CHAPTER VIII

Other Novels of the Time: A Short Agrarian Sketch

It was the penmanship of Tarashankar which gave birth of the actual agrarian novels in the realm of Bengali literature and the tradition of the continuation of the same genre has still been in force. Meanwhile, besides the novels which have been discussed in detail in different chapters, there is the presence of such novels in Bengali literature where the descriptions of agrarian life have to some extent come up, and out of which there are some novels which might not have been able to attain the class of an agrarian novel in true sense of the term, and though they failed to present the pictures of land-systems, description of agricultural works and the struggles and cultures associated with the agrarian life of India in an extensive way, yet these factors have been also revealed in these novels. So, we shall try to focus in this chapter in question the particulars pertaining agrarian life contained in few of such novels.

II

There have been lots of complexities and oppositions right from the beginning over the ownership of land in agricultural Bengal and with a view to mitigating those problems, many movements and agitations also took place including many reformative measures for land-systems plus the legislation of various laws on experimental basis. Incidentally, the writers of Bengal have
Bandyopadhyay, Manik Bandyopadhyay, Samaresh Basu, Amiyabhusan Mazumdar, Narayan Gangopadhyay down to many other writers of the present time. But so far the description of the agrarian life is concerned, Sarojkumar Raychoudhury (1903-1972) has made an exception in this regard. We can see the reflection of a different face of the agrarian life in his writings. Sarojkumar, contemporary with Tarashankar, appeared in a billowy atmosphere of Kallol, however, even being a writer of Kallol age, there is not so much influence of the age in his novels. Achintya Kumar Sengupta, another writer of Kallol age wrote about Sarojkumar:

The comment is well justified. Sarojkumar has portrayed the story of rural life with a humanistic outlook and what he wrote was everything from the intense urge of heart and soul and no theory of tenet was able to influence him. The greatest works of Sarojkumar are undoubtedly Mayurakshi (1935), Grihapot (1937) and Somlata (1938). This trio was anthologizedly published under the title Natun Fasal. It is Mayurakshi out of the three novels where the accounts of the life of people living by agriculture have been revealed to a larger extent. The story of the life of peasants in the novel stretched out up to the courtyard of a baul (one of a class of Hindu stoical devotees singing songs in a special mode illustrating their doctrine) transcending the familiar compound of a house. Both Haran Mandal, a family farmer, and his wife Binodini of the village Kamalpur remain as the central personages of the story of the novel. It is a small village and all of its inhabitants are farmers by occupation. The novelist has kept us informed:

Binodini happens to be the central character of the novel. Besides the conjugal story of Haran and Binodini, various other short or long episodes of baul Gourhari,
Tarapada, Lalita have got much importance in the novel; but outstripping everything, the picture of agri-oriented human habitation of the rural sector has become prominent. As there has been the wordy-picture in the beginning of the novel about the miserable condition of the peasants due to scanty rainfall, so it, too narrates the belief in myth relating to *Pushkar Megh* and a long description of the folk-belief regarding the marriage of frogs including the description of deplorable plight of the peasants from maximum rainfall. Since the peasants of Bengal depend on rainfall, so both heavy rainfall and shortage of rain seem to be the companion of their life. Haran Mandal is a well-to-do farmer having fifty *bighas* of land and a double sets of ploughs. Though his six wicker corn-bins are filled with paddy, yet he has to remain busy with work. Paddy-field appears to be like his child to him, so he has to go to paddy-field atleast once daily. On the other hand, Binodini despite being a wife of a farmer maintains a different nature in comparison with other women of the village. She is an ill-matched woman in relation to rural life and wants to discover the real nature of her ownself. She does not like to be lost in the diurnal activities of family. So, she even seizing time out of her tight schedules of routinized life has created her lonely dreamland about baul Gourhari. A critic said:

The comment is quite applicable in case of Binodini. Binodini maintains a simple and decent relationship with college-educated, rationalist and atheist Tarapada. He likes both Gourhari’s sister Lalita and Binodini. Lalita is a free woman detached from family and society, and Binodini happens to be the wife of a peasant and mother of two children. While Binodini condemned the illegal relationship and intimacy of Lalita with Tarapada, and in return Tarapada, too pointed out the past life of Binodini based on the information that he learnt from Lalita. However, Tarapada could not stand against the personality of Binodini, rather falling at the feet of Binodini, he begged appology. But a wife of another peasant witnessed the incident with her own eyes, so in consequence, bad name spread out against Binodini. Haran being busy in saving the crops from
excessive rainfall ultimately failed to keep his family in order. Binodini had to desert her home breaking her ties with family. The next phase of Binodini’s life has been described in *Grihakapoti*. Here the flow of life of Binodini got entangled with the story of the life of baul Rasamay and Lalita, and in this regard the novelist has given the descriptions of titbits of the livelihood of the bauls. Even emerging from agricultural society, both Lalita and Rasamay built a new society of a free and unprejudiced relationship. They are not confined to land like the people living by agriculture, nor do they get involved in popular bonds, rather pair like Lalita and Rasamay play the role of someone from the slumber of insensibility) for the agricultural society. Binodini left Kamalpur after deserting her home and then took shelter in their den at Satgaon. At the end of this, Binodini again changing the course of her life had to take shelter in the family of her brother. *Somlata* narrates the episode of the coming back of Binodini in the life of Haran and both Lalita and Rasamay played a major role in the reconciliation of Haran and Binodini.

The picture of peasantry has been revealed following the thread of the story of Haran and Binodini. The separate outlook of the writer can easily be identified in depicting this life. The pictures of the change of the economic scenario and the control and exploitations by zamindars and mahajans that have been depicted in the novels of his contemporary Tarashankar have been left completely untouched by Sarojkumar. The two villages, namely, Satgaon and Kamalpur are under the control of two different zamindars, but the reference of the zamindars is almost nil in the trio. It is only in his novel *Mayurakshi* where the mention of zamindar has been made only one time through the framing of this sentence. The novelist quite consciously refrained from depicting the miserable condition of the peasants belonging to Bengal of post-Permanent Settlement period. The way in which the life of the people living by agriculture has been revealed in this trio deserves to be called of one-dimensional character. The novelist was interested only in highlighting the peaceful, pleasing and agreeable segments of the agrarian life, but the mention of an agri-dependent rural economic aspect has been almost absent from his writings. However,
it is right to say that the agricultural world which he presented in his novel, was not
observed by him from the outside of it, rather he observed it going into the depth of it.
The life of protagonist Binodini in this trio seems to have passed in a zig-zag way like
that of the river Mayurakshi. Though the belief, culture, village partisanship, customs
etc of the agrarian life have been narrated very sincerely, yet it has to be admitted that
the very life of Binodini has turned out to be the focal point of discussion in this trio.

III

Stories of a good of number of Bengali novels have been fabricated about the matters
like the growth of alluvial land on the river-bed and setting up of habitation there and the
beginning of agriculture, and in this regard Tarashankar’s *Kalindi* (1947), Manik
Bandyopadhyay’s *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1938), Advaita Mallabarman’s *Titas Ekti
Nadir Nam* (1956) and Amarendra Ghosh’s *Charkashem* (1949) are worth mentioning
as novels. These novels are actually river-centric ones. The life of fisherman and boatman
has remained as the salient topic of discussion in all other novels except *Kalindi*. But it
is a fact that two different courses of rural life of river-irrigated Bengal are *Halik* and
*Jalik*, that is depending on ploughing and casting nets for catching fish. So, naturally the
description of the agrarian life has been unveiled in the novels.

*Kalindi* covers the period of 1920s when feudalism has been on the wane.
Tarashankar observed the changed face of rural society including aggression by
capitalism. This critical juncture of society has been vividly portrayed in *Kalindi* also.
There are four classes in the novel–zamindar Indra Ray and Rameshwar Chakrabarty,
Satgope-farmers, Santhals and mill owners. All sorts of conflicts, relationships and
hassles amongst the four classes erupted centering the alluvial-land that surfaced in the
river Kalindi. All the coparceners of the multi splintered Ray family have been actively
interested to attain their ownership on the alluvial-land. On the other hand, a few mahajans,
too, have turned out to claimant for the ownership of the alluvial-land. Indra Ray made
an arrangement to distribute the alluvial land in exchange of hefty amount of *selami* (an
irregular fee given to an owner or landlord) and tax in order to settle the Santhal tenants in the alluvial-land and he was firmly determined to do it. But the Santhal tenants are in favour of Rameshwar Chakrabarty as because his father Someshwar Chakrabarty has led the Santhal rebellion, and Rameshwar’s son Ahindra is their favourite Rangababu. On one side of the novel there exists a group of peasants like Ranglal, Nabin, Nani Paul etc. and on the other side of the coin depicts the presence of the Santhals. It is these Santhals who cultivating alluvial-land produce bumper crops and the zamindars son Ahindra has experienced his ascension coming in contact of them. Ahindra stood against two architectures of exploitations that exist in the form of zamindar and mill owners. Holding a sense of avidity for the land of Ranglal, Nabin and others and efforts to allure them—all these things made Ahindra to lose his faith in the zamindari system. He realized:

So he became anxious to save the Santhal peasants:

This ascension of Ahindra has forced the story to move in another direction. Ahindra in the novel wanted to keep himself outside of the circle of landlordship and ownership. The poverty, exploitations, helplessness and the act of surrender of and by the peasants have made the significance of his ascension deeper. Although Ahindra was at last arrested, yet the novelist Tarashankar tried to find out the path of emancipation through him for the exploited souls. We have seen the act of mutual fighting in the novel over the right of the alluvial-land including the encroachment of alluvial-land by the mill owner and even the changes of old methods in the matter of cultivation. Virtually, how the capitalist class replacing the moribund feudalism has firmly established their right has been focussed in this novel. There is mention of the possession of alluvial-land in Advaita Mallabarman’s Titas Ekti Nadir Nam, though the novel was written based on the life of the fishermen and boatmen of Malopada living on the bank of Titas. However, it is a fact that river provides the people living by agriculture elixir of life. Hence, Advaita portrayed the life of farmer along with that of fishermen. We can clearly see the occupational classification
amongst the farmers in the novel. For example, Jobed Ali is a well-to-do farmer but while Karama Ali and Bande Ali work as labourer in his land. The novelist projected the characters in the form of landless Karam Ali and the likes against the portraiture of Jobed Ali and this class of people represented by Karam Ali sacrificing their every dream and desires lend physical labour for the sake of their life and livelihood. So Karam Ali and the like said:

That’s why neither joy nor love has any significance in their life. Advaita in the novel portrayed a real picture of forgery, fraud and exploitations done by the mahajans and businessmen. When the alluvial-land heads up on the bed of Titas, then there starts the tussle between the farmers and the fishermen over the possession of such land and in this fight the farmer get the better of the fishermen. Ramprasad, a headman of the fisherman community, for the protection of the existence of the fishermen, himself was involved in the act of possessing the alluvial-land, but ultimately died. Even Karam Ali, Bande Ali and others moved forward to take possession of alluvial-land, but they had to return empty-handed. The novelist wrote in this connection:

Indra Ray, a character in the novel Kalindi told: and this most popular proverb has got its perfect materialization in the novel entitled *Titās Ekti Nadir Nam*. Virtually the feudal system of producing food is indicated by Advaita. However, Advaita has unmasked an absolute truth in the novel. One day food growers will be turning the wheel of the society removing the food gatherers and that’s why the food gathering fishermen class was lost to the people living by agriculture. We also see a virgin land called Maynadwip in Manik Bandyopadhyay’s *Padma Nadir Majhi* and Hussain Miya one of the noteworthy character of the novel, wanted to make that island fit for human habitation. Hussain Miya by means of his razor-sharp intellect became very favourite to fishermen and boatmen of Ketupur and his intention was to take the young and hard-working fishermen by hook or by crook to Maynadwip with a view to
greening the island by tilling the lifeless land. The view point of Amarendra Ghosh is seen to be different from that of Tarashankar, Advaita or Manik Bandyopadhyay. Amarendra Ghosh’s novel *Charkashem* delineates how a newly formed alluvial-land on the bed of Padma was developed for agriculture and how the low caste farmers and boatmen living in that alluvial-land struggling hard for their life and livelihood was ultimately extincted by the hard blows of femine of ’50. Kashem is the protagonist of the novel, who for the debt of rupees two and a half was in pawn to the house of mahajan. After a few day taking rupees two and half as loan from his *(father’s sister) paid the debt of his father and he himself started dealing in fish independently. Kashem used to dream of a alluvial-land having ninety nine “of” land under the surface of Padma. He dreamt that the land which has got would be fertile one day, and gradually the land will collect alluvial deposit. So he clearly forsees His dream is that the name of the alluvial-land should be Charkashem. But everyone laughs at his dream. The second dream of Kashem is to have a happy married life with the widow Phoolman. This novel is nothing but the narrative of the consequence of the twin dreams of Kashem. We see in the story of the novel that one day the alluvial-land really sprang up and Kashem got the ownership of it. Senses of reservations, jubilation and curiosity germinated within him centering the alluvial-land. Both Hindus and Muslims gradually have built a new colony in the alluvial-land, and Kashem too, successfully materialized his dream marrying Phoolman. The novelist at the fag end of the novel portrayed the hair-raising picture of war and famine. He wrote in his description of the foodless life of the people living in alluvial-land:
Once the alluvial-land of Kashem also went out of existence due to crushing blows of wide-spread famine. There lies a big difference between the novels Charkashem and Kalindi or Padma Nadir Majhi. It is in the novel Kalindi, the song of a zamindar came on front foot to save the Santhal farmers, and so far Padma Nadir Majhi is concerned, Hussain Miya seems to be an other form of a superman to be denizens of Ketupur. So, he might not have understood the matter of building up a new human habitation. Ahindra in the novel Kalindi could have led the down trodden souls, but unfortunately he remained as a half-blossomed character of a political ideology. Again the novel Titas Ekti Nadir Nam, Ananta could have led the fishermen, but he practically did not offer any such leadership, but in this respect Charkashem is indeed an exception.

The owner or protector of Charkashem is such a man who is himself a very ordinary man. He cannot revolt against, no knows how to exploit. Living amid other people and being a part of them, he dreams of a higher life, dream of alluvial-land, dream to live and survive, and dream for a life happen to be the inner force of this novel. The name of the character who transfused this force in to all is Jiban Haldar who appears, as if, to be a spokesman of the philosophy of life of the Leftist Amarendra Ghosh. He said:

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It is in fact the Hindus and Muslims of Charkashem would jointly lay the foundation of this new era. The heartful sympathy and compassion of the writer has come to limelight through the description of the life of this class of people. The writer himself said on some other occasion:

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Hussain Miya as projected in the novel Padma Nadir Majhi also wanted to establish a classless society in Maynadwip. Without thinking of the running issues of principles and corruption, he had an intention of increasing the number of strong and steady persons
there, but on the other hand, Amarendra Ghosh displayed more substantive sagacity arranging facilities for education as well as paying equal importance to temple and mosque.

IV

The ownership of the land was with the state till the Permanent Settlement. A new class of zamindars emerged as a result of the Permanent Settlement who started enjoying the right to the ownership of the land. The newly emerged middleman-class was at the root of all troubles faced by the peasantry. This class of people did not shoulder any responsibilities for agricultural-development. This people with applied different strategies for the collection of revenues from the peasants and thus created havoc all the lies of these poor souls. The tenants wanted freedom from this oppression but it was not that easy. At the juncture of the decadent feudalism and capitalism based on industries the tenants were under compulsion to move to the cities. They did so in order that they may be free from feudalistic oppression as well as it provided them and opportunity to earn hard-cash. The simple and easy-going tenants of the villages turned factory-labourers leaving behind their traditional jobs. In this way a great change came over the agri-based social set-up. The impact of this transition was the strongest in the lives of the peasants. In a good number of Bengali novel, the impact of this multi-dimensional change occupied an important place. The following novels in this regard are worth mentioning: Tarashankar’s Chaitali Ghurni\textsuperscript{15} (1931), Manik Bandyopadhyay’s Chintamani (1946), Darpan (1945), Subodh Ghosh’s Shatakiya (1958), Jarasandha’s Nihsanga Pathik (1972), Samaresh Basu’s Uttaranga (1951) and Jagaddal (1966), Prabhat Dey Sarkar’s Ora Kaj Kare (1964) etc.

Chaitali Ghurni is the first novel of Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay where the matter relating to the transformation of the peasants of Bengal into the class of labourers of factories and industries has been realistically revealed. Tarashankar himself personally observed the flow of social dynamics and he too, witnessed how the happiness, good sense, and human qualities were gradually being destroyed. He also realized that
the owners of mill and those who are slaves of mechanized civilization seem to be the representative of this age. The conflict of Banowari-Karali in *Hansuli Banker Upakatha*\(^{16}\) is practically and actually the conflict of vanishing age and of modern machine age and this changing scenario of rural society has been spotlighted in *Chaitali Ghurni*. The description that the novelist has given at the start of the novel is that of Bengal shorn of her grace, beauty, prosperity and glory:

The village where everybody’s granary was full of paddy, the atmosphere of village which was always charged with the joy of Yatra and festival is now a mere memory of the lost days. Nevertheless, still in such environment with a slim flame of hope Gostha and Damini maintain their life through cultivation. They had a deep love for their land and harvests, yet Gostha, frightened at the enhanced rate of tax of the zamindar and possibility of being tortured for not paying the tax, thought:

So, Gostha was bound to leave the village. Then there followed a fresh course of life in a new environment. The simple and innocent peasant of the village named Gostha was converted into a mill worker. The major part of the novel narrates the life of these workers of mills and factories. A critic wrote about such life:

It is a fact that such worker had to sacrifice the whole lot of their humanness in exchange of bread and butter for their life. Tarashankar’s sense of tenderness and compassion towards the rural life has been revealed in this novel while he juxtaposed the description
of this urban-centric life with simple style of passing one’s life under the rural sky.

The picture of the maturing character of time has been painted in some novels and stories of Manik Bandyopadhyay. Both Tarashankar and Manik almost belong to same period. One is zamindar and non-Communist, while the other is not a zamindar, but a direct member of the Communist Party. However, both of them focussed the sorrows and sufferings of mankind in the domain of literature. Moreover, both of them were able to be sympathetic to those persons of the society who are exploited-harassed-illiterate and clouded with superstitions. So, a critic has rightly said:

The period spanning from 1944-45 to 1951-52 has been most important one in the life of Manik Bandyopadhyay in term of the development of his political consciousness as a novelist. He joined Communist Party in 1944, but he talked of the class-exploitation much before his joining the Party in course of portraying the life of the poor working class people. Besides the stories like *Mati*, *Haraner Natjamai*, *Chhota Bakulpurer Yatri* etc., there are other works too, in the form of novels which deserve to be mentioned here: *Darpan* (1945), *Chintamani* (1946), *Jiyanta* (1950), *Itikathar Parer Katha* (1952) etc. Though the chronological order in the novel *Darpan* does not look clear, yet it may be taken as a fact that time of the story should be either the last part of 30s or the beginning of the 40s. Apart from presenting the picture of the exploited peasants and their struggle in the novel, the novelist, side by side, also delineated the life of urban workers and Santhals wagers. Loknath Dutta is a zamindar of a village but a town-dweller and his son Hiren is a Communist worker. Shashanka, Umapada and Heramba are respectively nayeb of their cutchery manager of a factory and a contractor. There stands two villages namely Jhumuria and Banakhal on one side of the story circle, and on the other side, factories of Kolkata and slum-life. There is one more respective identity of Shashanka and Heramba. Shashanka is a distantly related brother’s son of zamindar Loknath Dutta and Heramba is the (daughter’s of husband) of another zamindar. One of the chief characters of the novel is Bireshwar. Bireshwar is a peasant. When the avaricious and lecherous Heramba without getting help from Bireshwar in
order to manage men for cutting tree, managed men holding out threats to them and
more over, he got Bireshwar into a scrape of a fabricated case. Bireshwar has been
portrayed as a fighting peasant in the real sense of the term. In the long run Bireshwar
dies in an encounter with Heramba. Side by side with the representation of the pictures
of exploitations by zamindars, there are the pictures of Kolkata-based factories, and
of slum areas with a realistic outlook in the novel. Manik in his novel entitled Chintamani
has on the background of world wide war delineated the deplorable plight of the peasants
and workers, their hopes and desires and of their dreams. The economic recession that
was created during the war time jerked the rural areas more heavily and price hikes of
the commodities affected the life of the peasants and workers very seriously. Chintamani,
the central character of the novel had to move toward town in search of her livelihood
and took up the duty of a maid servant in the house of Nilkantha Ghoshal, owner of
Harernam Rice Mill situated in Madhubani region. Many peasants like Gouranga,
Chhidam, Jagu got nonplussed for the want of paddy-seeds. The writer narrated thus:

Besides Nilkantha Ghoshal of Madhubani, two more owners of rice mill taking the
opportunity enhanced the prices of commodities when the market was already so dear.
On the one side of the coin, the picture of the scarcity of seeds enhanced prices of daily
necessities and on the other side, the peasants were at a loss in giving paddy to zamindars
in the form of tax. Manik Bandyopadhyay directly castigated the agriculture department
in course of describing this deadly situation:

The hero of the novel Gouranga alias Gour under such circumstances had to maintain
his family selling milk to the house of Nilkantha Ghoshal. Gouranga’s uncle through
mutation of Gouranga’s name in the official register got the landed property whatever
Gouranga had transferred to his title. The story of the novel came to an end with the
narrative of Chintamani’s acquaintance with the utterly ruined Gouranga and at last through a decision of setting up a family marrying each other, but only the graph of economic crisis shows a upward trend in their life. Though the name of the novel is *Chintamani* but the major part of the novel deals with life of Gouranga. He became a landless labourer from a peasant. There is not any direct description of any movement in the novel, but many problems such as, bitter relation of the peasants with the owners of rice mills, exploitation by village mahajans and problems related to agro-economy have been mentioned in the novel. To be spoken briefly, Manik actually wanted to depict the prevailing scenario of time. A writer of the history of Bengali novel rightly said that Manik perfectly liked to be according to the style of his own political view.

Charuchandra Chakrabarty’s (Jarasandha) novel *Nihsanga Pathik* (1972) was written on the backdrop of the district of Faridpur of Bangladesh. The novel was penned on the portrait of the village life connected with Kaijuri, Moshkhal, Tentuldanga etc. situated on the bank of the river Adiyal Kha. Though the life of the villagers now heavily shattered by the erosion of the turbulent river Adiyal Kha appears to be the main point of description, yet the picture of the changing scenario relating to socio-economic sides has incidently been described in the novel. There are some peasants in the region who are the owners of lots of land. The novelist has mentioned the time pertaining to narrative: At that time the price of jute went up astronomically, so the peasants cultivating Bogi jute, Dewai jute etc. in place of paddy became financially sound. Houses with corrugated iron sheets in lieu of thatched roof were made. There came up the wall made of Muli bamboo in place of Hogla fence. The changing layout of the rural society came under the notice of the crown-jem of the village Shyamacharan. He also noticed the change of sense of social values amongst the simple and illiterate peasants along with their socio-economic changes:
Through this brief description the novelist in passing indicated the position of the peasants in the changing rounds of clock.

Samaresh Basu in his novels narrated about the establishment of jute-mill in India, the history of the emergence of working class people including the facts related to turns that occured in the life of the peasantry. Samaresh Basu in the first phase of his literary came in close contact of labourers and socially lower class people, and so in consequence of it, he reflected the social life of people belonging to lower strata of society in some of his novels. The writer’s novel Uttaranga (1951) has been written on the basis of establishment of jute-mill and the life story of the working class people, and the succeeding part of the same novel is Jagaddal (1966) and the story of which has developed centering Jagaddal-Atpur-Senpada-Bhatpada and Halishahar lying on the eastern part of the Ganges and Chandan Nagar-Chunchuda-Chapadani-Banshbediya etc. on western part of the river. The novelist analyzed in the novel how geographical limit was in jeopardy and side by side with it how the social and sense of human values underwent changes. The time-span on which the story of the novel develops covers from 1860 to 1880-82. The narrative in the seminal part of the novel lets us know the transformation of the leader of Sepoy Mutiny from Hiralal to Lakhindar Bagdi. Moreover the novel Uttaranga also depicts of how the coming of capitalism and machine age slowly but steadily changed the course of village life, and it is in Jagaddal where this very trend of changes bloomed in its full form. The peasants of Bengal owing to impact of Permanent Settlement once violently stood against the zamindars-mahajans and tenure-holder after being continuously crushed by steam-roller of exploitations, likewise, many of them turned towards towns and cities. Many of the farmer of that period changing their own nature of occupation turned out to be mill-worker just to meet the requirements of survival, but the picture projected by the novel Jagaddal is a bit different. The author in the novel has drawn a line of demarcation between old and new generations in term of sense of values. The people of preceeding generation like Hiralal alias Lakhai like to live adhering to age-old sense of values it is the British government but not the zamindar who is considered to be the foremost enemy to Lakhai. On the other hand,
Madhu representing the present generation does not have any respect for sense of values. He humbly knee'd down before the mechanized civilization not only for heartless flogging of wants and scarcity. It is in the parlance of the novelist:

The young boys like Madhu have got maddened at the beckoning of machine and with avarice for easy money and Madhu, Latifa and the son of Lakhai are not obsessed with culture. Loving machine, they have too, become machanical by nature. Madhu said:

Madhu and the likes feel that there lies uncertainty in the cultivation works. The major part of the harvests that are produced go to the granary of the land-lords and mahajans, but so far the mill work is concerned, there is the commitment of income and to have food to one’s heart’s content. So, to them this circle of lords and middle-men seem to more hostile than the English government.

A detailed description of the livelihood of the workers of mills and factories has been given in the novel, moreover the novel is studded with realistic description of how the new set of foreign companies through the setting up of mills and factories changed the face of Bengal. It may be said, that a chronicle of shifting winds relating to social life of rural Bengal is created in the novel. A critic rightly said:

Prabhat Dey Sarkar’s novel Ora Kaj Kare (1964) delineates the history of the uncertain way of the peasants of rural Bengal and at last that of their change of occupation,
and the story of the life of the agricultural labourers of South 24 Parganas is projected. The agriculturer workers like Chandan, Fakir, Mukunda, Shibu of the village Pirpur at the end of the cultivation-tide lead an uncertain life. They go to different place in search of casual work. These people ultimately become the workers of factories being pressed by economic setbacks. Chandan is the chief character of the novel and who after joining the factory gradually turned out to be the leader of the workers and in the long run took part in the workers’ movements. Though not in an extensive fashion, yet we meet with the picture of socio-economic ups and downs of the peasants in the novel.

Subodh Ghosh’s novel *Shatakiya* (1958) too bears the evidence of economic, social and religious exploitations and the backscreen of the novel being the village Madhukupi under Chhotanagpur region of Bihar, where every villager is a temporarily hired labourer, and all of them arc having no land and hearth and home of their own. We see at the very outset of the novel that an Adivasi tenant called Dashu Gharami of this village released from jail. It is the exploitation by the upper class people that worked behind his term of imprisonment. Ray Babu wanted to take away Dashu’s one and a half *bighas* of *chakran* land in order to make a brick-field. Even after lots of threats, Dashu did not agree to lose his possession over the land. When Sarkar Babu with his party came to encroach his land, then Dashu, mad with anger, injured Sarkar Babu hitting with his axe; and for which Dashu was sent to jail. Dashu dreamt of a happy married life in association of his wife Murali, but the beginning of Dashu’s jail-term, once it so happened even the mindset of Murali also changed countering the odd circumstances unceasingly. She deserted Dashu with the hope of a happy life marrying Palus Haldar and accepting Christian belief she was baptized Jehana. After release from the jail, Dashu thought of starting share-cultivation taking again three *bighas* of land, but the departure of Murali from his life, shattered all of his dreams, Dashu realized:  

Meanwhile, the whole lot of scenario of the village changed. The owners of the mills and factories wanted them to be as labourers, and in addition to this, the Christian missionery seizing the opportunity also had an intention of converting them to Christianity and the Hindus wanted to bring them to their own fold. Their family
began to be fragmented due to this triangular pressures. Dukhan Singh even being a member of their caste created a new • • • ••• • •• •, but Dashu could not save his family ignoring the power-politics of the upper class of the society like Dukhan Singh and Lal Babu. This novel of Subodh Ghosh is a pointer to the fact as of how the family of lower class gets fragmented and how the cultural shadow of the upper class and upper caste is cast on it. A critic rightly said:

It is really so. The persons who are powerful in term of money do have the guts of repeatedly changing the arithmetic of family-minded persons like Dashu. There stands just only one wall of difference between the novels of Samaresh Basu and this group of novels, Samaresh Basu showed that the peasants of Bengal voluntarily left works connected with paddy-fields, moreover, they did not have even an iota of fascination for paddy-fields, land and crops. But though other novelists right from Tarashankar highlighted the picture of the socio-economic turns occured in the life of the peasats, yet at the same time they revealed also the intense sense attachment of the peasants towards their village, land, paddy-fields and crops. These novelists exposed that the peasants being helpless with the turns of time were bound to change their occupation. We can observe two sets of mentality, number one, a group of people of the new generation delightfully is becoming part and parcel of the machine age, number two, another group is compelled to accept the machine-age. The novelists in this way arrested the transitional period marking the fall of feudalism and the advent of machine-age by means of their wordy-chains in the Bengali novel.
The agricultural tenants of rural Bengal during 1800s and 1900s primarily became victims of three types of exploitations. One, economic oppression by zamindars, mahajans and indigo-planters, two, physical torture by zamindars and indigo-planters and lastly religious oppression by the missionaries and for all these reasons mass displeasure erupted repeatedly in Bengal. During such period of multiple oppressions, many leading personalities and organisation like Krishak Sabha helped and generated consciousness amongst the peasants in order to make them stand united; and such discontents have made a direct impact in the realm of Bengali literature.

There has been the story of discontents of the peasantry in the novels of Manik Bandyopadhyay, such as Jiyanta (1950), Etikathar Parer Katha (1952) and Nagpash (1953). The story time of the novel Jiyanta happens to be 1925-26, and which was published in 1950, that is, the novelist chronicled the events of 1925-26 in 1950. During that time the Communists wanted to stage fall of Congress through a revolution like the Telengana one, and Manik picked up his plot out of that revolution. When the atmosphere of the whole country was filled with depressions and opportunism after the failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the self-sacrificing young generation became vocal against it. Thus Manik penned the novel Jiyanta basing on this phenomenon. There stands the mafaswal town one side of the story of the novel, and on the other end there is the village Atuli situated a few miles away. The story of mafaswal and village developed centering Prakash Ray alias Paka and Panchu. Paka belongs to an aristocratic family while Panchu is the son of a peasant of a village and staying in the house of one of his relation in town continues his academic education. There he gets acquainted with Paka and ultimately friendship has developed between them. During his stay at Panchu’s house, Paka has become familiar with the life of rural Bengal. Hemanta is the son of a zamindar of this village and for whose oppression and torture the peasants are seized with utter fright and panic-stricken. Hemanta wanted to biologically enjoy the peasant Ganesh Santra’s daughter Dukli. This unwelcome desire of the zamindar Hemanta did not create much trouble in the mind of wretchedly poor Ganesh in exchange of a bellyful of food and little comforts, nor did he consider it in term of any virtue and vice. Manik
But it is Panchu who protested against such injustice meted out by the zamindar. He saved Dukli from the grip of Hemanta and who being beaten by Panchu and his companions fled away to Kolkata by night. But the zamindar Basanta could not accept his defeat by peasants. Many persons of the peasants locality were arrested by police on false charges of dacoity. The novel also depicts the story of oppression by the powerful moneyed class upon the workers of the leather factory of the mafaswal town along with discontentment of the peasants. Besides all these, there has been the references of local politics, nature of the leaders and their ill-feeling to one another, and the spirited protest against all sorts of exploitations by Paka and Panchu and others. The novelist ended the novel showing an amorous relationship between Panchu and Dukli and side by side hinted at the making of a new struggle-minded rural life to be born in future through the delineation of socio-economic struggles of the peasantry well accustomed to rural life. The salient subject-matter of the novel *Etikathar Parer Katha* also happens to be the infighting among the zamindars-mahajans and the peasants. Manik Bandyopadhyay contributed a story entitled *Mati* in a serial form to the issues of *Agrahayan*, *Poush* and *Phalgun* 1353 B.S. and *Baishakh* 1354 B.S. of *Masik Basumati* and when he published *Etikathar Parer Katha* in book form, he added many excerpts from the story *Mati* to it. The story of the novel revolves round Bartala and its adjoining villages. Manik portrayed the zamindar of Bartala as a symbol of ferociousness and harshness and the novel is abundant with many examples of his rendering exploitations upon the tenants and even the instances of oppressions by Rashik mahajan are not lacking in the novel. This novel plays the role of a living evidence as of how much problem-ridden is the life of the peasants even in free India. But it is remarkable in this respect that zamindar’s son Shubha, an England-returned scientist and technologist, stood against his father in the novel. We have also seen in Tarashankar’s novel *Kalindi* that Ahindra by means of his activities and sympathy reached close to the heart of peasants; yet there lies a little difference in both the cases. Ahindra tried to organize the peasants observing their tearful conditions and being exploited in many
ways and he joined the fight for the protection of the rights of the peasants, he considered nothing superior to comfort and ease of the peasants but Shubha wanted to set-up factory for the development of the peasants and behind which his intention of becoming an industrialist worked, yet it has to be admitted that his role heralded a wind of novelty in the novel.

Amiyabhushan Mazumdar’s novel *Gadh Shreekhanda* (1957), too, depicts the outburst of anger of the peasants against the exploitation by the mahajans. The story of the novel has developed centering the villages, namely Budhedanga, Charankashi, Sanikdiyar, Gadh Shreekhanda or Chikandi adjacent to Bandarbigha station situated in the southern part of the district of Pabna (now in Bangladesh). Great wars, famine, communal riot, partition of the country and attainment of independence— all these matters have been included in the body of the novel. One part of the story of the novel deals with Surtun, Fatema, Phultusi and others who even being the members of farmers-family had to maintain their life selling rice in the train during famine time, and the other part is fabricated concerning the zamindars family of Shreekhanda centering the zamindar Sanyal Babu and besides this a separate flow of narrative that has covered a small part of the novel is that of the life of peasants and workers like Ramchandra, Chhidam, Krishnadas et all. The character of the zamindar that Amiyabhushan portrayed was affectionate to tenants. Although the zamindar was not oppressive, but mahajans and tenure-holders maintained their class-nature unchangedly. The solvent peasant of this locality named Ramchandra showed no interest in any other matter except cultivation and land, and who was able to asses the price of land easily just seeing its colour and testing the soil. He had unbound greed for land. During famine when the price of paddy goes up and that of land goes down, he even then manages money to purchase land. On the other hand, when the price of paddy shoots up abnormally, all the peasants of Chikandi are at the door of mahajan Chaitanya Saha for help. Cultivation stops due to want of paddy-seeds and in consequence of it, even arable land is turned into hard land, and the peasants are bound to sell their cultivable land to maintain their livelihood. The novelist described their adversities in this way:
Comprehending the miserable condition of the peasants, Chaitanya Saha wanted to do Khai Khalashi settlement with them, but they did not see eye to eye with him completely in term of the conditions, and it was not difficult for them to understand the mahajan-like tricks of Chaitanya Saha, and so Chaitanya Saha turned to be Chiti Saap (a kind of speckled snake) to them. When Chaitanya brought labourers from outside on hire to rout the peasants, that door for the peasants was also closed, and in the wake of it many of them had to become workers of mill in the urban area. The obedient footmen of Chaitanya prevented Chhidam, Mungla and other peasants from reaping the paddy, and as a result of the peasants being angry appealed to the zamindar. The kind zamindar advised them to knock the door of law and on the other hand Chaitanya Saha also out of fear of complaint wanted to make compromises with the peasants.

Two different pictures go side by side in the novel. One, the picture of exploitation and oppression and two, that of discontentment among the peasants and their protests. It is remarkable to note that the author portrayed the character of the police officer as sympathetic to the peasants as Sanyal Babu and the likes were. Even a mahajan like Chaitanya Saha had to reach a compromise with the peasants. It may be said that a different picture of the life of peasants have been drawn in this novel. Even after the abolition of zamindari-system in the post-independence era, but that practically remained in practice in different parts of India and the steam-roller of exploitations remained in action in those areas and this regard Prafulla Ray’s novel Akasher Niche manush (1981) is a glaring paradigm. The region which lies in between Ranchi-Patna high way and the mountain of Chhotanagpur is known as Garudiya. As far as the eyesight travels in this region lands of different sizes and measurements, such as of quadrangular, triangular, sexangular, octangular come to one’s notice. The novelist wrote in coarse of his description of these plots of land:
The most powerful Rajput Talukdar of this region was Raghunath Singh, and the villeins of this region worked in the land of tenant-oppressing Raghunath without wages. The hero of the novel Dharma is also a villein. This class of villeins or the labourers who were brought every year from Palamou during cultivation time known as did not have any guts and power to protest and to resist the oppression. Rather all of them being panic-stricken for Raghunath led their life. The peasants like Dharma, Ganeri, Budheri had been sold out to Raghunath hereditarily. Many years ago some one of their forefathers took loan from somebody of the forefathers of Sings, and to pay off that debt they had been working generation after generation. So like land, harvests, trees and plants these people were under direct control of Raghunath; and to Raghunath the value of an ox seemed to be higher than that of this class of people—

Here the peasants are Doshad by caste. They were not only exploited economically but also in respect of class and castes. The description of the dwelling place Doshadtola of these peasants that the novelist had given, appeared to be more terrific and unfit for human habitation than that of the fisherman locality projected in the novel Padma Nadir Majhi, yet the peasants led their life in this way. Dharma did not like to spend a subjugated course of life, rather he dreamt of a bondage-free life with Kushi. Election bringsforth a fresh wave on the life of these peasants. This neglected class of villeins all on a sudden due to gimmick of vote-based politics become favourite to Raghunath, even they are allowed to be off from paddy-field work for three days. After winning election fray, when Raghunath informed the peasants that it was for them, he won election as well as he was one of the peasants, then it was only Dharma who thundered out—

The author at the end of the novel let us know through this protest of Dharma that it took a few generations and a few centuries for them to utter this unfabricated truth. A remarkable side of this novel is land system and land
reformation. Though the zamindari system was abolished from maximum number of states of India after 1956, but in reality it was not so easy to be implemented. It is the loophole of legal system which helped Raghunath Sing of the novel in question to be the undisputed authority of Garudiya. He kept all the land under *benami* title, and he made the villeins owners of the land capturing their thumb impression on the stam paper, but again he turned them in to slave for whole life on the false charge of debts. We consider the fact worthy to be mentioned given by a researcher in this respect:

Persons like Raghunath have to get their access into political arena in order to keep their land and *jagir* under their control, as if some one is not voted to Assembly as people’s representative, it becomes impossible to keep land under one’s control and possession. Even a Rajput *Kshatriya* land lord has to distribute *laddu* among the untouchable Doshad as well as arrangement is to be made to sink well for them just for the sake of electoral victory. But Dharma was able to identify Raghunath Sing lying behind the mask of public welfare, so he registered his protest, and patois became the vehicle of his protest. The novelist thus narrated an evolutionary journey of a marginalized peasant from a caddish state of existence to the state of a proper man in his novel *Akasher Niche Manush*.

The background of Saiyad Mustafa Siraj’s novel *Trinabhumi* (1970) is too, related to the revolt engineered by the working peasants of the frontier region of Murshidabad. The life of the people belonging to the village Hizrol, Sonatikuri’s field, forest of and of *beel* area has been reflected in this novel. Chronicle of communistic movement and an abortive attempt of armed uprising by Santhal and poor Hindu and Muslim working peasants is written in this novel.
The peasants of Bengal were being exploited all the time by three kind of agencies – the British governance, zamindars and middlemen. Apart from being veiled by illiteracy, economic set-back and religious superstitions, some of the peasants being perplexed grilling by both physical and mental tortures cross over to urban sector, and while others revolted too. Even the government principle and laws of free India were not up to the strength of helping the peasants to change their condition. The Krishak Sabha, established by the Communist Party at that time tried to mobilize all the peasants of Bengal and the leaders and members of Krishak Sabha set up farmer’s organization in every village and even women brigade was formed and in consequence of it once the oppressed peasants stood against all sorts of oppressions. So, peasants movements occurred in India one after another. As there occurred some remarkable movements in the forms of Owahabi Revolt, Farazi Movement and Santhal Revolt in pre-independence period, likewise some time before independence and in the succeeding period of it, the occurrence of Tebhaga Movement may be called in the history of peasants revolt as the most important and sanguinary movement and subsequently there occurred bloodbathing Naxal Movement which basically aimed at closing the chapter of exploitations of the peasants and the attaining their rights. A good number of novels came into existence in Bengali literature basing such peasants movements, and remarkable out of them are Narayan Gangopadhyay’s *Lalmati*, Sabitri Ray’s *Paka Dhaner Gan*, Tapan Bandyopadhyay’s *Nadi Mati Arnya* etc.

Narayan Gangopadhyay, of course, portrayed in some of his novels the pictures of zamindari period, exploitations during feudalism and relationship between zamindars and tenants. His novel *Lalmati* (1952) has been written on the historical background of Kaibarta Revolt. The clash between zamindars and tenants in Barendra Bhumi (ancient Gaud), as well as political antagonism between Hindus and Muslims happened to be the main subject matter of the novel. The novelist with utmost care delineated life of a particular region that preceeded 1947 in this novel. A critic said regarding selection of this topic by Narayan Gangopadhyay:

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The comment is rightly made. The novel has depicted the characters of two different zamindars namely Bhairab Narayan and Phatesha Pathan and while the latter was the chief of Muslim League, the former was submissive to the British. Though there existed land-related tussles between these two zamindars, but at the time of revolt by the tenants both the zamindars jointly tried to put down such unrest. Phatesha Pathan demanded revenue even against virgin land and the peasant Tulku stood against such injustice. Madden with rage, he murdered the footman of Pathan and in consequence of it he was jailed. Persons like Ranjan, Nagen Doctor, Alimuddin master formed Krishak Samity in the village with a view to making the peasants conscious. The Turi class peasants lived in Kalapukhuri of this region including fifteen more villages adjacent to it. When Bhairab Narayan demanded water tax to irrigate the two thousand bighas land lying on both side of the village, a sense discontentment grew up amongst the Turis, and the same time Ahirs living in the Ahir colony gradually developed a revolting mind due to exploitations by zamindars and mahajans. But the Hindus and the Muslims tenants prepared themselves in every respect to giving a fitting reply against the oppressions by the zamindar and who tried to create a rift in the unity of Hindus and Muslims but that attempt too, ended in a smoke. Thereafter, one day fighting started between the zamindar and the peasants and former fled away after being defeated. In this way the awakening of Kaibarta was staged in Barendra bhumi. Narayan Gangopadhyay wrote in the description of the rise of Kaibarta:

Narayan Gangopadhyay quite consciously revealed the Kaibarta Revolt occurred in Barendra bhumi in the narrative of his novel, yet the story of the novel has not moved to a single direction rather lots of short and long stories coupled with sequence of different events flood the pages of the novel. The character of Ranjan in the novel may be called
a connective one. He used to live in the house of zamindar hiding his self-identity. Probably he was the worker of the Communist Party. The way by which Ranjan, Nagen Doctor and other tried to make the peasants conscious might have disclosed their identity as communist workers, though the writer did not mention anything in this respect given for a single time. Ranjan had close intimacy with all the communities like Santhal, Aahir. The peasants in cooperation of Ranjan, Nagen Doctor gathered courage to revolt against the zamindar. Narayan Gangopadhyay virtually wanted to project the political scenario of pre-independence period in the novel. He was himself a Communist (marxist), so he knew how the Communist workers at that time visiting every village worked for the formation of organization, and this is what was done in this novel by different characters, namely Ranjan, Nagen and Nagen’s sister Uttama. The activities of Muslim league have captured a large part of the novel. Alimuddin Master was an honest Muslim league supporter and not a communalist. He dreamt of a free Pakistan sans exploitation. So Alimuddin was mentally wounded at the activities of the leaders of Muslim league and rioters. In this way Narayan Gangopadhyay was effortful in depicting the positions of the political parties like Communist, Congress, Muslim league etc. in his novel.

The description of the Hajong Revolt occurred in undivided Bengal during 50s has been given also in Sabitri Ray’s novel Paka Dhaner Gan (Vol 1-1956, Vol 2-1957, Vol 3-1958), but in addition to the novel Paka Dhaner Gan depicting the Hajong Revolt, fractionized sequence of events of many other revolts and struggles too, have been added to the epical background of the said novel. Lots of major and minor characters crowded the body of the novel and where Partha, a son of a farmer, is portrayed as a protagonist of the novel. Partha is an educated man and an active worker of the Communist Movement. His write-ups relating to tax-hike, Begar-system, capturing of outlawed land, ejectment from land and many other multiple oppressions done by upper class people were being regularly published in the Kolkata based magazine Chashi, and naturally for such anti-government activities Partha was ultimately arrested and was ordered to be interned in Maimanshing area. The tribal people like Garo, Dalu,
Koch, Hajong etc. lived in the area of Garo Hills belonging to north of Maimanshing, and almost most of them are farmer by occupation. During his internment here, Partha realized the real form of the livelihood of Sarathi, Saraswati, Shankhaman, Sulakshman and the like. They were economically so much neglected that they could manage nothing except Bichi Bhat as their food. The illiterate and simple men like Sarathi could not understand the tricks of receiving the receipt of rupees twenty one against rupees thirty three as rent of three years from the court of Zamindar. Partha during his internment stood by these peasants and tried to make them conscious. It was not only in the Hajong populated area, once he even told the peasants of his own village regarding exploitations by Zamindars:

As a member of Krishak Shamiti he extended his cooperation for awakening of the oppressed peasants. Here in this reference it is to be mentioned that the Krishak Samiti at that time took strong steps against the exploitations suffered by the peasants of Maimanshing region. A critic said:

Enhancement of rent and ejectment of peasants were the main grievances which give rise to the Hajong peasants movement.

In 1937 the Krishak Samiti tried organise the Hajong peasant and raised the demand for the reduction of Tanka rent. The author has presented a detailed description of the historical Hajong Revolt in the third part of the novel. The Garo, Dalu, Koch, Hajong peasants by means of the cooperation of the Krishak Samiti revolted against the exploitations by the zamindar and Tanka system. Tanka actually means an agreement by means of which peasants were obliged to pay a fixed quantity of crops or paddy as rent to the zamindar. Due to impact of this movement ultimately Tanka system went out of practice. Sabitri Ray in her novel Paka Dhaner Gan has practically portrayed the artistic picture of that Hajong Revolt. When the Hajongs being enlightened at the initiatives of Partha and Sulakshman decided to store paddy in Dharmagola built by Krishak Samiti instead of giving it to
zamindar, then the clubmen of zamindar wanted to forcefully lift away Sarathi’s wife Saraswati, but a fighting started with them face to face while the peasants in a body protested against such injustice and Partha took an active part in this fight. The Eastern Frontier Rifle Regiment of the government came forward in favour of the zamindar. Both Sarathi’s mother and Partha were shot with bullets in this fight. The whole village, as if, came to senses at the unexpected occurrence of this incident. The symbolic message of Shinga (a horn for blowing) reached from village to village. Sabitri Ray gave the description of the awakening of the peasants in this story in this way:

Partha’s lover Bhadra took the responsibility of the movements after the death of Partha. It is mentionable indeed, the women characters, such as Bhadra, Debaki, Meghi, Saraswati etc. that Sabitri Ray created on the extensive background of the novel have been illumined with their respective distinctiveness. All of them in their personal life, too, were vocal against oppressions. However, there is one more excellence of the novel lies in the thorough description of the cultures of the life of the peasants. Anyway, this Hajong Revolt once got merged with the Sanguinary peasants movement of Tebhaga and which happened to be the biggest peasants’ movement in the undivided Bengal.

Tapan Bandyopadhyay in his novel Nadi Mati Aranya (Vol 1-1998, Vol 2-1999, Vol 3-2001) has given an extensive description of Tebhaga Movement, moreover, the writer also has dealt with the century long history of Sundarban through this novel. He himself has commented about the subject-matter of this novel:

We are able to find out prop in favour of writer’s comment at the reading of the novel.
The writer reconstructed the story of the Ramayana in a time-befitting manner in his novel *Nadi Mati Aranya*. This novel too, like Ramayana is divided into seven cantos — the first part consists of *Adikanda: Jamin Hasil Parba*, second part — *Pattan Parba* which includes *Manthan Kanda, Agnipariksha Kanda, Ajnatabas Kanda* and *Yayati Kanda*, the third part comprises *Tebhaga Parba: Ahalya Kanda* and *Lanka Kanda* and even the names of the characters are also taken from the Ramayana — Ramachandra, Sitabala, Kushadhwaj, Sushen, Nil, Jatayu etc. The first narrates the coming of Ramachandra, son of Samanta of Eshan, from Sutahata to Sundarban in search of his abducted mother Sitabala, but coming here he became a zamindar from a *munish*, and once he killed the abductors of his mother named Buno Samanta or Bibhishan Samanta. He took the responsibility of producing crops cultivating the untitled land miles after miles, and this land ultimately turned up to be as Sita to him and whom he released from the state of not being ploughed. He was sent to jail on the charge of killing Buno Samanta. In the second part of the novel, Ramachandra came back to Sundarban fleeing away from jail, but by that time the scenario of Sundarban has completely changed. He was not only declared a dead person to his wife, children and to the locality as well, but was also defied as God for the reason of killing Bibhishan Samanta. His son uttered at his sudden return:

Ramachandra in human incarnation was no more but was transformed into a godly form. Ramachandra was bound to come and thus the second part of the novel came to an end. The whole lot of the third part of the novel deals with the narrative of Tebhaga Movement and the horribleness of this chapter can be guessed from the very naming of *Ahalya Kanda and Lanka Kanda*. Persons like Kangsari Halder, Jatin Maiti, Hemanta Ghoshal and Gajen Mali were firmly determined to create a new vista of history. All the
peasants standing collectively against the state power, Congress leadership and against the joint police force wanted to firmly establish the Tebhaga mission. The field workers amongst the peasants are dangerously warlike and they were the real leaders of the Tebhaga Movement in Sundarban area. The field workers brought the land under their possession in Lalganj area with the fighting force of their sticks and share-holding peasants prevented the ejectment of burgadar. Meanwhile India attained freedom and administrative power went under the Congress Government and they started exercising stringent repressive measures in Lalganj area but at last the rule of workers came into force in Lalganj for the active cooperation of the Krishak Samiti. It is seen in the end of the novel that a serious fighting started in Radhanagar area under the leadership of warlike Communist leader Ashok Basu. Actually the fire of Tebhaga Movement got extinguished at the fag end of 1949; and that substantive picture has been drawn in the novel. After the Radhanagar clash Ashok Basu went traceless and movement stopped after the arrest of Gajen Mali and Bijay Mandal. The novel which started with the protest of Ramachandra met with a tragic end. The writer arrayed in the chapter the Congress Party, Communist Party, Freedom Movement etc. and the important events of 40s. Inspite of the use of enough historical facts, the purport of story is not disturbed. It may be said at the end of all that Tapan Bandyopadhyay paraded much virtuosity in arranging the connection of history with the present time in course of his description of the story of one hundred years of Sundarban in his novel Nadi Mati Aranya.

VII

We have come to know through our above discussion that whether in the pre-independence period or the period that followed or even the very last decade of the twentieth century, there appeared no remarkable changes in the life of the peasants. There is no doubt that in the field of agriculture, technological changes occured, chemical fertilizers, the use of new breed of seeds are obtained at a low price, but nothing so remarkable so far the socio-economic scenario of the peasants is concerned. The
peasants were repeatedly crushed by the moving wheels of worldwide war, riots, famine and above all exploitation by feudalistic force, yet they went on producing crops ceaselessly. Once the peasants whom the feudalistic engine of exploitations shattered were equally done so subsequently by the political parties. The peasants who got perplexed by their own poverty, illiteracy and by the sinister designs of capitalism had to become urban-dwellers deserting the village. Money, comforts and the splendour and glamour of urban sector has demolished the structure of the rural life. The picture of this town-bound tendency of the peasants has been revealed in the novels of Manik Bandyopadhyay, Samaresh Basu, Jarasandha, Prabhat Dey Sarkar et al. On the other hand, novelists like Subodh Ghosh and Prafulla Ray showed how the zamindari system remained in vogue in the interior areas of Bihar, even after its abolition. Subodh Ghosh was sincerely effortful in analyzing the reasons that worked behind shattering the dreams of Adivasi peasants, likewise the life story of the alluvial-land dwelling refugee peasants has been portrayed in a good number of novels. But one common matter is available almost in every novel—the picture of oppressions on farmers and workers by mahajans, tenure-holders, talukdars, who played the role of a vicious circle of middlemen, but the novelists have presented the artistic embroidery of the warlike peasants movements in their respective novels. In some of the novels the causes and nature of the Tebhaga Movement, Hajong Revolt, Naxal Movement have also been analyzed. As the peasants have overcome the problem of land-revenue and different hardles, so they themselves once even revolted against all sorts of exploitations. In the wake of such revolts, different laws were enforced, yet there occured no remarkable change in their life. The peasants who throughout their life have taken the responsibility of strengthening economic foundation of India live still with an uncertain course of life.
Reference and Notes:

1. Achintya Kumar Sengupta: *Kallolyug*, p.181
4. Parthapratim Bandyopadhyay: *Saroj Kumarer ‘Trayee’r Adhunikata* Composed in *Shubhashree*, p.49
5. Sarojkumar Raychoudhury: *Mayurakshi, Natun Fasal*, p.37
9. Ibid, p.554
11. Amarendra Ghosh: *Charkashem*, p.2
12. Ibid, p.116
13. Ibid, p.44
15. Ist. Pub. 1929 in monthly magazine *Upasana*
16. The conflict between Banowari and Karali of Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay’s novel *Hansuli Banker Upakatha* is in reality a conflict between the older value system and the advent of a new one including that which is associated with the upcoming capitalism.
18. Ibid, p.27
21. Manik Bandyopadhyay: Chintamani, Manik Bandyopadhyay Rachana Samagra Vol.5, p.245
22. Ibid, p.246
24. Jarasandha: Nihsanga Pathik, Jarasandha Rachanavali Vol 5, p.15
25. Ibid, p.22
27. Ibid, p.89
28. Dr. Jhuma Raychudhury: Kathasahitye Samaresh Basu; Samagrik Mulyayan, p.167
29. Subodh Ghosh: Shatakiya, Subodh Ghosh Rachana Samagra Vol 3, p.257
30. Manabendra Mukhopadhyay: Goshthi Jibaner Upanyas, p.76
31. Manik Bandyopadhyay: Jiyanta, Manik Bandyopadhyay Rachana Samagra Vol.6, p.446
32. Malini Bhattacharya: Itikathar Pare: Manik Bandyopadhyayer Natun Paryayer Upanyas, Composed in Jalark, Manik Bandyopadhyay Sankhya 2, p.157
33. Amiyabhushan Majumdar: Gadh Shreekhanda, p.65
34. Prafulla Ray: Akasher Niche Manush, p.9
35. Ibid, p.20
36. Ibid, p.275
37. Shampa Chaudhury: Bol Fontar Gandha: Akasher Niche Manush, Composed in Bingsha Shatabdir Samaj Bibartan: Bangla Upanyas, p.381
38. Biplab Maji (Ed.): Bangla Upanyas 200 Bachhar, p.138
41. Dipankar Bhattacharya: *Peasant Movement in Bengal And Bihar*, p.46
43. Tapan Bandyopadhyay, Quoted by Shubhankar Ghosh in *Nadi mati Aranya*: *Bahuswarik Samayer Manush O Prakritir Dwandwamay Akhyan*, Composed in *Divaratri Kavya*, p.236
44. Ibid, p.240-241