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Title: A Critical Evaluation of Premchand's Non-fictional Writings

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Research Findings:

Present thesis seeks to study Premchand as a literary-cultural critic and a thinker by critically interrogating his selected non-fictional works in a coherent way and examine how the hitherto available reception of Premchand which is largely based on his fictional writings can be evolved further. It addresses a seminal question whether he can be studied as an accomplished editor and journalist of his times. This aspect of Premchandian scholarship is ignored in most of the critical discourses on Premchand.

Ruminating on this aspect, present thesis attempts to study the interconnections between the varieties of non-fiction Premchand wrote ranging from letters to articles, essays, editorials, book reviews, translations, biography, memoirs etc and the purpose and politics of writing multiple varieties of genres. The enquiries and curiosities raised by him have been further understood keeping his purpose of writing non-fiction in mind and why he took it as a 'mission' which must be carried forward and fulfilled. This study also enquires questions like how does he evolve as a writer of non-fiction? What was his quest behind writing nonfictional prose?

Can Premchand's non-fictional writings be treated as radical departure from his fictional works? Or it is just a complimentary, or an extension to his literary creations? This thesis undertakes to examine all these questions for exploration and connect and study in the light of larger questions that Premchand was attempting to address. Through a cross fertilization of journalistic and literary aesthetic interpretation, I seek to enhance our existing understanding of Premchand's evolution as a classic writer of his times.

A close reading of Premchandian non-fiction shows that he challenged the colonial, imperialist, and at times western propaganda of undermining the socio-cultural aspects of India. That is why his non-fictional works in their individual capacity becomes a befitting reply to the hegemonic colonial discourses that were being circulated through several 'ideological apparatuses' by British Raj. At the same time these discursive writings create an alternative discourse, a parallel line of thinking based on and observed from the perception of common masses, the majority which of course meant peasants, labourers and other marginals of the time. Each and every policy of British government is judged on the basis how these would be going to impact the common masses. And that's a huge shift in the very genre of Hindi journalism and non-fictional prose.