

**INDIAN WOMEN OF VALOUR: MUNSHI PREMCHAND'S DHANIA AND THAKAZHI SIVASANKARA PILLAI'S CHIRUTHA**

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**Abstract**

*In the contemporary era of globalization, scientific and technological advancements, Indian writing in English has been gaining momentum and numerous branches have emerged hitherto. Various novels have had women as central and powerful characters. The world of novel writing has seen a burgeoning focus on the predicament of women and their genuine aspirations for economic autonomy, egalitarianism and freedom. At a time when themes like gender equality and women empowerment were almost unexplored and unthought of, the progressive writers, Munshi Premchand and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai chose to bring about a revolution with their pens mightier than swords. The paper is a voyage through the novels Godan (The Gift of a Cow) and Randidangazhi (Two Measures of Rice) wherein spotlighted are the lead ladies, who possess an undaunted spirit despite being surrounded by utterly hostile conditions. These female protagonists echo the tragic plight of millions of women who crave for an identity and love. They render a glimpse of the pertinent issues related to an average Indian woman. Besides, their life captures unhappiness experienced by the women folk that have even influenced their physical, mental and emotional psyche. The paper attempts to focus on a multitude of issues coming in the ambit of Godan and Randidangazhi such as maternal love, sisterhood, social norms, male entitlement, marital agonies etc. in addition to the greater themes of women empowerment and gender equality. These novels allow to learn about the world of women with all its problems and prospects albeit being simultaneously exhilarating and painful, illuminating and disconcerting. Hence no age and custom can stale the infinite variety of characters created by these two progressive writers for imparting a message that makes a clarion call for humanity.*

**Keywords:** Women, Gender Equality, Realism, Progressive Movement, Agrarian Life, Revolution.

Munshi Premchand and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai are the champions of progressive literary movement in Hindi and Malayalam literature respectively. It is widely acclaimed that they

are trend setters and victors in making the novel a powerful tool of social transformation. The emergence of novel is more or less a social phenomenon than just a literary exercise worked out in isolation. Society enters into history and vice versa with the novel. Their fiction has striking similarities and, in many respect, they are most closely comparable to the 20th century novelists of India. At a time when themes like gender equality and women empowerment were almost unexplored and unthought of, the progressive writers, Munshi Premchand and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai chose to bring about a revolution with their pens mightier than swords. This is lucidly brought out by these writers in their novels. The select novels *Godan* and *Randidangazhi* amidst all geographical differences and distances, stand parallel for the vivid depiction of women folk and their miseries in the evil clutches of the exploiters and feudal landlords. Both the novels have ignited a cult status in Hindi and Malayalam literature with their unrivaled success and individual traits.

In Hindi literature, Premchand stands out as an archetypal figure whose novels depict, with moving realism, the tragic plight of a farmer, struggling with the peculiar hardships on a farm located in the great plains of Northern India. He can indeed be called the first literary exponent of Indian peasantry in new Indian literature. This eminent epoch-making fiction writer imparts a true and authentic picture of Indian village through his last completed novel *Godan*. It forms the climax of Premchand's work as a realistic writer. *Godan*, replete with the chill penury and misery of the peasants in northern parts of India is an unmistakable expression of the spirit of the specific locale and time. It is an imperative document of Premchand's contemporary society with its problems and evils. The Indian farmer who is the soul of this narrative is not aware of his rights and prominence in society. He is contented like a skulking insect in the soil and one day, he becomes victim of some heinous acts done to him by this unpleasant world. The story is set in a small, poverty-ridden village called Belari in Avadh, Uttar Pradesh, during the Pre-independence era. Dhaniam is the devoted wife of the protagonist Hori, an uprighteous and God fearing man. "Hori's supreme ambition is to have a cow at his doorstep. It brightens up a house; and if one could have the *darshan* of a cow in the morning, it would indeed be wonderful" (Gopal 428). Dhaniam is thirty six years old, mother of one son, Gobar, sixteen years old and two daughters, Sona, aged twelve and Rupa, eight. Due to excessive work at home and at field, Dhaniam grows aged than her real age. "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" (Premchand 2).

Dhaniam is a practical woman. During the twenty years of her married life, she fully understands that even if she lives a miserable life, it is impossible to liquidate the debt of the Zamindar. Hori can never forsake dharma and his life is doomed due to his scrupulous adherence to it. Dhaniam on the contrary, raises her voice against this and she does not like her husband to play sycophant and touch the Zamindar's feet. On this matter, she always has differences with her husband. "Her mind would often rebel against such a state of affairs. But a few scoldings from her husband would jolt her back into reality" (2). Though criticized by

the villagers for being sharp-tongued, Dhania continues to stand up for women's, in fact, fundamental human rights. Her acceptance of a low caste pregnant woman Jhuniah, a miserable helpless girl as her daughter-in-law anticipates the decisive role of her as an emancipated peasant woman in the construction of a casteless society. Her maternal affection does not allow her to crucify Jhuniah in a society where the rich and poor are judged by two different moral codes. She criticizes the blind adherence to fake social status and hypocritical show off at the cost of humanity. She announces:

I'm not prepared to sacrifice a young girl's life at the altar of false prestige," she retorted. "I know Jhuniah is not legally married to my son. But he had held her hand in his all the same. How can I turn her out of my house? When the rich commit the same wrong they lose face. The rich may say their prestige is more important than the destruction of an innocent life. I don't care for such prestige. (106)

Dhaniah proves herself to be an emblem of devotion, sacrifice, tolerance, love and patience. She offers shelter to the cobbler woman Seliah with whom Datadin's son, Matadin has clandestine relations. By presenting the generosity of a simple poor village woman Dhaniah in contrast to the deception of religious leaders like Datadin, the author exposes the hypocrisy of brahminic rituals and fake ideals. "But he applied sandal paste on his forehead, recited the holy books, read the Geeta, scrupulously observed the religious rites, and took holy dips in the Ganges to wash away his sins. His *dharma*, therefore, remains untarnished" (106). The novelist, later on, presents a transformed Matadin who is ready to accept Seliah and her son relinquishing his ordained status as a Brahmin.

Having begun with the simple ardent desire of a poor farmer, who struggles hard to glean tiny bits of happiness, *Godan* presents a wide cultural spectrum of Indian life lived by common masses. The women in the village are ill-treated, crushed and ignored to the extreme. Gobardas gets into physical relationship with Jhuniah a widow, and when she gets pregnant, he escapes to Lucknow and Jhuniah is left to suffer alone. Realizing Jhuniah's helplessness, Dhaniah boldly accepts Jhuniah. Punia's husband bangs her head on the ground. Dhaniah reminds Hori how he kept beating her for silly reasons. Thrashing and battering of wives by their husbands was as a common phenomenon. They were treated inhumanly and made to work like animals. Though they worked shoulder to shoulder with men, they were paid very less and expected to work at home and take care of the unpaid labour of family as well. The novel vividly pictures the reality of time showing that for ages men have been the property holders and their women have been nothing but the acknowledged laborers.

Despite all the brutal treatment meted out by their husband, Dhaniah, Jhuniah and Puniah never leave their husbands. They speak of maltreatment of their husbands and even temporarily escape by running to their parental house. Still, their entire universe revolves around their family. They live for and on the wellbeing of families. Dhaniah helps all the women in distress. There is an instance in which Dhaniah provides shelter to Seliah and questions the hypocrisy and exploitation of upper caste. She willingly accommodates and shelters pregnant Seliah, the cobbler's daughter whom Matadin, a Brahmin has impregnated. When, Datadin

asks Dhania that she should not give shelter to this malevolent woman, Jhunia; Dhania publicly holds Matadin culpable for his misdeeds against Selia. Dhania gets distressed by the asymmetry that underlies the social positions of both sexes. In her view:

Men are all alike. No one was upset when Matadin defiled her. Now the samethings happened to him, so what's wrong with that? Doesn't Selia's virtue count as virtue? He takes a chamar woman and then makes out that he's sopious! Harkhu did just the right thing. That's exactly the punishment hoodlums like him deserve. You come home with me Selia. (310)

Dhania is an argumentative lady whereas Hori becomes an easy prey to the despotism, enslavement, injustice and exploitation of the hard-hearted landlords and money-lenders. Dhania proclaims her anger and asks Hori why Matadin did not think of all this before, "First have fun with the girl and then dump her!" (239). In comparison with Hori, Dhania is a more dynamic or energetic character. She resists the agents of colonial 'law and order'; she refuses to pay the police officer who comes to investigate the killing of their cow and who promptly allies herself with the village headmen. The village is thrilled by her defiance. But the village is less thrilled with her resistance to caste laws, which forbid the alliance of her son with Jhunia. Yet she chooses to take into the abandoned Jhunia, "Stay in our house, my daughter. I'll deal with your father and brothers if they come here. You have nothing to fear as long as we are alive" (115). When Jhunia's father Bhola insults and rebukes Hori and Dhania for accepting his daughter and giving her shelter, Dhania retorts:

Look here, Mehto. Dhania spoke as if she meant every word to register on Bhola's heart. "I am not so soft. I'll never do what you ask. We hold Jhunia dearer than our lives. If our bullocks can redeem the honour of your ancestors and restore your lost prestige, take them. I do admit that Jhunia has committed a mistake. When she came to our house, I wanted to drive her off. But she wept- I have a heart- I gave her refuge. You, Mehto, you are an oldman, yet you are not able to control your passions for a woman. How dare you accuse this young girl?" (135)

People labelled Dhania as *Goddess Bhavani*. The minute the inspector handcuffs her husband, she invokes Goddess Bhavani and the goddess comes down into her head to help her with the might, so much so that she breaks the handcuff of her husband in a minute. "She hurled the Inspector to the ground, yanked at his moustache, and sat astride his chest. It was only after much entreaty that she condescended to let him off" (99). Dhania is the outspoken character of this novel. She is supportive of her husband always and in all ways. Although she has been criticized by the villagers for being sharp-tongued, Dhania continues to stand up for her as well as for other women's rights. She is provoked by the public slander faced by Jhunia. Dhania along with Hori, readily accepts her into their home and affirms that she can't commit murder just out of fear of the community. Dhania is, in fact a feminist figure who throws light on patriarchal prejudice that views woman's resistance to violence as a negative act.

Dhaniam epitomizes revolt and protest against tyranny and oppression. She symbolizes the awakening in the peasant class. In Dhaniam, Premchand has created a memorable character in the world of fiction whose each action and speech demonstrates the way a village woman struggles to preserve her family and its meagre possession. She is not confined to her kitchen but works shoulder to shoulder with her husband in the field, at home and also lends strength to the family. She has the primary pride and intelligence of India's women folks. Cow is auspicious wealth of a rural family and her joy brims when the cow arrives in her house. Dhaniam's face sparkled with a youthful radiance.

Let's first mix up a plate of flour and sugar. Poor thing has been walking in the sun. She must be thirsty. You go dig the trough. I'll mix up the food. There used to be a little bell around somewhere. We must find it and tie it around her neck. Dhaniam quickly tore the black border off an old sari and tied it around the cow's neck.(52)

Dhaniam is furious when the cow is killed by Heera and is full of contempt when her husband gives false witness against her even swearing on the son to save his brother in public from the crime of killing a cow. "She is shocked as she had —brought him [Heera] up from childhood like a mother" (89). She decides to teach him a lesson. But Hori starts beating her as he does not want the matter to reach the police. Every time Dhaniam abuses Hori, he hurls a few more blows at her. The villagers come to patch up the quarrel but stay away to watch the fun. Pandit Datadin, the self-appointed veterinary of the village rebukes Hori, "Beating the Lakshmi of the house like this! Has Heera's shadow fallen on you also?" Hori angrily replies, "I won't rest till I set her right. The more I overlook her faults, the more she gets". Dhaniam says with tearful eyes, "I have ruined my whole life for his sake, and this is how he rewards me now"(90). Hori wants to save his brother from punishment but Dhaniam informs the police that Heera killed the cow. Hori bribes the inspector and halts the search of Heera's house. Dhaniam again objects:

"Leave him alone, Gobar. Let him do his worst," Dhaniam said getting bold. "Let him show his mettle. The inspector is also here to watch it. He feels dishonored when they want to search his brother's house. But he feels no shame in beating his own wife before the whole village. Is this the behaviour of an honourable man?"(95)

Dhaniam stands by what she thinks is her *dharma* rather than the traditional principles of the community. She raises her voice against injustice done to her family, much against the wishes of her husband Hori. She even gets the beating from him but does not remain silent against injustice. The public beating of Dhaniam strains the relationship of Hori and Dhaniam. Even Gobar is annoyed and starts avoiding his father. After a few days, Hori falls prey to Malaria and gets bedridden for a month. "How could she nurse grievance against Hori, when the illness had brought him within inches of death? Even at the sight of an enemy in such a condition, her heart would have melted. Hori was after all her husband" (99). Hori is overwhelmed by her sincerity and he even confesses that he was not in his senses.



Giving the minute details of familial relationships marked with numerous challenges, *Godan* presents an elegy of married life. Hori and Dhaniam are not romantic lovers, but Hori has intense admiration for Dhaniam's silent sacrifices she has made for the family. She is praised by Hori as she goes to bed hungry herself and she makes tea and snacks for other women. They have admiration for each other, but its form has changed. Towards the end of the novel, Hori gazes at Dhaniam and tears roll down from the corners of his eyes. He asks for Dhaniam's forgiveness in a tearful expression of his swan song. "Forgive me, Dhaniam, if I've wronged you in any way. I am ready to depart. I have no cow. Don't weep, Dhaniam. The worst is over. Let me die" (338). Dhaniam and Hori represent a common married couple tied lifelong, irrespective of all adverse conditions. Dhaniam brings twenty annas which she has earned from the sale of yarn and gives to the brahmin Datadin in place of a cow. She keeps struggling until the end. The couple in Indian traditional marriages keeps their affection alive in the form of understanding, sympathy and regard for each other. These last words of Dhaniam exemplify her devotion and commitment to Hori.

Dhaniam rose like a machine, went in and brought out twenty annas which she had earned from the sale of yarn. Placing the coins in the icy palm of her husband, she looked at Datadin. "Maharaj, there's neither a cow nor a calf nor any money in the house. This is all the money I have; this is all I can give. Take this in place of the cow." And she collapsed and sank to the ground. (342)

Like Premchand, Thakazhi also brought realism to Malayalam fiction in his own way and championed the cause of the insulted and humiliated segment of a specific regional community with profound sympathy. He saw the scary sides of life and portrayed them widely. Although realism lacked the pomp and hubbubs of the elite strata of society and ivory towers, he exhibited his presence as an artist who is in love with the poor and who hates those who exploit them. His major themes in novels consist of caste segregation, feudal and bureaucratic system, and connection with Hinduism, exploitation of women and lower castes, man-woman relationship and political temper of the times. His early life in the village of Thakazhi had facilitated him to learn from his first-hand personal experiences. His familiarity with the tragedies and comedies disquieting the social fabric of a community, was very much rooted in the place he inhabited but it perpetually progressed through the passage of time. The artistic representation of this phantasmagoric panorama through his fiction is Thakazhi's forte. Being a professional pleader, his real-world experience of handling tenancy disputes gave him acumen of not only the psychology of farmers and farm workers, but also the very materialistic economics of land tenure.

Thakazhi's novel *Randidangazhi* faithfully records the changes taking place in the socio-political set up of Kerala. His fiction shows how it awakens the dormant forces which make people aware of their inherent power to change their living conditions. *Randidangazhi* deals

with the essentials of human character, which assert the powerful resistance to oppression through the individuals and groups; irrespective of the artificial barriers of caste, class and religion. Friendship, love between man and woman, attachment to family, loyalty to the clan, personal ambition and inter-personal relationship, class struggle between the feudal landlords and workers hardly better than the beggars, partisan politics are unfurled with all the skirmishes, pains and promising prospects of a locale, Kuttanad, an integral part of the geo-political map of Kerala. Dr Ayyappa Paniker has rightly appraised *Randidangazhi* thus:

*Randidangazhi* tells the story of the agricultural workers of Kuttanad; the setting is strictly rural, and the problems relate to the conflicts between landowners and landless labourers in the context of a rural economy. The wages are paid in kind; the barter system has not been fully replaced by the monetary system. But both the workers and their employers have to reckon with another factor: the land. Everything turns around that central fact of existence' there is no such factor in the other novel. Land here is basically the rice field; it is not impersonal; in fact, it does not seem to tolerate impersonality. In the course of the novel, however, both the land and the people are apparently moving away from the old rural economy and towards greater impersonality. Meanwhile, life is still rooted in tradition; both the landowners and the labourers are part of that tradition along with the land which is the link between the two. The absence of impersonality makes the tragedy of the workers more painful. (Paniker 90)

The foreground of the novel depicts the triangular relation among Chirutha, the daughter of Kali Parayan and Kunjali, and the two young suitors, Koran and Chathan..Thakazhi initiates the novel by introducing Chirutha, the heroine and affirming her efficiency as a farmer, who deserves any amount of dowry either in grain or money:

That day also there was a man visiting Ettil Thara to see the girl. Hewas the fourth candidate of the month and a native of Neelamperoor.The first of the suitors was ready to accept any demand of theprospective father -in -law in grain or cash. It was no wonder that young suitors came flocking to ask forChirutha's hand. She was a real darling, an excellent worker and inthe pink of health.

In weeding and transplanting -in fact in any job in the paddy field - she was unrivalled.Not only that. There wasn't a Paraya lass in thewhole village who was a match for her in the art of reaping. Sickles inhand she would enter the field at daybreak and not before threshingtime in the evening would she lift herself up. One could then see thelovely sheaves lying in a double row on either side of her.She was as efficient in farm work as she in housekeeping. Lucky wouldbe the man who got her as his wife for his family would never knowstarvationAs young men began to queue up to seek his daughter's hand, thefather was convinced that she was worth something. He could get anyprice he wanted, he thought.(9)

Chirutha had the fame of being an excellent farm hand, and therefore her father was so obstinate in demanding a huge amount as her bride price. When Chathan could not meet her father's demand, the more enterprising Koran gathered the required amount as advance for future services from his big landowner Pushpavelil Ouseph.

The growth of the political consciousness made the farmers aware of their own power, and this made them think of their rights and privileges as citizens as well as workers. The landless agricultural labourers started to form their own organizations to safeguard their rights. Young and intelligent, now getting smarter under the arbitrary treatment of his master, Koran came to be the leader of the new union. It began to make demands on behalf of the workers. Naturally, the big land owners were offended, and Koran became the target of their displeasure. Koran was not allowed to bury his father's dead body where he had lived. This was in retaliation of his union activities. Koran wanted to devote all his time and energy to his organizational works and he began to feel that having a family was an obstacle. Koran becomes increasingly conscious of the need to free himself from his personal and family life and devote his time and energy to the service of the working class. Koran feels guilty of neglecting his wife: "I shouldn't have married you, because you are a problem for me. I always feel that I am neglecting the girl I have married. I am not destined to enjoy the bliss of family life" (96). He expresses his guilt in the words: "It will be hard on me. Having married a girl, would it be right on my part to make her suffer? On that wedding day when there was a quarrel, I ought to have given it up and gone away. In that case someone else would have married you and you would have been happy" (89). Koran comes to know that as an active member of the union, he may have to face a lot of hazards; he may have to die or go to jail. Therefore, he feels that he must entrust his wife to the care of someone else. Then, he may feel free to engage himself in the struggle. Despite his intense love for his wife, his decision to leave Chirutha to Chathan, who was once his rival for her hand, is a supreme act of sacrifice for the sake of revolution. Pillai thus displays his hero's total, selfless dedication to the workers cause through Koran's decision of breaking away from his wife who has been everything to him. Chirutha, on the contrary, gives complete support to Koran's full-time political work, because she knows it could be one of the ways to strengthen her husband's commitment to the worker's cause. She wishes to cooperate and indirectly contribute to the upcoming social change. There is an instance in the novel that depicts Chirutha's outspoken and sensible nature. Koran does not like even a single grain getting wasted. At the time of reaping, a few grains fall from a worker woman's hand out of carelessness. Koran enters into a verbal fight with her on this issue. The infuriated Koran approaches the lady with a sickle. Chirutha enters and holds his hand:

Chirutha asked:

"Are you mad?"

"How arrogant she is when I asked her not to throw or waste the grain?"



Chirutha was capable of taking him away from this scene. She took him to the place where she was reaping the grain. She asked in a rebuking manner.

“Have you lost your consciousness on seeing the grain?”

Koran was enlightened by her query. He even felt that his enthusiasm has gone beyond the limits. He was not ready to accept that his approach was not right. He asked.

“Give something to eat if you have.”

He took betel leaves from her. Chirutha asked

“Have you have worked in this land last year also? Why are you exasperated?”

“I have taken effort to reap and the grain has to be taken without letting it fall.”

“So, what? Whosoever has reaped in the field knows very well that grain will fall naturally while reaping.”

Koran could not defend her argument. He could not utter anything. (55)

Although Chirutha was ready to let Koran do whatever he liked, they were both apprehensive of the unscrupulous nature of his master’s son, Chacko. One night, when Koran was out on his rounds, Chacko went to their hut where Chirutha was alone. As soon as he attempted to molest her, Koran turned up all of a sudden and caught Chacko red handed. In the ensuing scuffle Chacko died. Koran was sentenced to imprisonment for fifteen years owing to this.

The more the peasants are suppressed, the more they rise against their opponents. Once they have developed the class consciousness and a sense of solidarity, they cease to have any loyalty to their masters. When the public meetings and processions are banned, the Union decides to defy the ban; the workers’ struggle is seen to reach a significant stage. The entire working class stood up to this crisis. The whole state was awakened; it would not be a trivial local event. In all probability it would become a memorable event in the history of the land. The victims of repression were mobilizing their forces. They engaged themselves in a life and death struggle and thousands of workers lay down their lives for the noble cause of social revolution, when the police fired at their huge demonstration in Padachal. Thakazhi describes the massacre of Padachal portraying in parallel Chirutha giving birth to Koran’s son in a hut. Juxtaposing both the events, and presenting them as taking place simultaneously, Pillai makes the child’s birth symbolic of the birth of Revolution. The whole description is full of symbolic overtones. “Thence, from Padachal, came the deafening noise of continuous firing and the people shouting slogans. Thence too, the pangs of birth or of destruction” (Pillai 107). It is the ‘birth’ of Revolution and the ‘destruction’ of a capitalist structure. This is indicated through the author’s comments at the end of the novel about the growth of the struggle. The novel ends on a happy note with Koran returning from jail and getting united with his wife and son, Veluttha, who shouts “Land to the Tillers” in response to the slogans heard from the distance: “Long live revolution!”, “Long live the Union!” (116).

When Koran reunites with his wife and son, he asks Chathan how many kids he has. Tears roll down from Chathan's eyes while responding he has none. Chathan looks back all of a sudden hearing a voice addressing 'uncle'. Chathan tells Velutha to see his Father. "Velutha looks at him. This is his Father who was imprisoned. Koran beckons and Velutha falls in his embrace" (116). Chathan holds Chirutha's hands and hands her over to Koran with an extraordinary sense of sanctity, dignity and morality. Chirutha falls into Koran's body saying "we were like brother and sister"(116). Thakazhi through the mouthpiece raises a question to the readers if one man's woman could be transferred to another man. This question stands as a testimony of Chirutha's chastity and loyalty to her husband. Chirutha reiterates the fact that the values of human relations cannot be weighed with the same yardstick as used for measuring materialistic aspects of life.

A wave of revolution in the zeitgeist regarding femininity is apparent in these novels. The greatness of Premchand and Thakazhi lies in the fact that their writings embody social purpose and social criticism rather than mere entertainment. The novel's concern for the common life lived by the women folk of Northern and Southern India with an artistic juxtaposition of socio-political transition taking place on their outlook is explicitly manifested through the spokespersons of Dhaniam and Chirutha. They are the wives of farmers who try hard to make their both ends meet. Although they are not educated, they boldly raise their voice against all inhuman and heinous acts. Through their respective elaborate and compact style of depiction, both Premchand and Thakazhi succeeded in depicting these women of valour. The position of a woman in village patriarchy is still administered by defining factors of caste, class, gender and religion. It is difficult to alter the state of women unless a revision in the masculine attitude of the society is altered. The time is ripe when one considers woman as equal to man; acknowledge her dignity; appreciate her abilities and accept the righteousness due to her. Only then it is conceivable that the woman can be called empowered in the true sense of the term. Dhaniam and Chirutha exhort the need of a social revolution in order to get rid of the socio-political malaise. Premchand and Thakazhi believed their creative endeavors could be an effective instrument for social transformation. They inaugurate a new epoch in Hindi Literature and Malayalam literature respectively. They uphold human dignity and assert that these wretches are also human. They humanize the people of marginalized section of society by imparting them feelings, mind, heart and soul in their fictional incarnation. For them, society was the court of law where they plead their case. In their revolutionary novels, Premchand and Thakazhi both present the central theme of social and political transition through an effective portrayal of their female protagonists. Liberating their spirit from social impositions and defined gender role, they become revolutionary. The change that occurs with the heroine's response to the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions is reflected in many micro incidents. These events showcase the historic transition of the woman in Indian society at large. Dhaniam and Chirutha serve as testimony to the revolutionary change in social structure as well as temper. Both the novels resemble in the portrayal of the growth of social and political sensibilities among the

deprived weaker sex. Despite the difference in the level of intensity, these women are seen to move from ignorance to awareness, from passivity and acquiescence to resistance and revolt. They gradually become aware of their position and the need to stand united in the fight for their rights. The message conveyed through the portrayal of revolutionary women in both the novels is same. It reinforces that the success of struggle and political revolution depends upon the empowerment of women too. Both the writers insist that, it is only through the solidarity among the workers strongly backed by the family support extended by their women counterpart can bring any real socio-political change. Their equal participation combined with a vigorous struggle can destroy the existing social order and set up a new socialist system. Both the writers have been at their best in the treatment of the subject of chivalrous Indian women. Thus, the picture of the existence of second sex in Premchand's Uttar Pradesh and Thakazhi's Kuttanad is strikingly similar. The life of the marginalized section may be one of the ruin and misery caused by poverty, exploitation, oppression, debt, forced labour and harassment, yet their heroines working shoulder to shoulder with their male counterpart do not accept defeat. They neither surrender nor do they relinquish their values even in the most troublesome time of their life. In the case of both Premchand and Thakazhi, it is the Indian landscape that gets reflected in the regional colour of Uttar Pradesh and Kuttanad. However, it is the courage, moral strength, cultural values and high spirit of Indian woman of which bring a farmer's wife of northern plain in Premchand's *Godan* to a worker's wife of southern coastal region in Thakazhi's *Randidangazhi*.

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