John Sevak as possessed with a single passion in life - the acquisition of wealth at any cost. All other matters are subservient to this single aim. In order to promote his business interests he would go to any extent. He is very clever at talking. He knows where to use praise and on what occasion use back-biting. In fact he was adept at both.

Though he does not believe in Christ's greatness and does not even consider him a great saint, yet he religiously visits Church every Sunday without any break in order to establish contact

77. *Rangbhumi*, op. cit., p. 481.
78. Ibid., pp. 76, 77, 152-156.
79. Ibid; also see pp. 10, 53.
for the promotion of his business interests. 80

"Mr. Sevak attended Church every Sunday
morning more as a matter of sound policy
than religious conviction. 81 He believes
in his father's dictum of double faced
method. 82 "The key-note to success" according
to him "is to keep an eye on the vital

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80. Ibid, p.80.
Also see p. 83.
"If you don't know, you should know", he tells his son, "that religion is only
a means to attain your selfish ends. You
may believe in Christ as the son of God,
or as a superman, but I have no such
belief. I respect him only as an ordinary
fakir," He tells Tahri Ali, his employee
in the leather shop, that to inject reli-
gion into business is stupidity.
"There is no relationship between the
two. To live in this world you must take
recourse to business, not religion. But
on the other hand, religion is ornament of

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid, p.171. Ishwar Sevak, his father
tells him:
"My son, can you get any worldly work done
without mixing colour (that is, without
hypocrisy, and by making false events
look like true)? The basic formula to
achieve success especially in business,
is only this one... Ask any preacher, any
lawyer, any writer, all would say in one
voice that colour (hypocrisy) and success
are synonymous." Ibid, p.122.
opportunity."\(^{83}\) "The hunter knows when to aim at a deer. The lawyer knows when his arguments would have maximum influence on the court."\(^{84}\)

When John Sevak's cashier-cum-manager, Tahir Ali, is beaten by Bajrang on account of their children's quarrel, and Tahir Ali meets John Sevak to apprise him of the incident and gain his sympathy, John Sevak shows no sympathy for him. On the other hand he blames him for the incident and immediately

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William Clark tells Sofia "Your father is a very clever man. Only such persons succeed in this world." *Ibid*, p.279. And Sofia adds "I prophecy, that within two or three years this locality would turn into a colony of workers' flats. Not even a single human belonging to this locality would be allowed to live here."

John Sevak assesses the value of his daughter's friendship with Bharat Singh's family and plans to cash on it: "I regard this acquaintance as divine inspiration...Kunwar Sahib is an influential person in the city. His son-in-law is the Chairman of the Municipal Board. I can very easily acquire land at Pandeypur with his help. It is possible he might purchase some shares too." *Ibid*, p.47.
he thinks of a way to take advantage of Tahir Ali's sad plight. He misrepresents the facts and twists the entire incident in order to enlist the support of Kunwar's son-in-law, Raja Mahendra Kumar Singh, Chairman of the Municipality, to acquire Surdas's plot of land at Pandeypur. When he senses that Tahir Ali is puzzled by his selfishness, John Sevak justifies his action. He believes that it is success which decides whether the means are foul or good (it is the end which justifies the means). "Success has remarkable power to eclipse the flaws."

John Sevak believes that "the world is a battlefield and not a peace loving one. Here only brave and self-exerting win while weak

85. Ibid, pp.120-122.
86. Tahir Ali thinks (soliloquizes); "Sahib (John Sevak) did not show even the slightest hesitation in using my plight for his own self-interest. Can such rich and respected, prominent, thoughtful and learned people be this much selfish? Ibid, p.121.
and cowards are left behind. 89 He admonishes his daughter:

The religious discourses have eclipsed your practical wisdom. You do not realize that sacrifice and altruism are mere ideals to entertain (or pass time for) the devotees, to decorate (or ornament) the speeches of preachers and for poets only. The Christ, Budha and Moses would not reincarnate now. In spite of its being censured, the wealth and luxury is and would remain a paradise (heaven) of human desires. 90

Surdas, on the other hand is the embodiment of traditional Indian culture. He owned a plot of land which is used as a grazing field for cattle. Children used it as a playground.

John Sevak wants to buy it for establishing a cigarette factory. But Surdas refuses to sell it because:

(a) "It is the only thing that I have inherited from my ancestors", he said "and I will have to hang my head in shame if I sell it for gain". 91

(b) He hopes to build a well and a

89. Ibid, p.233, 234.
dharamshala on this plot,\textsuperscript{92} which he hopes would be a sort of his memorial after his death, otherwise how would people know who this blind beggar was.\textsuperscript{93} If the land is sold his name would bring ill repute.\textsuperscript{94} For this purpose he saved five hundred rupees out of the alms he collected. (c) The people in his neighbourhood utilise this land as grazing field for cattle. If he sells this land "Where would the animals graze" since there is no vacant land nearby.\textsuperscript{95} Why should the poor cows die for the sake of a factory, he asks himself.

Finally and most importantly Surdas is afraid of the immoral consequences of industrialisation. When Raja Mahendra Kumar, the Chairman of the Municipal Corporation, narrates to him the benefits that would accrue to the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{92} Ibid. p.14.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Ibid. p.84.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid. p.84.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid. p.14.
\end{itemize}
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people of the locality as a result of the cigarette factory, Surdas replies:

You are quite right, Sir. The locality will, indeed, become livelier, and men of business will prosper. But this gaiety will be accompanied by the spread of drinking and prostitution. Outsiders will ogle at our women. How immorality will reign! Tempted by prospects of employment, peasants will flee the countryside, learn wicked ways, and go back to contaminate their villages thereby. Village women will come for employment and, for need of money, sell their virtue. The glamour that characterises the city will come here, too.96

He prophesises that the very "opening of factory would be the beginning of calamity for us".97 Surdas is very emphatic that he would not leave (or sell) his hut for such a purpose i.e. for the purpose of construction of quarters for workers working in the factory. He is prepared to dispose of his hut if it is to be...

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The fears expressed by Surdas are corroborated by Nayak Ram's first hand testimony: "These are precisely the conditions I have seen wherever there are mill and factories, be it Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad or Kanpur." Ibid, p.204.

used for some religious purpose. A cigarette factory, he says, "can be built only on my dead body." Surdas, in fact, represents traditional values. His opposition to the acquisition of his land by John Sevak was rooted in his desire to preserve those values against western and capitalist culture, the western and capitalist culture being viewed as the same.

(8) WEALTH AND LUXURY AS A CORRUPTING INFLUENCE

It is from the perspective of traditional virtues like sympathy, consolation, selfless service, love, compassion etc. that Premchand portrayed the wealth and luxury as a corrupting influence. Thus, Mirza Khursheed in Godan explains to Tankha:

I'm fully aware of how much comfort and prestige money buys. But I'm also aware of how much selfishness it brings and how much love of luxury, deceit and indifference towards others.

98. Ibid, p.509.
99. Ibid, p.68.
100. Godan, op.cit, p.120.
Money in fact is regarded as the worst curse by Sheeron in "Jeevan Ka Shap". According to her "the smouldering fire beneath the surface of luxurious life becomes visible only when the volcano bursts up." 101 It is regarded as intoxication and "the intoxication of money (addiction of money) is the most pungent and fatal of all intoxications." 102 And it is regarded as the "root cause of all miseries." 103

Therefore, Premchand's fictional characters who belong to upper class families suffer from a sense of moral guilt. When Sabal Singh's wife commits suicide he realizes:

"I am realizing now that wealth and luxury for which we aspire and sacrifice our souls in its devotion is in fact a violent fire that burns our hearts to ashes...Property is the root

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103. Gaban, op.cit. p.137.
cause of all the evils. It awakens the immoral desires and creates all vices.\textsuperscript{104}

In the story 'Bank Ka Deewala', Thakur Jagdish Singh considers wealth and property "not as a blessing but the wrath of God that eliminates the noble feelings of compassion and love from human's mind."\textsuperscript{105} It is cloud that spreads over the twinkling stars of the heart.\textsuperscript{106} Thakur Jagdish Singh believes that if at all the good behaviour (or the feelings of compassion and love) is left in this world it is to be found only in the huts of the poor.\textsuperscript{107}

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\textsuperscript{104} Sangram, op.cit, p.88. He further adds: The rich people do perform good acts, give charity and alms, are compassionate to the suffering people. The big Dharamshalas, hundreds of schools, dispensaries, health-centres, water tanks and wells are the symbols (pillars) of their fame and glory. They open asharams for widows and orphans, serve sechus but all these good acts get eclipsed by their disgrace, infamy. The stigma (blemish) of sin cannot be washed by charity and compassion. In fact it is my experience that the rich can never be inspired by pious feelings. Their charity, compassion, devotion, humility is a means to serve their selfish ends. They prey on their victims behind these masks.\textsuperscript{Ibid, p.189.}

\textsuperscript{105} 'Bank Ka Deewala', Mansarovar, Vol.VII, p.110.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, p.110.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, p.110.
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But this same man when he gets a *Riyasat* gets changed utterly. Then the *renunciation bows in front of the luxury*. But he soon realizes how his luxurious life is causing suffering to others. Therefore, he decides to live frugally like those who are his subjects. He finds solace now in gardening. He renounces luxurious life and spends his whole day in nurturing plants in his garden. His son also follows his precepts and leads a farmer's life. And Jagdish Singh is very happy to see this. He believes that the property would have taught his son the evil ways and now he has learnt how to lead a life full of contentment. And this lesson is worth learning.

Mr. Khanna, the capitalist in Godan learnt this lesson when he was faced with material ruin.

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109. *Ibid.* p.120.
110. *Ibid.* p.120.
He suffers from a sense of moral guilt.  

112. *you have no idea, Mr. Mehta, how I've sacrificed my principles - how many bribes were given, how many bribes were taken, the kind of men I hired to weigh the farmers' sugarcane, the false weights that were used.* Op. cit., p.357.

Mehta consoles him:
*The respect a man gets for being wealthy is only respect for the wealth, not for the man. Even if you're poor, friends can still have faith in you and enemies too. In fact, you won't have any enemies left.* Ibid.

And Govindi consoles her husband:
*Why are you so disheartened? Because of wealth, the root of all evil? What happiness did that wealth bring us? Just one problem after another from morning till night running our lives. The children dying to talk to you and you getting not even time to drop a line to your relatives. Was there any great honour involved? Yes there was, since the world still goes on worshipping wealth, but it had nothing to do with you. As long as you have money, tails wag in front of you. The next day just as many devotees prostrate themselves at some one else's door without even a glance in your direction. The good man does not bow down to wealth. He looks to see what you are. If you're honest and just, unselfish and diligent, he'll be devoted to you. If not, he'll turn away and become an enemy instead, considering you a plunderer of society.* Ibid., p.358.

She further adds:
*Happiness comes in making others happy, not in looting them. Please don't take it badly if I say that until now your life has been based on self-interest, indulgence and pleasure. God has frustrated those ambitions and opened a way to a higher and purer life. If the process involves some hardship, then welcome it. Why consider it a tragedy? Why not see it as a chance to fight injustice? To my mind it is far better to suffer than to cause suffering. If we can find our souls by losing our fortune, that's not too high a price to pay. Have you forgotten so soon the pride and excitement of battling for justice.* Ibid., p.359.
II

CHANGES IN RURAL SOCIETY

(A) CHANGING ATTITUDE TO TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES

During the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the traditional institutions and values were in a state of flux. Many of them were under severe strain. Premchand's works could not but be sensitive to this issue. Premchand's works give fascinating insights into how the traditional values around which the joint-families existed and functioned underwent changes in rural India. Some of his short stories and novel like "Bare Ghar Ki Beti" ("Rich daughter-in-law"), Premasheeram and Godan revolve around this question.

Premchand's main concern was to demonstrate how the values on which joint-families existed were becoming anachronistic in the changing social and economic situation in the
country. While generation after generation lived to sustain the Maryada of the family, the new generation steeped in new ideas and influenced by their changing social needs did not hold it as sacrosanct. 113

Premasharam is a good example of this conflict and how it ends up in the disintegration of the family. Premchand brings out this through a fascinating portrayal of contrasting attitudes of Gyanshankar and Prabheshankar. The head of the family, Prabheshankar, is a staunch advocate of the Maryada of the family and has spent his entire life in maintaining it. His concept of the Maryada was a mixture of several things: an emotional

113. For an idea how the family organisation and marriage system were in flux during colonial period, in Kerala, see K.N. Panikkar, "Land Control, Ideology And Reform : A Study of the Changes In Family Organisation And Marriage System in Kerala" Indian Historical Review, Vol.IV, No.1, 1977, pp.30-46 and Kathleen Gough and David M. Schneider (ed), Matrilincal Kinship, Berkeley; California, 1962.
and sentimental adherence to the honour of the family and a feudal-Paternalistic attitude towards the tenants and other adherents. 114 Prabhashankar's vision is limited by the considerations of this maryada and his life attitudes are ordered for its maintenance. In a way, he lives in a world of his own, removed from the changing realities of the society. Obviously, he is committed to the preservation of the family, for the family symbolised the ideal for him.

Gyanshankar, on the other hand, is the product of the new system of education and is keen on taking advantage of the available opportunities. He is ambitious and is intent on

114. Prabhashankar believed in the values of obligation, of charity and of the open door to the needy neighbour. Property in his eyes was a means of protecting the maryada. As Premchand comments "He could even give up his life to protect the 'prestige of the family'. He had that much love for honour that he could starve himself but would consider his good luck to welcome a guest! But alas! this tradition has flown away from the country!..." Premasharam, op.cit., p.216. Also see p.377.
becoming a Taluqdar. He does not look at the family with the sentimental veneer of maryada but from the point of view of economic advantage and viability. Is it advantageous for him to be a member of a family, the expenses of which is shared by several others? The ability to raise this question denotes the ability to overcome the ideology of joint-family which demanded sacrifice and adjustment. Premchand has caught the nuances of this ability and has admirably brought it out through several incidents.115

115. Gyaneshanker has discarded the age old practice of helping the tenants in distress or on the occasion of marriages etc. On this issue he picks up quarrel with his uncle, Prabhashankar, who adopts a paternalist attitude to the tenants.

Also, see the story, “Sabhayata Ka Rahasey” ("Secret of culture", Mansarovar, Vol.IV, pp. 197-204) in which the younger generation of the landlord stops to celebrate the festival of Janamashtimi. He has stopped the age-old paternalist attitude to his tenants, as he himself explains:

"Oh, it was a great non-sense. There is a marriage anywhere in the town or village and it is I who have to pay for the fuel. This tradition lasted for generations together. Was it foolish or not on the part of my father who had even to purchase trees from others to observe this custom. I stopped the issue of fuel wood immediately. People raised a hue and cry. But should I listen to others' cries or watch my own interests? The fuel wood alone makes an annual saving of Rs.500/- now. Today nobody dares to pester me with such demands."
Gyanshankar is an advocate of the individual's freedom of thought and action which was constrained by _maryada_. He says to his uncle:

You will bow yourself in the face of any difficulty out of fear of public censure while I give precedence to my freedom of thought than to public opinion and do not care for the latter at all where my freedom of thought is concerned...The very basis of your decency is suicidal. In your house even if there is nothing to eat, you would give a warm reception to a guest though you have to burden yourself with a debt. I would keep away such a guest from my house.116

In spite of the contrast thus provided, Gyanshankar has not been drawn as an ideal character representing the new values and interminably fighting the old. Instead, he vacillates between the two. He is not able to liberate himself entirely from the traditional consciousness.117 He is like a pendulum swinging between the two opposite value systems.

116. _Premesharam, op. cit._ p.46.
117. _Ibid_, p.46.
Premchand's sense of reality is remarkable here. He is conscious of the struggle inherent in such situations and therefore does not create ideal stereotypes. As Raymond Williams has pointed out:

...many old forms, old practices and old ways of feeling survived into periods in which the general direction of new development was clear and decisive.118

Premchand's sympathy is with "the general direction of new development." He clearly indicates how the historically dying concept of maryada has no place in a society dominated by cash-nexus.119

There is a growing conflict between Prabhasankar's concept of maryada and the social reality surrounding him. The process of narrative goes on to undermine or question his idea of maryada.

119. In fact the dying of this old order is symbolised by the type of images that Premchand has used while giving the physical description of the house of the landlord. He uses images of sickness, of old tattered objects etc., Premasharam, op.cit. pp.12-13.
Premchand depicts in the novel how Prabhashankar responds subjectively to the objective situation existing in the society, i.e., the relationship between the self-conception and the lived reality. In Prabhashankar the desire of self and the claims of society frequently come into conflict. He feels these contradictory pressures operating on him. Prabhashankar tries to sustain himself against these forces that threaten him and at the same time he adjusts himself to what objectively exists. He is both a subject that wills and an object which is controlled and restricted by environment. He tries to dissuade Gyanshankar from breaking the joint-family with the arguments of marvada, but ultimately has to compromise with the reality and throughout the novel he suffers the pangs of separation. In spite of Gyanshankar's callousness and indifference he helps him in times of difficulty or distress. While on the other hand Gyanshankar deserts
his uncle and his family whenever they are in trouble. Prabhashankar had never been to a police-station, or a court because it is against the *maryada* of his family. But when his elder nephew, Premashankar, is imprisoned he breaks this code and flatters even the petty officials to get his nephew released from jail. The comic treatment of Prabhashankar and the ridiculousness of his hopes reveals Premchand's consciousness that his old world is no longer viable.

(B) **PEASANTS' ATTACHEMENT TO LAND**

Premchand captured with extraordinary sensitiveness and insight the tension between town and village around the question of peasants' attachment to land on the one hand and their reluctance to become workers on the other. Thus in "Balidan" Premchand shows how Girdhari is
emotionally attached to his fields:

The fields were a part of Girdhari's life. Every inch of that soil was identified with his blood, and every particle of that earth was saturated with his sweat. Each one of the fields was named, and these names came to the tip of his tongue in the same manner as did the names of his three children: one was 'twenty-four hundred', another 'twenty-two hundred', a third one the 'irrigated one', and another one 'the shallow one'. The very mention of these names meant a picture of these fields in his mind's eye. He spoke of fields as if they were animate objects which shared his joys and sorrows. His hopes and aspirations, his dreams, his castles in the air were all built on the foundations of these fields. Without the fields, he could not imagine the purpose of life. 120

The peasants are conscious of the fact that land is not enough to feed them and their families and though at the brink of starvation they would not give up the land. 121 It is because


121. As Hori in Godan says to his son Gobar "...What do we get out of our land? Not even an anna a day a piece. A servant making ten rupees a month eats and dresses better than we do. But we don't give up our field. And we still have our prestige to uphold. There is a kind of dignity in farming that is n't found in working for someone else." Op.cit, p.30.
the land is the symbol of status in the rural society. Thus Damadi in "Sabhayata Ka Rahasay" has just six bighas of land but he has to support an equal number of dependents on it. His two sons, two daughters and wife keep themselves busy in the farm but even then they do not make both ends meet. How can this much land make them rich. "If all of them had started doing manual labour they would have earned sufficiently to live in comfort," comments Premchand, "but then a part-time farmer could not stomach the insult of being a manual labourer."\(^{122}\) The family has kept two oxen to escape such ignominy. Damadi is working as a chaprasi on daily wages in a government department. A major share of his wages is spent on feeding the bullocks. But they bear all these hardships rather than leaving the profession of a farmer to become a labourer. "Can a labourer, even though he earns a rupee a day", comments Premchand "have the prestige of a farmer? It is not bad to

\(^{122}\) Mansarovar, Vol.IV, p.199.
earn something through manual labour while being a peasant. The oxen yoked at the threshold protect the prestige. But once the oxen are sold away, there is no place for a farmer to hide his face from shame. Damadi does not possess warm clothing for winter and his employer, Rai Sahib questions him:

"Why are you shivering? Why don't you get yourself clothes?

Damadi: Sir, I don't have enough to eat. How can I have clothes for myself?

Rai Sahib: Why don't you sell away your oxen?

Damadi: Sir, I won't be able to face my biradari. Nobody will accept my daughter in marriage. I will be ousted from the hearth and home.

Rai Sahib: These very idioticities bring ruin to you people. It is a sin to have pity on men like you.

To retain this prestige, this status symbol, Damadi, one day, steals fodder for livestock at night from a field in order to feed his famished bullocks, is apprehended by a police constable and is put behind the bars.

123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
The question arises why should land be so important to one’s status? What is the social significance of owning the land? We have already discussed above the question of the land as a status symbol. But this symbol is governed by economic factors. In an agricultural setting, land is the major commodity for establishing relationships of continuing dependency. Thus in a family which controls land would control in part the lives of those who ultimately depend for their survival on that land—agricultural labourers, artisans, such as blacksmiths, carpenters and washermen and any who trade their services for grain. Thus when Girdhari’s land goes out of his hands he wails over the fact that now since he is no longer a cultivator, “the barber, the carpenter, the potter, the priest, the bhat and the watchman” all of whom were indebted to him, will no longer give him respect.125 Hitherto he was a householder, was counted among the respectable of the village and “though he was

125. op. cit.
not a panch he had a right to express his views on all matters affecting the village and be heard. But now, thinks Girdhari, he has forfeited "the right to sit in the ranks of the respectable to express himself in disputes between villagers." Though Girdhari has not yet taken to labour he takes it for granted that he has fallen in the eyes of all. The day his bullocks are sold away to pay off the debts, Girdhari departs from this world for ever.

126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. While handing over the bullocks Girdhari puts his head on the neck of the bullock and cries bitterly. Premchand comments "He was like a bride who, while leaving for the husband's home, clings to the feet of her parents. He would not leave the bullocks and cling to them like a drowning man holding on to a straw. Ibid, p.44. That same night he does not take his dinner. He lay on his bedcot wide awake that night and in the morning he leaves his home and dies."
Thus the attachment to land based on both economic and psychological factors prevented the peasants from becoming labourers. But Premchand possessed as he was with realistic imagination depicted the tension within the peasants' psyche to stick to the land on the one hand and how harsh economic realities that force them to become labourers on the other. Thus Hori in Godan in spite of his persistent struggle to remain attached to his land, is forced by harsh and cruel economic realities, to become a wage labourer. He takes to working for a road contractor with the aim of accumulating sufficient money to wrestle free his land from the clutches of the money-lenders. Hori's death in this futile enterprise symbolises the death of the old type of peasant and village utopia.

130. The attachment to land applies even to non-cultivating rural folks. Bechu, in "Lokmat Ka Saman" (Mansarovar, Vol.VII, pp.280-288) is an honest, hardworking washerman, yet he is not able to earn enough for both ends meet. Though he is oppressed by karinda and is also forced to do begar yet he is not willing to migrate to the city because he is emotionally attached to the village.
The futility of the village utopia and the values held by the older generations is explained by Premchand by contrasting this with the attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of the younger generation. This is embodied in the persons of Gobar in *Godan* and Girdhari's son in "Balidan". Gobar has developed critical consciousness toward his oppressors. He understands the hypocrisy of Rai Saheb, the taluqdar and tears his mask away. As opposed to Hori's views Gobar is of the opinion that God creates

131. When Hori defends Rai Saheb and argues "Even now the master spends four hours a day singing hymns to God." Gobar questions him "whose labour supports that hymn-singing and charity-giving?" and replies Hori "His own, of course." Gobar, then exposes the real face behind Rai Saheb's mask: "Oh no - the work of farmers and labourers. But he has trouble digesting that sinful money. That's why he has to give out charity and sing hymns to God. I'd like to see him naked and hungry and still singing hymns. If I could get two square meals a day I wouldn't mind reciting the names of God day and night myself. One day in the fields hoeing sugarcane and all his piety would be forgotten." *Op.cit.* p.31.
everyone equal and the inequality is man-made. Thus Gobar's attempt is a struggle to overcome the prevalent ideology.

To Gobar and Girdhar's son "farming is nothing but a waste of man's life". Therefore, they do not harbour any false illusions about land and thus do not have any scruples in becoming a labourer. There is a comparative prosperity in the house. But, despite this prosperity, Girdhari's son "commands little respect in the village. He is a mere 'labourer'. It does make a difference in the status of his mother, too. Subhagi's pride and aggressiveness is gone. She becomes a "dog outside its beat". She neither appears in the Panchayat meetings nor holds durbars. Her visits to the neighbours come to an end. She is now a mere mother of a "labourer".

132. Ibid.
133. Thus Girdhar's son now "puts on a shirt and a British made shoe. Vegetables are cooked in the house twice a day. The family now eats wheat instead of jawar". p.46.
(c) PEASANTS MIGRATION TO CITY AND ITS IMPACT ON HIS MIND

Gobar in *Godan* takes the city in search for work. He is under the illusion that the city affords better prosperity as illustrated in delightful fancies revealed in by Gobar on his way to the city of Lucknow:

He had heard that labourers in the city were earning five or six annas a day. If he could make six annas a day and live on one anna, he'd be saving five, which would add up to ten rupees a month, or a hundred and a quarter in a year. If he came back with a purseful like that, no one would dare say anything against him. Those Datasdins and Patashwaris would fawn over him, and Jhuniya would burst with pride... of course people in the village would sneer at him for doing common labour. Let them sneer. That kind of work was no sin... This farming was nothing but a waste of man's life. First of all he'd buy a good Western cow, one that gave four or five quarts of milk a day, and then he'd tell his father to look after her, bringing the old man happiness both in this world and the next...134

Behind the consciousness of Gobar is working the ethics of bourgeois society or the myths engendered by bourgeois society, that is "Hard work

134. *Godan*, op.cit, p.166.
pays", "thriftiness" etc. 135 Though all these illusions harboured by Gobar are shattered to pieces when he actually observes the city life and himself experiences it yet the city life brings about a transformation in his world outlook. The city life does accentuate Gobar's growing consciousness of the outside world. He has "seen something of the world and has begun to understand its ways."136 By attending some meetings of the Congress Party he comes "to know something about politics" and begins to understand the concepts of nation and social class. He no longer has respect for outmoded

135. Also see Premasharam where Gyanashankar while he is the manager of the estate owned by Gayatri, by virtue of these ethics is able to raise a huge profit for the owner.

social conventions nor does he care now for public criticism. 137

What is the attitude of Gobar, the migrant, towards his former social group? When Gobar pays a visit to his village we find that the relationship between his social values and that of his parents and other villagers undergoes

137. Premchand comments "...Attending the Council meetings almost daily had built up his self-confidence. The thing which had made him hide out in his place far from home or rather much worse things — went on all the time here, and no one ran away." Ibid, pp.246-247.

The question arises: does Gobar learn radicalism when he comes to the city or was there already a potentiality within him of developing a critical consciousness while he was in the village. Here we may refer to the remarks made by Raymond Williams, regarding migration of rural people to the city as depicted in English Literature:

"...The displaced labourers and craftsmen and small farmers did not learn radicalism when they came to the cities. They learned, in altering conditions, new kinds of organisation, new directing ideas, which confirmed and extended a long spirit of bitterness, independence, and aspiration..." — Country and City, op.cit, pp.270-271.
a change. This relationship is manifested even in the type of language Gobar uses. His dialect now is full of legal terminology.

Gobar's behaviour with the village elders reveals his feeling of superiority to them. Most of the village elders are usurers. When all of them come to know that Gobar has been able to earn money much more than what they were able to extract from their clients even with so much cruelty and oppression, they, at once, pay respect to him and even go to the extent of flattering him. But Gobar's attitude towards them is overbearing. He comes to know that Hori has been fined just because he gave shelter to his daughter-in-law, he takes each village elder to task and ridicules them and exposes their character and their dealings in a farcical drama. He knows that it is money that "runs the world" and if one has money "there is no problem about caste or social approval."138

While talking to moneylenders and even to his father, he often uses terms like law, court, suit etc. He opposes his father's standards of justice and virtue and on this issue he picks up a quarrel with his father as well as with money-lenders. 139

139. Ibid, See pp. 268–280.

When Datadin comes to Hori's house to remind him to work for him at his land, Gobar lashes at Datadin. This makes the latter furious and he claims his money as well as his interest of one anna on the rupee. Gobar takes him to task: "We will give you one per cent a month, not a cowrie more. If that suits you, you can have it. Otherwise, take the matter to the court. One per cent interest every month is plenty." Datadin then turns to Hori "...I am a brahman, and there will be no place for you if you swindle away my money. Very well, I will write off the seventy also, and I would not even go to court". This has a desired effect on Hori and "a surge of conscience" sweeps through his heart. How can he hold back the money of a brahman and he runs after Datadin and clutches his feet and promises him to pay him back every cowrie. When Datadin departs Gobar looks at his father contemptuously. "So you want to appease your God! It is people like you who have spoiled them. He gave his thirty rupees. So now he will collect two hundred, and top of that give you a telling off, get you to work for him, and keep you serving away until he has killed you!" But Hori defends the rightness of his position. "We must not lose our integrity, son. Every man is responsible for his own actions..." Ibid, p. 232.
In spite of Gobar's radicalism, the city has left its negative mark on Gobar's outlook. Now his social values are more governed by money. This affects his relationship with his parents also. He tells Hori, indignantly that he has not "taken up life in a strange city just to keep you being robbed at my own expense." He decides to migrate to city for good along with Jhuniya and the baby. Dhaniya expresses her anxiety about Jhuniya and the baby. Gobar rejoins "the world is a selfish place", and one can get a friend by just writing off a four-pice debt. If you are broken, even your parents do not bother about you." This snub plunges Dhaniya in deep grief and a wave of resentment.

140. Ibid, p.276.
141. He tells Dhaniya "What could I do sitting around here, work and die. What else is there to do here? Any one who has a little brain and is not afraid of work will never starve in the city. But brains are no use at all here..." Ibid, p.258.
sweeps through her. "So you consider even your parents among those who love you for your money" she asks her worldly wise son. Gobar unmoved as ever, replies in the affirmative. A family feud ensues first between the son and mother and then between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law. It culminates in a final break between Gobar and his parents. Dhaniya characteristically blames Jhuniya for this rift. Gobar takes away his wife Jhuniya and the baby to the city. And when, Dhaniya does not hear about their well-being for months together, she curses poor Jhuniya for her waywardness.

143. "Obviously Jhuniya must be behind all this trouble-sitting back and poisoning his mind. She was getting no chance here to deck herself out and lead a gay life and there was always some work to be done around the house. There, she had have money, and she could enjoy herself, eat in style, dressing in style, and going to sleep in without care in the world..." *Ibid*, p.278.

144. "...The witch had come and smashed her mansion of gold into the dust, while Gobar never even answered back to the woman. That wretched widow had won him over and taken him away. No telling what tune she had have him dancing to there..." *Ibid*, p.299.
Hori tries to console her by rationalising the stony silence of their son as an outcome of the city life\(^\text{145}\) and the ways of the world\(^\text{146}\).

\begin{enumerate}
\item \(\ldots\) Coming in contact with the city has changed the boy's outlook. Why do not you realize that?\textit{ Ibid.}, p.297. \(^\text{145}\)
\item \(\ldots\) And even if the girl did lure Gobar away, why are you so worked up? He is only doing what the whole world does. He has his own family now. Why should he bring his misery on himself for our sake? Why should he take our burden on his head? \textit{Ibid.}, p.298. \(^\text{146}\)
\end{enumerate}
Despite his reservations about capitalist culture, Premchand, as a realist, did not advocate peasantophilism, anti-urbanism and anti-industrialism. The reversion to the traditional values or in other words the logic of 'retrospective radicalism' was a device to make a critique of capitalist industrialization and an alternative to non-capitalist development along socialist lines. The myth of a happier and more natural past was used as a stick to beat the present. More importantly, he saw the past an embryo of socialist development. The nostalgia of that past furnished an adequate revolutionary stimulus to Premchand. True, he glossed over the tensions and conflicts between the social groups in ancient Indian society and stood to the concept of 'people' which virtually stands outside the class divisions of society. But all societies retain certain 'popular traditions' and these are used by different classes and political forces for various purposes. Premchand drew on these traditions from the perspective of dominated classes and not of dominant classes.