CHAPTER VI

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This chapter is an attempt to study the tensions between the dominant nationalist ideology of the time and Premchand's efforts to transcend that ideology. An attempt would also be made to study the resultant contradictions in the process of resolving or overcoming these tensions.

I

PEASANTS AND NATIONALISM

For Premchand national question was essentially a peasant question. He realized that the true revolutionary power in India lay in the hands of the masses who lived in rural India. He thought that radical social change was unthinkable without direct involvement and initiative of the peasants, who constitute
the overwhelming majority of the population.\textsuperscript{1}

He firmly believed that without an adequate solution of the peasant question all efforts at national independence were doomed to failure.\textsuperscript{2}

Why did Premchand choose peasantry as his "referential group"? "No section of the society" believed Premchand, "has been ruined by colonialism as much as the workers and the peasants have been, especially the peasants".\textsuperscript{3} Every one thrives on peasants' blood and flesh and no one protects him.\textsuperscript{4} It is the peasants who have to bear the maximum burden. They have to pay the land revenue irrespective of the fertility or productivity of the soil and the land rent goes on increasing.\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} He firmly believed that only the masses can redeem India. See "Swadesh Ka Sandesh", \textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II, p.22.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} See \textit{Premchand Samriti}, \textit{op.cit}, p.29.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} "Swarajaya Se Kiska Ahit Hoga", \textit{op.cit}, p.42.
  \item \textsuperscript{5} "Swarajaya Se Kiska Ahit Hoga", \textit{op.cit}, p.42.
\end{itemize}
Therefore, the movement for Swaraj is particularly the peasant movement, 6 "struggle for Swaraj is in fact a peasant movement".

Premchand believed that the preconditions to achieve freedom was to inculcate awareness among the masses, as he wrote in the editorial of the first issue of Hans "But independence is only awareness of the mind. To arouse this awareness is indeed independence." 7 Once this awareness is injected among the masses, they themselves would learn to protect their rights. 8 "The main instrument to gain independence" he pointed out "is to mould public opinion" for nationalist cause. This would pave the way to swaraj. 9

The most important method for inculcating awareness among the peasants was to inculcate a sense of self-respect and human

dignity among the masses. Premchand believed that in the nationalist struggle the regard for an individual, money, property and technological progress is not as important as the regard for one's honour, dignity, commitment and self-respect. 10

Some of Premchand's peasant characters were conscious of this fact. This consciousness was born out of their miserable conditions. Thus Haldhar in *Sangram* remarked:

Why is there such degradation for us? Everybody abuses us, hits us. The minions, the Zamindars, all consider us lowlier than dogs. It is because we have become shameless. We have come to love our skin. Had we too possessed pride and a feeling for our dignity, no one would have dared affront us. It is heard that in other countries people come to blows if abused. There none can abuse others...What do we have here? We are kicked and cursed most execrably, we see with our own eyes, without a blush or batting an eye lid, the declension of religion. To save our skin we tolerate every kind of humiliation, so dear has life become to us. I would thousand times prefer death to this life. Take it from me the dearer a man holds his life, the lowlier he is.11

Since the awakening and self-debasement were opposed to each other, awakening in the villages meant lessening of the authority of the landlords and the officials. The government wanted that the tenants kept on paying land rent and endure the excesses of the officials. Thus Thakur Jagdish Singh in the story "Bank Ka Deewala" said:

We may harass them as much as we want since they are not aware of their rights. They do not realise their own importance but a time would come when they would become conscious of their rights and protest against their oppressors.

ATTITUDE TO PEASANTS' STRUGGLE

Premchand's attitude to Peasants' struggle was ambivalent. There was an abiding faith in the peasants' potentiality to struggle for their rights on their own and at the same time scepticism to sustain the struggle. Thus he

13. Ibid.
believed "The members of the Congress or some other groups too, may occasionally plead for peasants' causes out of justice and policy but they cannot be expected to have that much concern for the varied miseries and agonies faced by the peasants as the peasants themselves would have."15

Thus Balraj in Premasharam was a conscious peasant. He knew the importance of his class. He had gleaned knowledge of international happenings from newspapers. He knew how the peasants had struggled and gained importance in Russia, as he told his fellow tenants:

You are making fun of me, as though the peasants are nobodies, and were made only to drudge and slave for the landlords; but in newspaper that comes to me it is written that in Russia it is the peasants who rule the country, they do what they please. And somewhere close by there is a country called Bulgaria, there quite recently, the peasants have dethroned the king, and the country is now ruled by a commune of peasants and workers.16

This view was expressed by an enlightened peasant who was young and of aggressive nature. When the Zamindar ordered his karinda to raise the land rent the entire village was in tumult, but Balraj was unmoved since he trusted his lathi.  He was prepared to beat anyone who would encroach upon his fields. He told his father, "Zamindar is not a king that howsoever much high-handedness he may show we don't utter even a word. If the courts don't listen to us then we would take recourse to lathi". He was not able to bear the injustice perpetrated upon his fellow tenants:

Since I have come to know a little bit about conditions prevailing in the world, I don't know why I can't remain silent in face of oppression. I get infuriated to see a strong man throttling a weak. I feel like mortifying him without considering whether I would lose my life or not. An obsession overpowers me. My

17. Ibid, p.52.
18. Ibid. Balraj told his father: "You won't live long. It is we who will have to bear all the extortions. And I tell you that we shall not submit to this kind of a thing without protest. After all, the Zamindar cannot ride roughshod over us, and if he does so and turns a deaf ear to us, we (brandishing his lathi) shall use this." Quoted by Madan Gopal, op.cit, p.166.
mind gets out of control though
knowing very well that a lone
soldier cannot win a war.19

But except Balraj all the tenants in Prema­
shram suffered silently without any protest.20
There was only a passive recognision of wrongs
among them. Therefore, Balraj, on behalf of
his fellow tenants pleaded their case and
tried to obtain justice from the authorities
by deputation. The issue was on the question
of begar. It was being exacted from them on
the occasion of encampment by Deputy Jawala
Singh. The begar was being exacted by Deputy's

20. In fact these silent struggles were just
as crucial as those observed in direct
protest.

See Alf Ludtke "The Historiography
of Everyday Life : The Personal And The
Individual", p.42 in Raphael Samuel and
Gareth Stedman Jones, eds, Culture,
Ideology And Politics, (History Workshop
Series), London, 1982, p.42 :

"According to conventional ways"
points Alf Ludtke "the tenants struggle
to transform the relations of production,
and only in this later case do they act
'politically'...This one-dimensional mode
of analysis has very little to do with the
lives of peasants in the process of their
daily production and reproduction." He
points out that "it is important to
include within 'the political' more than
simply strategically calculated action."
Ibid, p.42.
minions with the collusion of Zamindar's Karinda. Balraj met the Deputy and narrated the woes of the villagers. The Deputy, after listening to Balraj's report, ordered his subordinates not to take begar from the villagers but these officials (chaprasis, daftaries, and orderlies) were so cunning that they misled the Deputy. They appealed to his ego by telling him that these villagers did not open their tongue in the presence of English officials. It was because he was an Indian that they paid no heed to him. This design had desired effect upon Jawala Singh:

Jawala Singh had adopted the English way of living to increase his decorum and propriety. He never considered himself less than an Englishman. While going to meet Englishmen he used to keep hat in his hand. He used to save himself from the insult of putting off his shoes. He used to sit only with Englishmen while travelling in train. The people used to address him as saheb in their discourse. It was an abuse to call him an Hindustani.

21. This can be termed "as a movement from below". See M.H. Siddiqui, Agrarian Unrest in North India, The United Provinces, 1918-1922, New Delhi, 1978.

22. Premasrham, p.94.
They poisoned his ears against Balraj and tried to ensnare him into the clutches of the police. But Jawala Singh first wanted to investigate the matter. The sub-Inspector was ordered by him to make an inquiry and submit him the report. But the peasants got united and refused to utter even a single word against Balraj. Therefore, no proof was available to arrest Balraj. The Karinda gnashed his teeth in anger.\(^{23}\) The tenants realised that if they were united then no one can oppress them.\(^{24}\) But this unity was fragile. The sub-Inspector was a corrupt man and wanted to extract bribe from all the villagers. He threatened them to execute personal bonds. Some of them decided to give evidence against Balraj but at night Kadir Khan persuaded them not to do so. But Gaus Khan, the Karinda, bribed the Daroga and he wrote such a damaging report that all the villagers had to execute

\(^{23}\) *Ibid*, p.95.  
\(^{24}\) *Ibid*, pp.95-96.
personal bonds. Therefore, Balraj and Kadir were not able to do anything worthwhile to liberate the tenants from the clutches of begar system.

The lack of peasant unity was another concern of Premchand. Unless and until they were united, he believed that they will not be able to oppose the Zamindars and the colonial bureaucracy and unless it happened the peasants would not be liberated from oppression.25 "It must be kept in view" said Premchand "that the workers and peasants, if united, can achieve anything they want, since their power is boundless. So long as they are scattered they are like grass leaves but united they would become like thick ropes

Thus Bhola a herdsman in Godan grumbled and said to Hori "We can't even get along with each other. We never unite on anything." Op.cit, p.36.
for pulling ships. In an article "Swarajya Se Kiska Ahit Hoga", Premchand pointed out:

The workers, Government servants, Zamindars, and moneylenders have their respective unions to protect their interests but the peasants have no unions. They are all scattered. If an effort is made to unite them, the government, Zamindars, Government servants and moneylenders get enraged. All around panic and confusion starts prevailing. This movement is destroyed from its roots by raising the bogey of Bolshevism.

But they have to be united by some enlightened educated men, in other words, they cannot represent themselves, they must be

26. "Varatman Andolan Ke Raste Mein Rukawatein", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.29; also see Godan, op.cit, p.425. Here Ramsevak tells Hori and Datadin: "And this is the result of our servility. I've had a drummer announce throughout the village that no one should pay the extra rent or let his land go. We're prepared to pay the new rate if someone can convince us there's good reason, but if the Zamindar was intending just to grind up and devour the defenceless farmers, he was mistaken. The villagers went along with me and the whole village had united, he was forced to back down. Confiscate all the land and who would work it? In this day and age you have to be tough or no one pays any attention. Even a child has to cry he gets any milk from his mother."

represented. 28 They have to be led by the "revolutionary voluntarism," 29 that is the enlightened few. Premchand stressed the importance of the masses being led by revolutionary avant-garde and progressive intelligentsia who should be entrusted with the democratic education of the masses and rationalising popular practices. He believed that "it is the educated ones who lead the banner of revot. The same is true of India too." 30


29. The term "revolutionary voluntarism" may be defined in the words of Teodore Shanin as "a belief in the ability of the devoted few to turn the tide of history by a display of determinism and sacrifice". The Awkward Class, Oxford, 1972, p.47.

Premchand's attitude to the educated class was an ambivalent one. He was doubtful whether the educated community is capable of leading the nation in the right direction and at the same time believed that it is the only community which would lead the masses.

Thus he railed at the educated community. He condemned the educated middle class for leading a luxurious life, indulging in pleasures, for selfishness and aping the western

31. In one of his letters to Dayanarayan Nigam, Premchand wrote that the University educated community "hardly takes interest in the national movement. If the nation has to depend upon the educated people then India would have to wait for independence till doom's day." 23 April, 1930, Chitthi Patri, Vol. I, p.178.
Also see "Rashtriya Bhasha Hindi Aur Uski Samasayane", in Sahitya Ka Udayshy, Allahabad, 1969, p.III.
culture blindly. According to Premchand the educated Indians have become accustomed to uncritical acceptance of ready-made

products (ideas). The blind imitation
of the West makes them attribute even their
flaws to their qualities. Premchand was

33. Thus one of the characters in Sevasadan, remarks:
"A slave in a way is free. His
body may be bound, but his soul is free.
You have bantered away your freedom of
soul. Your English education has made
you such an imbecile that even in matters
of spiritual and religious beliefs you
await the judgement of western scholars.
You do not esteem the Upanishads high
because they in themselves are worthy of
esteem but because Blavatsky and Max
Muller have praised them. You have fore­
feited your faculty of reasoning and
reflection. This mental slavery is more
contemptible than physical confinement.
You call Arjun, Arjuna, Krishan, Krishna
and Ram, Rama. This is your knowledge of
your own language. This mental servility
of yours has made you accept their over­
lordship even in realms where by virtue
of your forefathers' achievements you
could hold your banners high, fluttering
triumphantly over your heads."
- Quoted by Syed Sibt i Hasan "Munshi
Premchand And the Indian Freedom Movement"
in Shiv Kumar, ed, Premchand Our
Contemporary, New Delhi, 1986, p.10.

34. "Mansik Pradhinta", op.cit, p.189.
distressed by the selfish mentality exhibited by the lawyers, doctors, professors and government servants. The educated men keep themselves engrossed in their own selfish motives while paying lip service to the sufferings of the masses. The poor peasants, though illiterate, can see through the political veneer of the leaders and turn a deaf ear.


In a letter to Dayanarayan Nigam, Premchand wrote:

"I did not expect such a slave mentality from the lawyers, doctors, professors and the government servants. This class regards its welfare in establishing government's suzerainty. It cannot ignore its material gains and amenities even for a moment. Either this class does not desire independence or it regards its prestige to depend upon others or it feels that the freedom would come of its own." - 23rd April, 1930, Chitthi Patri, Vol. I, p. 179;

Also see "Azadi Ki Larai Mein Kon Log Age Hain", op. cit., p. 49.
to the empty slogans of Swaraj chanted by them:

There is no reason why they should prefer your rule to that of the foreign rulers. The peasants crushed as they are in the jaws of tyrannical and selfish landlords all the time... Cannot for any understandable reason desire to see them as their rulers. Is there any surety that once your claws are upon them, their condition would not really get worse? Today you have given no evidence to the effect that you are their well-wishers. If there is any evidence, it is to the contrary, it is an evidence of your selfishness, your greed, your meanness.36

Therefore, Premchand set out some norms for the leaders who would lead the peasants/masses.

About the requisite qualities required for leadership, he points out:

One who has entirely dedicated and sacrificed oneself (himself) to the nation, one who possesses high moral character,

one who has control over his mind and heart, one who is free from blemishes, can only claim to be the leader of the society.37

According to Premchand freedom begins at heart first of all and this means self-abnegation, sacrifice, renunciation, restraint and self-control.38 Ostentation and affectation are enemies of freedom.39 The one who

37. "Deshbandhu Chitrānjan Das", a tribute, Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.409; also see "Lag-Dat", Mansarovar, Vol.VI, pp.203-208. Thus Chaudhury in this story addresses the audiences: "How to attain this Swaraj? By means of spiritual force, valour, unity. Do not be malevolent to each other. ...The only way to achieve Swaraj is spiritual self-mastery. Only this medicine would cure all your maladies by roots... Strengthen your soul, control your mind, and it would result in patriotism. Only then malice would be eliminated. Only then the feelings of malevolence and mutual rancour would be removed. It would also liberate your mind from luxury and pleasure. ...Without spiritual force Swarajya would never be achieved. Self-seeking is the root cause of all the sins...Kill this demon (of selfishness) with the weapons of spiritualism and you would achieve your aim."


is not slave to his needs (desires) is independent. Simple and natural living was an important aspect of Premchand's notion of achieving independence. In fact, it is the leitmotif of his ideology. In fact the leitmotif of his ideology was the idea of nation's independence inseparably bound up with the idea of simple and natural living. In fact, he seemed to be inimical to those who were opposed to simple and natural living. The one who does not possess these qualities, he does not deserve to sacrifice himself for the nation. Since India lost its soul with the onslaught of colonialism, it is very

40. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. "Shrimati Kamla Nehru Ka Swaragwas", a tribute, Vividh-prasang, Vol.III, p.444; also see "Deshbandhu Chitranjan Dass", op.cit, pp.404-411; Also see the story, "Kutsa", Mansarovar, Vol.II, p.144. The narrator of the story points out "In my view the nationalist worker should transcend the feelings of selfishness and greed. Only a high noble ideal can lead to genuine service of the nation".
essential that Indians should regain it by developing these qualities which are the essence of the Indian soul.\textsuperscript{44} And this is the first step towards liberation, that is, the inner liberation is the pre-condition to outer liberation.\textsuperscript{45} According to Premchand "Politics is another name for self-sacrifice.\textsuperscript{46}

Premchand equated nationalist struggle with the struggle for righteousness. The word Dharma recurs in his works. This is a leit-motif of his ideological struggle. He used this word/phrase in the sense of truth, duty and righteousness. He says that the struggle for nationalism is the struggle for Dharma for truth and righteousness.\textsuperscript{47}


\textsuperscript{45} See "Maulana Hasrat Mohini", \textit{op.cit.}, pp.411-419.

\textsuperscript{46} See "Deshbandhu Chitrnanjan Dass", \textit{op.cit.}, p.408.

\textsuperscript{47} That Premchand attached supreme importance to sacrifice and renunciation is indicated in a letter to Shri Ram Sharma, 12 January, 1932, Chitthi Patri, Vol.II, p.214.

It also stands for non-violence. Premchand firmly believed that the battle for nationalism or struggle for independence can only be won by sticking to our dharma or holding fast to our sense of dharma (i.e. Satyagraha, non-violent path).

Premchand was of the opinion that a true leader (or true nationalist leader) can only be one who would "take the nation to the path of dharma (meaning thereby righteousness), one who fulfils his promises (or there is no difference between his words and deeds), one who is not a hypocrite. The battle of


49. "Desh Ki Varatman Parisithiti", op.cit, pp.78-79; also see "Swarajaya Se Kiska Ahit Hoga", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.45. At another place Premchand said, "non-cooperation is (just) the external (outer) means, the inner means is the purity (piety) of soul. We lost freedom because we lost our soul. The selfishness led us to be enchained by slavery. We can achieve freedom only by regaining our soul." (Swarajaya Ke Payade", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.276.)

50. "Desh Ki Varatman Parisithiti", op.cit, p.79.
righteousness can only be won by holding fast to the dharma (or holding fast to virtuous, moral and ethical path). 51

Premchand advocated the need for a "true leadership" to lead the masses in the right direction. 52 The masses would respect and follow only that leader who can adhere to selfless service and renunciation. The one

51. Ibid, p.79; also see "Congress Ka Naya Programme", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.220. Premchand, in this article pointed out that leaders should possess genuine missionary zeal, not missionaries like our Sadhus and Sanyasis but such missionaries who can survive on a handful of gram.

52. "Desh Ki Varatman Parisithiti", op.cit., p.79; also see Kayakalap, op.cit, pp.202-203. Thus Chakaradhar in this novel explains to Manorama that it is essential first of all to inculcate awakening, zeal and spiritual strength among the masses.
who does not possess these qualities would not command people's respect. 53

Pramond embodied these qualities in the characters, Premashankar in Premasharam, Vinay in Rangbhumi, 54 Chakradhar in Kayakalap

53. Rangbhumi, op.cit, pp.244, 167; also see Kayakalap, p.128.
Thus Raja Vishal Singh remarks about Chakradhar:
"The one who can serve can command people's respect. Only he can influence the people. It is his service that has made him popular among the masses."

Also see Vardan, Allahabad, 1980, p.6.
Thus Sudama in the opening pages of the novel worships the Devi (deity) and the later after being pleased prevails upon her to ask for a boon:
"What do you desire? a treasure house?"
"No."
"Strength of Indira?"
"No."
"Knowledge like that of Saraswati?"
"No."
"What do you ask, then?"
"The most precious thing of the world."
"What is that?"
"A worthy son."
"The one who may bring honour to the family?"
"No."
"The who would serve his parents?"
"No."
"The one who would be learned and powerful?"
"No."
"Who, then, is considered a worthy son?"
"The one who would uplift the country."

54. That Vinay in Rangbhumi had been leading a simple, austere life has been discussed by Sofia and Prabhusevak, the major characters of the novel. He is described as a Yogi. See pp.41, 99-107, 165, 270.
and Amarkant in *Karambhumi*. These characters are idealist educated young men who can be termed as "problematic individuals". They are problematic in the sense that their values are at variance with those of society in which they live. Thus Premashankar returns home from America, with the aim of improving the methods of agriculture, but his hopes are shattered when the society boycotts him as he had flouted the taboo of crossing the sea. In case of Premashankar, the problem is how to live in a society governed

55. The term 'Problematic individuals' is applied by George Lukacs in *The Historical Novel*, Penguin, 1962.

56. He says to his younger brother Gyan-shankar "It is sad that for all your intelligence you remain a slave to the *biradari*, especially when you concede that the *biradari*’s intervention in this matter is absolutely irrational. Education should make you a path-finder for your community and endeavour to reform; not that you should sacrifice your own principles under its pressure." - *Op. cit.*, p.117. Premashankar upbraids his brother for divorce between his theory and practice.
by the forces of obscurantism and superstition and simultaneously try to change it.

Their's is not a passive disagreement with dominant social values but they are involved in a search for authentic values. And what are these authentic values. These values are:

identification with the peasants and then devise the means to bring about a change in

57. Similarly Chakradhar and Amarkant are not at peace with their family. Amarkant's problem is how he can live in a family governed by exchange values. He tells his father, "I'm sorry I can't go on like this any more. My life is my own, and I mean to live it. Living with you has lost me my best years. You do not know, father; a man's life is not eating and living and dying. It's not making money, I can't bear it! I have a different vision. I'll sweat for a life which knows what it means for a man to sweat; which respects a man and his wife; which gives them a chance of discovering some happiness. I know that if I stay with you, my life will pass in sticking to the niceties of convention-dry years, dead years all."

58. They are searching for authentic values in the context of what Lucie Goldman describes as "a degraded society". By the phrase "degraded society", we mean the dominant value structure prevailing in Amarkant's family. See Towards Sociology of Novel, London, 1975, p. 8.
their conditions. They make a survey of the villages and try to establish a degree of rapport with the villagers. It is this type of activity - the attempt to transform society and relationships - that give a meaning to their lives. By engaging in practical work they strive to purge themselves of the emotional and ideological incrustations of the past.

What are the ways and means adopted by these characters to inculcate a sense of unity among the peasants?

Vinay in Rangbhumı teaches people to renounce courts which humiliated the self-respect and subjugated people.

Amarkant in Karambhumı launches a cleanliness campaign and then opens a school. His educational programme aims at overcoming the colonial hegemony from the minds of the masses. He feels that in order to emancipate the peasants, autonomous education is very important because the later frees the minds. He is successful in inculcating social and political consciousness among the peasants.
Premashankar in *Premasharam* opens an ashram where he teaches the villagers to be self-reliant. This induces a sort of self-respect among the peasants.

Chakradhar in *Kayakalap* organises a Kisan Sabha and makes it an instrument to inculcate the political consciousness among tenants. It is as a result of this consciousness that the *begar* is almost eliminated.

Thus by inculcating a sense of self-respect and human dignity among the peasants these educated leaders prepare them to struggle for their rights. What is the nature of this struggle? What is the method and form of this struggle? These questions would be discussed around the peasants' issues on (a) Payment of rent (b) question of *begar* and (c) rights on the use of pasture lands.

At the outset, it may be made clear that these educated leaders fought "for the sake of peasantry", that is, in support of peasants' struggle against the landlords as well as
"on the side of the peasantry", that is against the colonial State.\(^{59}\) In Premchand's works both these struggles coalesce together. In fact, the peasants' struggles against landlords lead to confrontation with the colonial bureaucracy.

In Premchand's works there were two forms of struggles of the peasantry:
(a) Constitutional and (b) non-constitutional, i.e. mass movement. The constitutional form of struggle is launched through (a) Judiciary (legalism) and (b) petitions.

Though the struggle is waged broadly within the Gandhian paradigm, yet, there is an attempt to come out of this paradigm also. Before we discuss this aspect with special reference to *Premasharam*, *Rangbhumi*, *Kayakalap* and *Karambhumi*, it is worthwhile to examine Premchand's attitude to Gandhi.

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PREMCHAND AND GANDHI

Premchand was influenced by Gandhi's personality. In 1935 he met him at a meeting of the 'Hindi Parishad' at Wardha and after he returned home he told his wife:

Mahatma Ji surpassed all my images of him. I doubt if there is anyone, after meeting the Mahatma, can be against him. Either he is attracted by people or he attracts everyone to himself. There is such appeal in his personality that whoever sees him is automatically attracted to him... No matter how big a liar one is, in front of Mahatma Gandhi one can only speak the truth.60

In fact even before meeting Mahatma Gandhi Premchand had been influenced by him.61 Premchand was enamoured of Gandhi's personality


throughout his career. He regarded him as a deity. In one of his articles, Premchand wrote:

In this land of penance, numerous awesome penances have been undertaken before... but it is Gandhi's singular honour to resolve to lay down his life for the nation... Once upon a time the sage Dadhichi too laid down his life to save the nation. In our irreverence we had believed it to be a more legend, but today, you have revived that ancient ideal, that ancient dignity, that ancient self-sacrifice.

62. See Premchand's letter to Dayanarayan Nigam, 24 March 1931, Chiithi Patri, Vol.II, p.184; to Jainendra Kumar, 23 March 1931, ibid, Vol.II, p.21 and to Keshoram Sabharwal, 31 August, 1928, ibid, p.206. It is also suggested by a letter written about the time Bhagat Singh and his comrades were hanged by the British Imperialists. "I was wanting to attend the Karachi Session. What hopes could one go there now? People will hoot down Gandhi and the Congress will pass into the hands of irresponsible extremists, and there will be no place for us. What path we shall pursue is not clear. I have lost heart. The future is bleak. The events in Benaras, Mirzapur and Agra, I feel, will encourage the government. But no government could even commit a greater stupidity. How deep an impact could the government have created, if it had commuted the death sentence (of Bhagat Singh and his comrades) into transportation for life? Its attitude, however, betrays that there has been no change of heart, and that the government is determined to go its irresponsible way". - Quoted by Madan Gopal, op.cit, p.290.


64. "Mahan Tap", Vividh-prasang, English translation by Harish Trivedi, op.cit, p.277.
He regarded him as the living "incarnation of tumultuous awakening of the Indian soul". He "is the supreme ideal of Indian life, ethics, truth and dharma". According to him "Mahatma is the first patriot for whom truthfulness and politics are synonymous words". The Mahatma has astounded the mankind by demonstrating the might of love and non-violence. Premchand pointed out "It is the immutable truth and law of nature that violence begets violence and non-violence begets non-violence. It must be kept in mind by the strong as well as by the colonial officials." "Mahatma Gandhi has put before mankind", according to Premchand, "a pure and simple ideal which is not just a theoretical one but entirely practical. By attaining what was unattainable

66. Ibid, p.54.
69. Ibid, also see "Naya Press Bill", ibid, Vol.II, p.83
and by moulding his life to such ideals he has exalted humanity to an altar."  

Even the opponents of Mahatma have to accept the fact that his humanity has reached the level of godhead rather "our ancient sages were nothing as compared to our Mahatma. In fact, he can even be regarded greater than Lord Krishna."  

Premchand extolled Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha, i.e. the ideals of truth, non-violence and renunciation. He believed that these were a means to attain political awakening among the masses. The vital question according to Premchand "is not how to incite and encourage the countless army but how to control


In an article "Swarajaya Ke Payade", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.282, Premchand pointed out that we must follow the wise and farsighted leader like Gandhi who is a rare species and if we do not follow him we would have to repent and would not achieve swaraj.

it and channelise its energies in a non-violent form of struggle." It has been controlled to some extent by ceaseless efforts made by Mahatma Gandhi. We do not want our brothers to be victims of bullets by inciting them. The bureaucracy is always in search of opportunities to suppress the non-cooperation and thus strangle the nationalism. "Our entire energies" should be "directed towards

74. Ibid; also see "Swarajya Sangram Mein Kiski Vijai Ho Rahi Hai", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.64. Here Premchand pointed out : "What is the basic element of non-violent form of struggle? It is this : that we may force the enemy to repress this much that he would fall in his own eyes, his own soul (conscience) may start hating him. Even his police and army may refuse to abide by his repressive policy. Along with it (beside) we may abide fully by humility. Even a remote thought of immodesty should not come to us. The violent force cannot last long in presence of such an humble ideal. Seeing such a ruthless violence on the part of the colonial state, the public opinion gets favourably disposed to the movement and the movement gains momentum."

Also see, p.65. "This is our victory. This Danda policy, this repression, this violence would destroy the British Imperialism...We are on the side of truth."
peaceful, non-violent movement. The Congress volunteers are aware of their duty and of the fact that it is a religious struggle, i.e., battle for righteousness and for truth and they are duty-bound to abide by truth (dharma, non-violence).

But Premchand was doubtful whether the general rank and file of the Congress party would be able to abide by the principle of Satyagraha. He believed that the day a

75. "Vibhajak Rekha", op.cit. Premchand supported and praised Gandhi's technique of Salt Satyagraha. In a letter to Nigam he hit at those critics of Satyagraha who declared that the Salt Satyagraha as 'premature': "Salt Satyagraha is premature in the same way as death is always premature or as the moneylender's demand for payment is premature. Any movement or situation which involved financial risk or other sacrifices is always considered premature. The popularity of salt Satyagraha is itself a proof of that the movement is not premature."
Quoted by Madan Gopal, op.cit. p.308.


large number of men are prepared to sacrifice their everything for the nation, the independence would be achieved of its own but it is doubtful whether such a day would come or such a dream would be realized. Therefore, in such a situation i.e., until a large number of Indians are not prepared to sacrifice their everything for the nation, the policy of Satyagraha is not expected to achieve the aim. 78 He pointed out "It would have to be conceded now that Mahatmaji's inner voice which is not likely to be in error, is not reliable since it has committed mistakes a number of times." 79 Moreover, all Congressmen, according to Premchand are not Mahatma Gandhi, they are "human beings and not ascetics. Their non-violence is born out of realization of their incapacity (incapability). Therefore, non-violence has no spiritual value. 80 Premchand was realistic enough to recognize that in face of intolerable

78. Ibid, p.190.
80. "Congress Ka Naya Programme", ibid, p.218; Also see "Congress Aur Socialism", ibid, p.217.
repression let loose by the Colonial State, the Congressmen might discard the path of Satyagraha.\(^{81}\)

But one should remain steadfast and keep the movement unabated in spite of the severe repression by the Colonial State.\(^{82}\) In fact, the repression

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82. Premchand in many of his article attacked the Colonial State for its coercive methods and repression. His article "Danda" (\textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II, pp.58-59) is satire on the State that wants to use danda (staff) for all the purposes. England has invented a Panda Shashtra. "There is no need of law, no need of management. The Councils and Assemblies are useless, the courts...are fruitless. What a Danda is the medicine for all the rebels, wherever there is awakening of nationalism, signs of self-respect, take the help of \textit{Danda} immediately (p.58)...So now-a-days, it is the rule of the \textit{Danda}. What a brave community it is! It attacks with \textit{Dandas} the unarmed, women, children, travellers on their way, the people sitting in their home! And if someone points a finger on this brutal injustice, he is beaten with \textit{Danda} and then jailed." (\textit{Ibid}, p.59).

In an article "\textit{Naya Varash}" (\textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II, p.34), Premchand praised the Indian people for their undaunted courage and struggle for achieving independence in spite of severe repression by the colonial state. "Where else in the world can we get such an example of children, youth and old people facing such arduous torments in jail? Where even children courageously face the \textit{Dandas} of police"? Again in another article, "\textit{Vibhajak Rekha}" (\textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II, p.37) he wrote "In a political struggle such a situation does arise when the authorities adopt very harsh attitude and if we fear the authorities at every step we may be saved from going to jails and serve our interest but we cannot at any cost do good to our nation".

In an article "\textit{Daman}" (\textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II, p.54), Premchand wrote: "In fact the colonial state has not been able to grasp the reality (essence) of the Indian national movement. This movement is not led by a few Congressmen as the colonial state would be assuming rather it is a mass movement led by the Indian people and it cannot be suppressed by repression rather it would accentuate by repression."
itself would lead to the victory of the nationalists. They would score victory because they are fighting for their rights.

83. See "Daman", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, pp.53-57; "Azadi Ki Lari", ibid, pp.45-53. In the article "Daman", Premchand asserted that the extent to which the Colonial State has resorted to ruthlessness and repression indicates that the government are getting nervous by the awakened people of India. At the end of this article he says that the spirit of awakening cannot be crushed by repression rather it would gain momentum", op.cit, p.56. Also see "Ordinance Ki Avadhi", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.105; "Swarajya Sangram Mein Kiski Vijai Ho Rahi Hai", Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.65.


In this article, Premchand pointed out "We are fighting for our rights and victory is always on the side of the right. It is the eternal truth. The time is also on our side, this is age of democracy... It is of great significance in history to face dandas and bullets. Ibid, p.65.

In an article "Swarajya Mil Ke Rahega" Vividh-prasang, Vol.II, p.75, he wrote "It is an age of Swaraj and the International Public opinion is on our side. And besides it, the public can no longer bear autocracy".
Premchand portrayed this undaunted spirit for fighting for rights in a number of stories.85

This spirit of undaunted courage is depicted in Ramdhumi in a classic way. The unflinching


In the story "Anubhav", he shows how a person is sentenced to one year's imprisonment for offering sharbat (a cold drink) to nationalist volunteers. His wife is refused shelter by her father-in-law because he is expecting a higher grade that year from the govt. He does not want to be associated with the nationalists. Her own father also refuses because he fears his pension would be stopped by the govt. if he gives a shelter to a nationalist's wife. Ultimately her husband's friend (Gyan Babu) and his wife offer her shelter in their own house. But the secret police is always chasing her...

Gyan Babu, who is a school teacher, is warned by the head-master that he should dissociate himself from that lady. But he submits his resignation with dignity, but it is not accepted by the headmaster when he comes to realize the self-respect shown by Gyan Babu.

It is implied in this story that one should be fearless and must be courageous enough to uphold one's right to associate oneself with the nationalist activities.

Kailash in the story "Dikri Ke Rupal" (Mansarovar, Vol.III, p.67) remarks "so long as the Govt. continues to subject us with ruthless force we would be opposing it". In fact "It is from his stories of 1921-22 and 1930-32" points out Ram Vilas Sharma that "written during the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements of those years, that earned him the right to be called story-teller of the independence movement", Premchand Aur Unka Yug, Delhi, 1955, p.133.
courage in face of state-violence is symbolised in the following dialogue between Surdas, the blind beggar, and the protagonist of the novel, and his nephew. The hut belonging to Surdas is burnt by a villager, Bhairon, and Surdas's nephew, Mithua, is worried where to live now:

Mithua: Dada, where shall we live now?
Surdas: We shall build another house.
Mithua: And if someone again sets it on fire?
Surdas: We shall build it again.
Mithua: And he burns it again?
Surdas: We shall build it again.
Mithua: And if someone burns it one thousand times?
Surdas: We shall rebuild one thousand times.

Children have a special fascination for numbers. Mithua asked again: And if it were burnt down a hundred million times? With the same child-like simplicity Surdas answers: Then we too will build a hundred million times.

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86. Rangbhumi, p.139.
Also see, pp.138, 242.
Premchand embodied all the qualities he associated with Gandhi in the personality of Surdas. Surdas’s struggle against capitalist industrialisation has already been discussed in Chapter IV. But his struggle against capitalism takes the shape of a powerful movement. It is in this context that the colonial state intervenes in favour of John Sevak, the capitalist.

Surdas’s method of fighting is a unique one. In order to illustrate this we can refer to three important incidents in the novel. (a) The first is when the Municipal Board grants permission to John Sevak to acquire Surdas’s land. Since his appeal to the Chairman (Raja Mahendra Kumar) of the Municipal Board has not born any fruits he makes an appeal to the public. He roams from one street to another in the city of Benaras and attracts the attention of the way-farers by singing melodious songs. When a crowd gathers around him to listen to his song, he goes forth to narrate
his sufferings, appealing for justice. In this way he mobilises the public opinion in his favour. His approach has a desired effect upon the public.

(b) In the second incident also, Surdas adopts the same strategy of making appeal to

87. After having chanted the song he appeals to the public in these words: "I invoke the panchs; John Sevak and Raja Sahab have grabbed my land forcibly. Nobody listens to the appeal of the downtrodden. I, again, invoke the panchs..." Rangbhumi, pp. 218, 220.

88. Raja Mahendra Kumar, the Chairman of the Municipal Board/always been after his had public image, and Surdas has been very successful in destroying this image. Finally, the name of this Chairman has become so unpopular that it becomes difficult for him to come out of his house. Ultimately 'no confidence motion' is passed against him and he has to resign from the membership of the Board.

(b) Surdas calls himself a player who is playing in the field. According to him, the whole world is a playground. Whoever knows how to play good wins and those who do not, are destined to lose. He is least worried about the result of the game. His job is to fight with full courage.
the masses and is successful in convincing
the people that he is an innocent man.\(^9\)

(c) The third episode is the most important.\(^9\)

This lead to a strong movement and Surdas is
the protagonist of this struggle. The resi-
dents of Pandepur are ordered to evict their

89. Surdas is tried by the jury on the false
charge of abducting Subhagi, Bharon's wife.
Surdas declares in the court that Subhagi
is his sister but the jury sentences him to
imprisonment. He refuses to accept this
judgement and says that people are his court.
He addresses the huge gathering outside the
premises of court and finally waits for
people's judgement. The people declare him
innocent. It is true that despite public
opinion he is imprisoned but has to be set
free when the people collect fine and pay
for his release.

90. John Sevak has established the cigarette
factory and now wants to construct quarters
for the workers by destroying the houses at
Pandepur. The residents have to be evicted.
He is granted the approval of Municipal
Board for this purpose. Raja Mahender Kumar
announces the decision to the people of
Pandepur, thus: "...The govt. needs this
locality for a very special official work.
They have decided to acquire this land by
paying you its proper price. The order of
the Governor has been received. ...You will
have to vacate these houses within three
months from today... Whoever does not vacate
the house within this period his money meant
for compensation will forfeit and he will be
evicted from his house forcibly. If anyone
resists then police will prosecute him and
he will be punished for it. The govt. are
not giving this trouble without any cause,
they need the land seriously. I am only
implementing their orders...". Ibid, p.495.
houses. The people make an appeal to Raja that they had been residing in this colony for generations. They request him to allot them land somewhere else for shelter but Raja expresses his inability. And finally, they are ordered to evict the houses without even been paid compensation. Surdas refuses to come out of his hut. This takes the form of a strong movement. The members of seva-samiti (the nationalists) support the movement with full vigour. Raja Mahender is compelled to pay compensation out of his own pocket. Everybody, except Surdas, accept the money. Surdas firmly points out that it is his fundamental right to refuse to sell his own house. He does not budge even an inch from his hut. Ultimately he has to sacrifice his life for the

sake of his rights. 92 But the experience of defeat does not diminish the value of the fight. 93

92. The police force is strengthened. There is firing. About a dozen people are killed. The funeral procession is joined by about 10,000 people. Tension mounts. City dwellers are told not to go to Pandepur. Clark, who is now back in Benaras, is in charge of the situation. Surdas, carried on Bhairon's shoulders, tries to calm the crowd. Thinking that he is inciting the crowd to be violent against the police, Clark fires at him and Surdas falls down. And he dies in the hospital.

93. "What if we've lost", Surdas says on his death-bed, "We did not flee, we did not cheat. We'll play again, let us catch our breath... We'll learn how to play the game from you... You are an expert at the game. We are amateurs... one day the victory will definitely be ours". Quoted by Suresht R. Bald, op.cit, p.84. (Rangbhumi, p.74).
TENSION BETWEEN GANDHIAN IDEOLOGY AND THE REALITY

Premchand mirrored the tension between Gandhian ideology and the reality in Premasharam, Kayakalap and Kambhumi. Thus in Premasharam the tenants whenever faced with severe oppression decide to take to violent means to redress their grievances, but are either dissuaded by an old man, Kadir (a tenant) who always persuades them to suffer silently or by an educated leader, Premashankar, who tries to channelise the tenants’ energies into non-violent form of struggle to redress their grievances. Thus at one stage the tenants argue with each other:

Kadir Khan : Do you want to brandish/wield lathi?
Sukhu : For what other purpose the lathi is?
Kadir Khan : On whose back/support would you fight with lathi? Who is left in the village? God has already taken away youths in plague.
Sukhu : What if the youths are not there? Old men would do. How else our life would be useful.94

94. Premasharam, op.cit, p.181.
But Kadir prevails upon them and dissuades them to take to violent means.

It is worthwhile to discuss in brief an episode in the novel in order to illustrate how Premashankar, the educated leader, intervenes at a crucial stage when the tenants were ready to take arms against their oppressor. It occurs when the tyranny and pillage by visiting officials makes the villagers furious. The tehsildar orders the villagers to cut grass and then mix it with dung in order to prepare a playground for Polo. In particular, tenants belonging to the upper castes are outraged by being forced to do polluting work usually done by untouchables. One man, Dukhran, known as the most pious person in the village, refused to do such work and receives a humiliating beating with shoes. While other peasants like Kadir, Kulu, and Manohar cut grass by narrating humorous stories, Dukhran Bhagat does not derive any pleasure out of it. Finally, when the grass has been cut, the tehsildar orders them to clean it and mix it with dung in order to prepare the
playground for Polo. Dukhran, now refuses to do. He is beaten but he accepts beating without any demur, "the destitution (miseries) had decimated (slaughtered) all his sensuousness". Kadir Khan comes in between and offers himself to chaprasis and says that they can beat him instead of beating Dukhran. But the chaprasis pushed him aside. He (chapraşı) again lifted his shoe to beat him but suddenly Premashankar comes and stops chaprasis from doing so. All the villagers narrate their woes to Premashankar and he requests the tehsildar to stop beating them. The tehsildar says, "you have incited them to rebel. I suppose you must be related to some kisan sabha." And he does not stop his chap­rasis from beating the villagers. Now

95. Ibid., p.188.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid., p.186.
Premashankar
discerned the faces of the dwellers of Lakhanpur strained with resentment and anger. Every moment, there was an apprehension that some one among them may retaliate. The problem was getting intricate (complicated) every moment. There was no hope of humaneness and kindness on the part of tehsildar and other officials. At once he decided to do his duty. Facing the villagers he ordered them to obey tehsildar. Not even one of you leave this place. All of you would be paid the wages. You must not worry about it.\textsuperscript{99}

Hearing these words all the men got bewildered and saw Premashankar with amazing eyes. Even the government officials were surprised.\textsuperscript{100}

All the men except Dukhran Bhagat started doing the work peacefully. Premashankar took tehsildar's permission to let Dukhran Bhagat go home since he was badly hurt.\textsuperscript{101}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{100} Ibid, p.189.
  \item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid, p.189.
\end{itemize}
Dukharan Bhagat got frenzied and was addressing the villagers in incoherent way:

This is shaligram. He is very kind to his devotees! Always defends them! He always likes Mohanbhog (a special type of Halwa, Sweetdose). ...Ask him what did not I do to serve him? I myself used to eat Satu, my children lived on Chabena but I always offered Mohanbhog to it. I used to go for miles to fetch flowers for it... Did I perform this worship and devotion just to be beaten with shoes, wrongfully and mercilessly dragged, to become a chamar? Cursed, would I be if I keep such a Thakur at my home and worship it! Yes, I be cursed! The scholars have rightfully said that he (Thakur) is enemy of his devotees. He sees to it that his devotees get humiliated. He is pleased only with those who insult him (Thakur). Till now I was mistaken.102

Manohar says to Dukharan "brother, why are you showing ignorance being such a knowledgeable man. He is the master of the world. His greatness is boundless."

And Kadir adds: "who knows what is His will? He returns good for evil. Don't be disheartened/dejected."

And Dukharan replied to them laughingly:

All this is humbug to console your heart. It is just a lump of stone, an earthen mass. I had been mistaken till now. By worshipping it I thought I would achieve salvation

102. Ibid, pp.190-91.
both in this world and the next one. Today this illusion has been shattered and I have realized that it is just a earthen mass. Now, you Maharaj go wherever you like! I would worship you only in this way. You have given me reward for worshipping you for thirty years. I repay you the same reward."103

Saying this he throws out the Saligram stone and it breaks into pieces.104 Seeing all this Premashankar exclaims:

Oh God! Such a sense of self-respect in this uncultured (uncouth), illiterate and poor person! He has been heart-rent this much by humiliation! Who can say that this feeling becomes dead among the illiterate? Such a heart-rending blow (shock) which has destroyed the devotion, faith and self-respect!105

The whole village is seething with revolt. The final blow to the peasants comes when they are forbidden to use the pasture (grazing land) which had been their traditional right. Bilasi, Manohar's wife refused to take out her animals and Faiju, Gaus Khan's chaprasi insults her and manhandles her. Although the villagers in the evening assemble together, hold a meeting and

103. Ibid, p.191.
104. Ibid, p.191.
collect money to file a suit in the court in
defence of their right but Manohar feels
differently and he does not attend even the
meeting. He tells Balraj, his son: "It is
the bounden duty of men to defend their honour.
How else can we fight such a tyranny? It is
better to die than to lead a life full of
humiliation." 106

Manohar feels that the only way to avenge
his wife's molestation is to murder the man
who was responsible for it. Therefore, he
murders Gaus Khan at night and surrenders himself
to the police confessing the act so that the
police may not entrap the entire village. But
this murder gives good chance to Gyanshankar,
the landlord, to entrap all the tenants of
Lakhanpur. 107 Consequently all the villagers

106. Ibid., p. 205.
107. "Murder has been committed whether this has
been the job of one man or many. Problem,
for me, is more intricate. The major
question is the question of Zamindar versus
Kisans. If the murderers are not given
proper punishment then this type of inci-
dents will occur frequently and it would be
difficult for the Zamindars to save them-
are arrested. Now, the village of Lakhanpur is faced with ever new miseries. Murder of Gaus Khan does not solve the problem. Now, Faijul Khan who formally had in fact molested Bilasi, is now appointed the new Karinda. "His appointment as a Karinda added insult to injury" of the miserable wretches, i.e. the villagers. He was now the ruler of the entire village. His order was a law. No one had the courage to protest. Since there was hardly any man left in the village he started oppressing women. The rights which Gaus Khan could not acquire throughout his life were acquired by Faiju on the very first day of his appointment. Though Faiju was oppressing the entire village, Manohar's house was his special target. He reduced his house to poverty. The crops were getting dry in the field and Faijullah got good opportunity to evict the tenants because no one had even a penny to pay the land revenue. He starts oppressing everyone.

108. Ibid, p.244.
Especially the poor women become the special targets of his cruelty. Who was there now to stop these tyrannies?

The principle that Satyagraha has the strength to oppose the injustice became illusory. Faiju knew that he would not get anything out of the villagers but his only purpose in perpetrating these cruelties was to humiliate the villagers. His animal mentality used to derive extreme pleasure out of these misdeeds, cruelties. 109

Finally, Gyanshankar orders to file a suit for evicting all the tenants.

Thus the violent means or individual terrorism has brought suffering to the tenants.

In fact, Premchand had great abhorrence for terrorism. 110 He believed that the terrorists

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109. Ibid, p.248. Also see Rangbhumi, p.268. Surdas in this novel adopts truthfulness to change others' hearts but to no avail. At times it turns out to be the other way. At times he repents.

were not serving the nation by resorting to violent methods rather they were hampering the nationalist activity.\textsuperscript{111} Thus Sofia in \textit{Rangbhumi} after remaining among the terrorists and herself participating in the terrorist activities for some time, came to realize finally that one can not remain a terrorist for ever because human beings by nature are peaceloving.\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, she discarded this method and reverted to non-violent methods of struggle.

Chakradhar in \textit{Kayakalap} has inculcated the social and political consciousness among the tenants by means of Kisan Sabha. He channelises the peasants' energies into a constructive, peaceful and non-violent form of struggle. This is the result of this inculcation of critical consciousness among the peasants that they decide to refuse to do \textit{begar} for anyone.\textsuperscript{113}

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\textsuperscript{111} "Bengal Mein Atankavad", \textit{op.cit}, p.110.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Rangbhumi}, \textit{op.cit}, p.431.
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Kayakalap}, p.43.
This growing consciousness about their rights lead them to spontaneous revolt on the day of the coronation of Thakur Vishal Singh. This spontaneous revolt takes place as a result of (a) levy of Rs.10/- per plough from each tenant to collect money for celebration of the coronation; \(^{114}\) (b) begar for months together and especially on the day of coronation the chamars (peasants) had been working for the last eight days without getting even food to eat; \(^{115}\) (c) General reign of terror inflicted on the peasants by Karamcharis, to extract money and Rasad; (d) beating of workers with hunters on the day of coronation.

All this leads to spontaneous revolt of the Chamars (Harijans). At first the protest is very peaceful and non-violent. The workers simply want to stop the work and go out of the enclosure. But the gate of the enclosure is guarded heavily by the armed soldiers of Raja.

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114. Ibid, p.103.

115. As one young worker cries "We had been cutting the grass and then grooming the horses for last eight days without eating anything, can't the horses remain even one day without grass". Ibid, p.121.
The soldiers fire at the workers. When their Chaudhury, the leader of the Chamars, is shot dead with hundreds of others, the workers turn violent and with stones and Dandas in their hands attack the British officers who had been firing at them mercilessly. When the ammunition of the British officers is exhausted, the workers overpower them and are about to kill them when suddenly Chakradhar intervenes and requests them to remain peaceful. The argument between Chakradhar and workers is important:--

One worker: One hundreds of our workers have been shot dead, where were you then? Friends, why are you standing still, what harm Babaji (Chakradhar) has got? Have not we been butchered? Come forward and kill those officers.

116. Premchand compares these workers with sheeps and the soldiers guarding the gate of enclosure, with dogs:
"Inside were the scared sheep and outside stood the dogs in their fury. The sheep do not know how to fight out to run away in fear for their life. They would come out from the path which is directly before the eyes. In their trepidation the sheep do not know a lion from a dog. The soldiers had hardly even such an occasion to show off their valour. What is easier than firing bullets on the unarmed." - Kayakalap, p.112.
Chakradhar flung himself in front of riotous workers and said "If you are thirsty for blood, then I offer myself. You can move further only by trampling over my dead body.

Another worker: brother, get out of our way. We have been trampled upon, have been pestered, now let us take revenge.

Chakradhar: My blood does not suffice to pacify this flame?

Worker: Brother, you are harping about peace but do you know what it leads to? Anyone who fancies it, beats us, crushes us. Are we to keep sitting in peace? To keep sitting in peace only worsens our condition. Don't teach us to keep peace. Teach us to kill. Only then you will be able to liberate us."

Finally Chakradhar is able to convince the workers to desist from violence. Chakradhar feels that if the workers are allowed to kill the British officer it will invite the wrath of the colonial state and the result would be the general genocide of the poor peasants.

But Chakradhar is arrested and a case is filed

117. Ibid, pp.121-122.
against him for inciting the peasants.

This tension is mirrored in the peasant movement launched by Amarkant in Karambhumi. The issue of the movement at stake is the reduction in land-rent. The tenants' condition is so miserable that they are unable to pay even the rent. The rent has been increased by such a high proportion that it often exceeds the value of the produce.\textsuperscript{118} The Zamindar of these villages happens to be a Mahant, who leads a luxurious life.

A meeting of the Kisans is held under the chairmanship of Swami Atamanand, who has been actively working among the tenants along with Amarkant. Guthadu Chaudhury, the leader of his biradari, is a staunch follower of Amarkant, suggests constitutional form of struggle and most of his compatriots accept his proposal.\textsuperscript{119} But Swami Atmanand inflames them and he proposes them to launch a non-constitutional form of struggle:

\textsuperscript{118} See Chapter V of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{119} Karambhumi, p.242.
Atmanand opposed every one and said - I say, no purpose would be served by petitioning. If the roti in your plate asks you not to eat it, would you oblige?

There are cries from all around - No, we can never oblige.

"How can then those oblige for whom you are the rotis in their plates?"

Many voices supported this - "Can never oblige."

"Come forward, and let us surround (gherao) the Mahant's house and temple and stop all the functions until he remits the rent in full."120

But Amarkant tries to pacify the crowd.

He advocates the constitutional form of struggle:

Amar emphatically said: "The strategy you are adopting will lead you to destruction and ruin. Will you plough your fields with the support of sick bullocks?"

Everyone is silent. No voice is heard.

"First of all, you would treat your bullock with medicine and as long as he does not recover, you will not plough your fields with its help. Because you do not want that bullock should die. With its death your fields will turn barren."

Guthadu said, "Well said, brother."

"Is it righteous to burn one's own house? Should we let the fire spread and consign the safe articles too into the flames?"

120. Ibid, p.243.
Guthadu replied, "Never, Never."

"Why? because we don't want to burn our house, we want to save it. We are to live in that house. There is great turmoil in the entire country. Our leaders are trying to solve this problem. We should follow them."121

He delivers a long speech but people remain apathetic to his speech and then the meeting is adjourned without having taken any decision. But Amarkant along with Guthadu Chaudhury take the delegation to Mahant. After a day Amarkant is granted meeting with Mahant. The Mahant assures him that he will write to government regarding reduction of rent and only then he would take the final decision. But the colonial bureaucracy does not take any action for a long time and the Kisans become restless. Swami Atamanand does not leave any stone unturned to inflame the public and incite them for a non-constitutional form of struggle.

After a prolonged procrastination Mahant declares a reduction of twenty-five percentage of rent until the decision of the government. But his Karindas (agents) again start repressing the Kisans to extract the unpaid rent.122

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121. Ibid.
to discuss the situation arising out of this new problem a meeting is called at the bank of Ganges. And it is decided to launch a 'no tax campaign.' It takes the shape of a powerful movement. There is severe repression and the general genocide of the masses.

What is the positive achievement of the movement led by Amarkant? At the end of the novel, Amarkant is very doubtful of the method adopted by him. He is sad because this method has invited the wrath of the colonial state and caused heavy loss of life and property. He laments that he could have continued with the strategy of petitioning. But Sakhada, Amarkant's wife, gives a different interpretation to the movement launched in the villages and the city. She is very happy at the end. She feels that without launching a no-tax movement among the peasants it would not have been possible to inculcate the political consciousness which they have been able to instill into the minds of the people.

123. Ibid, p.258.
124. Ibid, p.337.
125. Ibid, p.337.
Before starting the movement Amarkant had adopted all possible peaceful methods to draw the attention of the government towards the miserable conditions of the Kisans but the authorities were not prepared even to listen to him. Later when the movement is in its initial stage Salim, the magistrate, submits a report to the authorities, about the true conditions of Kisans. But his superior, Mr. Ghaznavi disagrees with his views and his report. He says "All that we have to do is to obey the orders of our superiors. When they ask us to collect revenue, we have to carry out the orders. Whether it means hardship to the people or not, is none of our concern." 126 It is when the mass-movement rises to its peak that the colonial state is compelled to climb down. It seems that Premchand highly appreciated the Gandhian strategy of launching a movement and then withdrawing it at its peak, in order to force the colonial state to accede to their demands. 127

It is the pressure of mass movement which at the end, has forced the colonial state to appoint a committee of five members to look into the conditions of the Kisans.

128. At the end of the novel, it is shown how with the intervention of a capitalist, a committee of five members is formed to look into the conditions of the peasants and prepare a report and submit its decision to the government:

Salim asks Sethji (Capitalist): Will we have the power to co-opt the members of the committee as we wish?

Sethji says: Yes, full power.

Salim: Will the decision of the committee be binding?

Sethji: I believe so.

Salim: We don't need your belief. We should get it in writing.

Sethji: What, if you don't get in writing?

Salim: Then we don't accept this agreement.

Sethji: The result will be that you will remain in jail and the peasants will be ruined.

Salim: Whatever happens, may happen.

Sethji: You don't care much but think what will happen to the poor.

Salim: I have thought enough.

But with the intervention of Amarkant this agreement is accepted by Salim also. *Karambhumi*, pp. 335-336.
What is the attitude of Amarkant to this Committee? Salim is reluctant to accept the agreement unless assurance is given in writing. But Amarkant, the leader of the movement, gladly accepts this offer because he feels it is better to accept the offer of forming a committee. He hopes that the government should not have any hesitation in implementing the decision of the committee.

The committee is formed on the intervention of a capitalist. And there is no certainty whether the conditions of the peasants would be ameliorated. This leads us to the nature of the Congress leadership.

**CONGRESS LEADERSHIP**

Premchand's attitude to Congress Party was an ambivalent one. His attitude wavers between faith in the Congress leadership and a critique of it. Premchand's complex political thought can be seen as the product of the play between sympathy and identification with the Congress and a criticism of the shortcomings and
excesses of the Congress leaders themselves. His works derive much of its complexity from the double perspective that he adopted.

At one place he wrote that he was a Congressman "I am myself a Congressman. Not from today but always have been". At another he denies this fact. Asked by a friend to which party he belongs to, he replied that of course, his party would consist of workers and peasants. In another letter he wrote "I am almost convinced of Bolshevik principles".

Premchand regarded Congress as a platform for nationalist activities: Where each (every) party has the equal right to put forward its views and mould the nation to its ideology. Congress, believed Premchand, is the organisation of the poor. Its prime duty is to protect the

131. Same to Same, 21 December, 1919, ibid, p.93.
interest of the poor. The movement led by the Congress is the movement of the poor. The majority of the Congressmen are poor and those who are burdened with household activities.

In its legislation, the workers, peasants and the poor have the same place as other groups. It has eliminated the differences of class, caste and community.

He believed that the Congress and its leaders really have made sacrifices for the nation. And people have faith in them. Whoever is able to do service and sacrifice for the nation would deserve to be trust-worthy of the society.


136. Ibid.

137. "Bhai Ji Ka Akhsep", ibid, p.245.

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid.
But all those Khadi-clad and who go to jail by courting arrest are not selfless. Generally one can find opportunists among them who have courted arrest in order to serve self-interest.\textsuperscript{140} To assume that only Congressmen are wise and all others outside of its party are traitors is to turn one’s eyes from justice.\textsuperscript{141} Premchand was critical of the Congress for its silence on economic programmes.\textsuperscript{142} It is true that the Congress is a platform for all types of ideologies and individuals with different ideologies have joined it.\textsuperscript{143} Yet in order to remove any suspicion among people about the nature of the party it should make some planning.\textsuperscript{144} Big Zamindars, Talukdars, Traders and Industrialists have joined the Congress. They might leave the party the moment it declares

\begin{footnotes}
\item[140] "Ane Wala Chunav Aur Congress", \textit{ibid}, p.260.
\item[141] "Golmez-Conference", \textit{ibid}, p.69.
\item[142] See "Congress Ki Arthik Yojana", \textit{ibid}, p.263.
\item[143] \textit{Ibid}, pp.263-264.
\item[144] \textit{Ibid}.
\end{footnotes}
economic programmes inimical to them.\textsuperscript{145} All of them are participating in the freedom struggle with their own vested interests but at the same time all of them see it with suspicious eyes.\textsuperscript{146} Premchand believed that no policy can be framed just on political basis.\textsuperscript{147} It would have to decide about economic programmes only then its positive and negative features can be illuminated.\textsuperscript{148} In fact Premchand favoured such a policy which can fulfil the interests of all the interest groups.\textsuperscript{149}

In \textit{Gaban} Premchand posed the fundamental question of the future of common man when swaraj would be attained. Devideen is doubtful whether the conditions of poor people will improve even after attainment of swaraj if the present leadership

\footnotesize{
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid. p.264.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, p.264.
\textsuperscript{147} "Congress Ki Arthik Yojana", \textit{ibid}, p.264.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
}
and the social structure is retained:

These bigmen won't achieve anything. They can only cry. They can do nothing but sob like girls. Go to their homes and you won't see anything Indian in them. They have had ten or twenty handloom Kurtas tailored for public consumption, but the rest of their household effects are all imported. They are all steeped in luxury, big and small. And they claim they will save the country. What can save you, save yourself first.150

Devideen asks a leader addressing a large gathering, “Sir, tell me truly, when you speak of swaraj what picture do you see before your eyes?”151 The leader gets puzzled and cannot reply. Devideen tells Rama Nath that steeped in luxury and hankering after still more, the general run of nationalist leaders are more prone to oppress the poor rather than ameliorating their lot:

Today you are not in power, and still you are ... wedded to luxury- when you come to power you will grind the

151. Ibid.
poor and swallow them up. 152

In the story "Ahuti" also, Premchand gave
a similar view. To him "self-determination"
meant more than replacing John with Govind:
as Rupmani says:

If even after Swaraj, this ownership over
property remains and the educated class
remains so blindly selfish, I would say
such swaraj may better not come... For
me swaraj does not mean merely making
Govinda substituted in place of John. 153

152. Ibid.
Also see "Tavan", Mansarovar, Vol.I,
pp.296-303. A character remarks here
about the Congress volunteers:"If they
are so heartless now, what kind of justice
will they serve out when they get a little
power?" (p.302).
Also see "Kutsa", Mansarovar, Vol.II,p.144.
Thus Urmila remarks about the selfish
Congressmen:
"What right one has to use the fund donated
by poor, in giving parties to friends and
travelling in motors (p.144)... You assume
to be the servants of the nation but your
conduct is worse than that of the libertines.
The nation cannot be uplifted or regenerated
by such debauches. The nation requires
genuine sacrifice and renunciation." (p.146).

Jalapa in Gaban feels that the leaders are
busy serving their own interests. They
have no regard for the welfare of the
nation, op.cit, p.242.

CAPITALISM AND NATIONALISM

According to Premchand "the mankind has been a worshipper of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) since times immemorial". But "more harm has been brought in the world by Lakshmi than by the devil himself". She is "not a goddess but a witch". Premchand stated "from the dim and distant past right upto date, the history of mankind has been the history of the preservation of property". In fact, it is the root cause of all the troubles. So long as property continues to be the basis of organisation of human society, the world would not be regenerated.

That is why Premchand attacked Nationalism based on capitalism. Nationalism, in spite of being a progressive ideology, provides vested

\[155. \text{Ibid.}\]
\[156. \text{Ibid.}\]
\[157. \text{Ibid, English translation by Harish Trivedi, op.cit, p.285.}\]
\[158. \text{"Rashtriya Aur Antarrashtriyata", op.cit, p.335.}\]
\[159. \text{Ibid.}\]
interests in the world:

It (The Modern Nationalism) wants to corner riches all by itself and does not like to share with others. It will stuff its belly when others are starving and laugh when others shed tears of anguish. If it wants to clad itself in red and if the colour of blood be red, it will not hesitate to slaughter others to dye its clothes red. If a piece of man's heart can invigorate it, a thousand men will be seen butchered with its dagger. It accords its own existence the supreme importance in the world and would not bother even if the rest of the world is destroyed. Selfishness is its religion, its Bible and its path. All humane sentiments and moral questions give way to this insatiable lust.\textsuperscript{160}

It is this nationalism based on capitalism which has led to imperialism,\textsuperscript{161} which in turn

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{161} "Naya Zamana : Purana Zamana", \textit{op.cit}, p.264. "The new age belongs to the traders and to baniyas. He has mountains of wealth and is traversing the land and the seas in his pursuit of riches, he has reached the limits of the skies. Now the whole world forms his domain of work." Also see "Kheti Ki Paidavār Kam Karne Ka Ayojān", \textit{Vividh-prasang}, Vol.II, p.329; "Varatman Andolan Ke Raste Mein Rukwatein", \textit{ibid}, p.26.
\end{enumerate}
has brought forth an all-out struggle for existence in the world:

The modern nation has set a gory of struggle for existence in the world. And such communities as have not so far assumed the form of a nation are the targets of attack of imperialism. It goes forth to Africa and cleanses its forests and vales of the pagan blacks. It comes to Asia and raises the slogan of culture and education. No one can doubt its good intentions. It does not enslave any one nor does it burn to ashes any city but it is a strange coincidence that the life of any 'non-nation' that falls into the clutches of this nation comes to be pestered with dismay and humiliation.162

It is true that the inter-action between nations has strengthened human relations.163 The whole of England raises a hue and cry if there is any injustice done to an English businessman in China. There is cry for blood and litigation.164 If a French paper is banned in a certain State the entire French world is set aflame with indignation. Was there ever such a feeling of unity and sympathy.165

163. Ibid, p.263.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
But the truth is that this unity and agreement is based on the relative sovereignty of nations rather than the considerations of humanity. 166 How is that a whole nation is roused on hearing about the humiliation of a single individual in a far-off place but we are hardly moved by the starvation and penury of our own neighbours and friends? 167 Why is the European capitalist, lolling as he is in his magnificent boat of luxury and riches, does not bother about those hapless orphans who are caught up in the whirlpool of poverty and indigence? 168 Capitalism has brought about inequality in society. There is an ever-widening disparity between the rich and the poor, the industrialist-capitalist and the proletariat. 169 For all the talks of equality no real effort is made to remove the inequality and other ills.

166. Ibid, p.263.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
169. Ibid, p.262.
Of the modern society. In the inimitable word of Premchand, "the leprous body is being garbed in a gaudy attire".\(^{170}\)

Therefore, only by solving the economic question, it would be possible to destroy nationalist chauvinism.\(^{171}\) Without destroying the foundation of capitalism it is not possible to reach Internationalism.\(^{172}\)

According to Premchand, the Internationalism or Monism or Aikatamvad or equality, all three are basically the same.\(^{173}\) There are two paths to achieve this: one Spiritual and the other Material. The spiritual path has already been tried for centuries. It visualised the loftiest ideals for the society and created the noblest codes (principles) to realise this aim.\(^{174}\) Prophets like Christ and Budha tried to change the social organisation

\(^{170}\) Ibid.  
According to Premchand, "Rashtriya Aur Antarrashtriya", op.cit. p.333. Here Premchand pointed out "Nationalism is the plague of modern age, just as religious fanaticism had been the plague of Middle Ages."

\(^{171}\) "Rashtriyata Aur Antarrashtriyata", op.cit., p.334.

\(^{172}\) Ibid.  
\(^{173}\) Ibid.  
\(^{174}\) Ibid. p.335.
by means of mental and spiritual purification but failed.\textsuperscript{175} It relied on man's volition but what it resulted into was an army of religious parasites.\textsuperscript{176} The society remained stagnant rather it became more backward.\textsuperscript{177} In spite of the rise of innumerable sects, religions and preachers the rancour and violence against each other is much more, as compared to earlier times.\textsuperscript{178}

Therefore, according to Premchand, the material path has to be tried now, and that is, the elimination of private property.\textsuperscript{179} According to Premchand, for a country like India where majority of the population is poor, socialism

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{175}. Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{176}. Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{177}. Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{178}. Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{179}. Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
can only be the alternative. Premchand saw hope in the coming age. The contemporary happenings portend the arrival of the age of workers and peasants. In India the workers and peasants would rule.


In this story it is stated that the "cycle of society began with equality (communism) and it would end with communism. The autocracy, the dominance of rich and the power of capitalists, these are intermediary stages. The present cycle has passed through these intermediary stages and its end is approaching."
Premchand saw this dream being realized in Soviet communism. He believed that the dictatorship in the Soviet Union is a temporary phase. Its aim is to build a socialist society in which there won't be any distinction between rich and poor, ruler and the ruled and everyone would be a human being. He stated:

Some wonder where the motivating force for human endeavour will come from once we have abolished the prospect of personal gain. How then will the arts, the sciences, and all knowledge flourish? But had Tulsi-das written the Ramayana so as to earn royalties from it? Even today we find thousands of men who are writers and preachers and teachers and poets merely because they get some emotional satisfaction from what they do. These doubts arise in our minds because we cannot yet imagine ourselves as anything but individuals. As soon as we can conceive of a collective society, these selfish considerations will by themselves become refined.


Premchand wanted a classless society but he believed that socialism should be ushered in by means of non-violent methods. 185

THE LIMITATIONS OF EDUCATED LEADERS AS DEPICTED IN NOVELS

The educated leaders like Premashankar, Chakradhar and Amarkant are constrained by certain limitations which to some extent hamper their efforts to bring about change in the society. Let us examine some of these limitations.

The most important aspect of these characters is their vacillation between the two pulls: the pull of the social ideal and the pull of social linkages. Thus Premashankar's dilemma is that the village of Lakhanpur where he is actively working among the peasants, belongs to his younger brother, Gyanshankar. Though he has cast away his association with the

institution of Zamindari 186 and lives among the peasants, yet his social linkages do hinder to some extent his efforts to implement his programmes. It is worthwhile to quote two episodes from Premasharam to illustrate this aspect.

One such incident is when he starts propagating among the peasants the need to put an end to the tendency of fragmentation of land by force of law. A friend tells him that "it was his illusion if he thought it was possible to put an end to this custom by force of law". The root of "this poisonous weed" says his friend "lies in the very core of man's heart", and unless uprooted, the custom "would continue to thrive". 187 But Premashankar refutes his argument by pointing out "Law can bring some sort of a reform". 188 To

186. He tells his brother "I don't want even to hear that I am the Zamindar of that village. I want to earn a living by my own sweat, not be a middle man, a broker... Think yourself, what kind of a justice it is that we should pile up money while others toil for it..." Op. cit., p.146.

187. Ibid. p.207.

188. Ibid.
this the gentleman rejoins emphatically that it is absolutely not possible, "on the other hand" he asserts, "the selfishness will assume a more heinous form on not getting a chance to come out in the open". At this point Premchand by a mere dramatic device turns the whole argument against Premashankar by making a poor peasant, who had returned from the court after moving an application for division of land, speak out:

I say, nothing will happen. We only follow you people. When even brothers can't pull on together amongst you, what will happen to us! God has given you everything and yet you are living away from your brother.

These uncouth remarks pierce into the heart of Premashankar. He bows down his head. The peasant realizes that he has "uttered something improper" and begs to be excused for whatever fault he might have committed, yet Premashankar instead of explaining the ideological differences which lead to his separation from his brother, accepts

189. Ibid.
190. Ibid, pp.207-208.
that the peasant has not said anything improper.\textsuperscript{191} He lays the entire blame on himself.\textsuperscript{192} For a moment he is prepared to

\begin{quote}
191. "...I needed this plain-speaking. You have taught me a good lesson. There is no doubt that rancour and envy prevail amongst the educated as much as it does in the illiterate people and I am myself at fault in this matter. I don't have any right to lecture others." \textit{Ibid}, p.208.

192. While left alone Premashankar ponders over this question. The more he thought, the more blameworthy did he find himself. "It is all my doing" he soliloquizes. "If he had a quarrel with the tenants, it did not behove me to side with them. Knowing that Gyanshankar had unleashed tyranny, I should have lived away from him or brought him around with brotherly love. This I couldn't do. On the other hand I have picked up a quarrel with him. I concede that there is an acute divergence in his principles and mine but why should the differences in principles infect brotherly love. Granting even that he has always ignored me, to the extent that he has bereft me of the love of my wife, I, too, have not ever tried to be with him, to forget his ill-treatment or to tolerate his bitter jibes. If he slipped one finger away from me, I moved away by palm. Love of principles does not imply that one should become hostile to one's near and dear ones. This is a good opportunity for me to clear my heart for him." \textit{Ibid}, p.208.
\end{quote}
sink all the differences with his brother and make a compromise at the cost of his social ideal. He relies on the acts of goodwill to win over Gyanshankar but fails.

That Premashankar, thus, wavers between the two pulls: the pull of the social ideal and the pull of social linkages, is very well illustrated in another episode. At the end of the novel, Premashankar is elected a member of the Council. He wants to raise the question of land-reforms in the Council. But somehow he is hesitant to do because of the fear of Gyanshankar. Though Premchand contrasts the attitude of other members of the Council and that of Premashankar, yet two years pass away.

193. Premchand describes the attitude of other members of the Council thus: "...People came to the Assembly to amuse themselves and went away after raising a few silly questions and showing off their gift of the gab... but doubtlessly, they were devoid of the purpose of serving the masses. The motive and endeavour; the means and the end all merged in the privileges..." *Ibid*, p. 411.

But for Premashankar and his group Premchand lavishes praises "But Premasharam did not have that laxity... People were already devoted to service here. Now they got an opportunity to broaden their scope of work..." *Ibid.*
in this manner and although the "friends group had charmed the Assembly", Premashankar still cannot muster enough courage to present his proposal, the purpose of which was to take away from the Zamindars their right to eject the tenants. Why Premashankar is hesitant?

Premchand comments:

...He himself belonged to a Zamindar family. Jawala Singh too was a Zamindar. Lala Prabhashankar who he adored like his own father, could not tolerate the diminishing of his rights even by a hair's breadth, on account of these reasons he hesitates to bring his proposal before the Assembly. Though the Assembly had a large number of landlords, Premashankar did not fear the Assembly, as he did his own relatives. At the same time he felt sad on diverting from the path of his duty...194

This sums up Premashankar's vacillating attitude.

Second, these characters' attitudes are governed by middle-class Psychology. They are egoists, at times, they care for their name and fame, are jealous of their co-leaders. This is very well demonstrated in the case of Amarkant in *Karambhum*. It is worthwhile to give some examples from this novel.

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Amarkant meets the chief district official, Mr. Ghaznavi, in order to petition on behalf of the peasants. When the later starts cutting cheap jokes about girls with Amarkant his ego gets inflated. Then Mr. Ghaznavi seeks Amarkant's opinion whether to arrest Atamanand who is creating trouble for them by inciting the Kisans to adopt non-constitutional form of struggle, Premchand comments:

Such a high official was talking on equal terms with Amarkant then why should not it go to his head. 'Atmanand is in fact spreading fire' thinks Amarkant. 'Peace will be established in the region if he is arrested. Swami is courageous, a good orator and a true servant of the country but at this juncture it is better he is arrested.' He replied in a manner to ensure that his feelings are not exposed but at the same time blow is aimed at Swami.

And Mr. Ghaznavi is able to fathom Amarkant's inclinations. Amarkant, though devoted to social reform, yet becomes vainglorious and conceited

196. Ibid.
when Ghaznavi offers him lift in his car and drops him to his village:

In the morning Mr. Ghaznavi sent Amar to the village in his own car. Amar's pride and joy knew no bounds. The company of officials had lent to him an officious majesty. He told the villagers: 'The administrator of the Pargana is arriving to investigate into your condition. I warn you, no one should make a false statement. Whatever he asks should be replied to accurately. Neither should you hide your condition, nor exaggerate it. The investigation should be factual. Mr. Salim is very noble and sympathetic man. There is bound to be delay in the investigation. But there is always delay in administration. It is such a vast region, months may be spent in touring through it. Till then you start your Kharif operations. I assure you eight annas exemption for a rupee. Patience is rewarding."

This, also has an effect upon his co-leader Swami Atmanand who "saw that Amar was cornering all the credit to himself and there will be nothing but discredit to Swami's lot. Therefore, he changes side. Amar and Swami "spoke from the same platform. Swami bent a little, Amar offered his hands and then there was cooperation between them. This clearly indicates that they were serving the Kisans for getting fame.

197. Ibid, p.257.  
198. Ibid.  
199. Ibid.
Third, though these characters are motivated by idealism and their values are at variance with those of the society, yet their efforts to bring about change in the society, in the beginning are only half-hearted. It is because the force of circumstances than their conscious decision that they eventually plunge whole-heartedly into the movement for social change. Thus Amarkant is forced to leave his city by his circumstances. His infatuation with Sakina, a poor girl from a Muslim family leads him to flee from the city. And how does he take a decision to launch a non-constitutional form of struggle? It is also decided by him not consciously but out of a sudden impulse. When a meeting was being organised to discuss the situation arising out of the new problem, both Amarkant and Swami

200. This new problem was: no action is taken by Zamindar and the colonial bureaucracy in regard to reduction of rent and the Karindaas start exacting arrears of rent from the tenants, with ruthlessness.
take a moderate stand. But amidst this process of meeting, Amarkant receives a letter from his sister informing him of his wife's arrest while leading a strike in the city. Amarkant is fired with enthusiasm to read this news: "Ah! she is behind the bars and I am lying here. What right do I have to remain free." And he delivers a fiery speech advocating a mass movement. He is not even conscious of what words he spoke in the meeting: "nobody knows who said what in the meeting. He, too, does not know what he himself spoke." But in spite of all these weaknesses and caught up in the continuous struggle between the two opposite pulls, these characters fight a consistent battle with the social reality and strive to transform that reality. In this process they themselves undergo evolution. Lastly, we may point out that the contradictions that they are beset with, were the contradictions of the society of Premchand's time.

201. Ibid, p. 258.
Premchand as a creative writer does not depict them as single stereotypes but as human beings with all their weaknesses, contradictions and limitations. There is continuous struggle between the ideal and the real in Premchand's creative process while portraying the social reality.