CHAPTER - 6

SHORT STORY OF TAGORE AND PREMCHAND:

ACHIEVEMENTS
Short stories of Tagore and Premchand: Achievements

1. Short stories of Rabindranath and Premchand, successful manifestation of their social awareness

The two literatures who gave Indian fiction its greatness and cleared its way for its development in different ways are, the deathless writer of Bengali language, Rabindranath, and one of the greatest writers of Hindi language Premchand. These two contemporary writers occupy the most important and respectable place in Indian literatures of the modern times. Though their family environment was different and attitude of the society was also not the same, yet in their mind and thinking they were very close to each other. Rabindranath had a many-sided genius, ... he was a poet, a story writer, a novelist, composer of songs, a play writer and a painter, all rolled in one. In every branch of literatures he moved freely and his greatness is undisputed. But the flowering of Premchand’s genius was confined to his skill as a story writer. His artistic skill has found expression mainly through his stories and novels. Within their own spheres, the two writers made the stories of their languages reach the highest points of excellence.

Both Rabindranath and Premchand avoided the outdated traditions and values and social evils and made social awareness. The themes of their stories, though Rabindranath wrote stories where Nature plays the dominant role, yet whenever he made man his subject matter, he spoke about their problems, their blind beliefs, their evil customs, and the misery and suffering of their life. So, Uday Chand said, "bīśāl ei bāh, lār saṁājera pāṁtabārik jēba, haddhamūl saṁkāra bālyabībāha, paṛprathā, puṇyeyer
The main themes of the stories of Premchand were his loud protests against social discrimination and oppression. The subject matters of his stories were his deep sympathy for the common man and his nationalistic views. We find his heartfelt sympathy for the man in the street who were the victims of social injustice. So, after reading the stories of Premchand Victor Balin has said, "is sādhāran, āmāndān, saral chal prapancha vihēn vinamra manusyaṅkē niyatī ke pratti gahan sahānubhūti jāgrata hatē hei."³

Regarding the prose writings of Rabindranath many people complain that they are written with the pen of a poet. Bipin Chandra Pal and other
critics preferred to stay away from his stories and novels because in their opinion, they were unrealistic, romantic creations, products of his imagination. However, this objection is totally baseless so far as the stories of ‘Galpaguchha’ are concerned. In the Pages of ‘Galpaguchha’ Rabindranath portrayed the real life of the society of Bangal with sympathy and from his own experience. He refused the allegation of the poetic nature of his stories himself time and again. In his letters and elsewhere he often said that there are ample signs of the middle class character of his stories. Such intimate pictures and characters and such unbroken and all-pervading influence of nature, had no precedence nor does it appear to have been seen in the later period. The poet was deeply hurt when these accusing fingers were pointed at him. So, he said, “āmān racanāy yārā madhyā bittār sandhān kare pānni bale nāliś kare kāche āmān ekī kāi phiyāt debār samay ela.”

In this connection he further said, “ek samaye māser pan māś āmi pallājē baner galpa racanā kare esechi. āmān biśwās et pūrbe bāṃlā sāhitye pallājē baner citra eman dhānaābāhik bāhe prakāś haini.”

Again he said elsewhere at that time, “bhebe dekhle bujhte pānbe, āmi ye chaṭa chaṭa galpagula likhechi, bāṅgālī samājen bāstab jēbaner chabi tātei prātham dhānā pare.” From these assertions of Rabindranath we understand clearly that the true-to-life pictures of the Bangali society are seen in the stories of Rabindranath. So, Sri Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay has said, “pallājē baner nicatā, dweś, kṣudhratā bibād” have been portrayed with surprising skill.

The many sided problems of the rural society of Bengal in which the life of ordinary man is deeply sunk, their joys and sorrows, their endless exploitation, their blind superstitious beliefs, are the chief themes of his
stories. The stories were very near to the heart of Rabindranath himself because these were, "mānab jēbaner sei sukh-duḥkken itihās yā itihāske atikram kare barābar cale eseche kriṣiksetre; pallē pārbane, āpan prātyahik sukh-duḥkha nei -- kakhana bā magal rājatwe, kakana bā īmrej rājatwe tān aṭī saral mānabatwa prakāś nitya caleche -- seiṭei pratibimbita haechila galpagucche, kana sāmanta tantra nāi, kana rāṣṭra tantra nai." 7

The country has gone through many upheavals in state matters, wars, feudalism, the impact of capitalism which brought many changes, yet we still find the disparity between the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, society ridden by dead customs, the dowry system in the name of a social tradition, oppression of woman, family fends, broken families and marriages, etc. In the stories of Rabindranath we get the realistic and life like pictures of the troubled life of the Bangali people as stated above the first time.

The chief ingredient of all kinds of fiction is man. In his short stories Rabindranath has spoken about this man, but only the realistic stories of his life. Here we see his realistic social awareness in almost every story. But he did not sacrifice the artistic aspect of literature for the sake of realism. He wrote the chronicles of human life without losing sight of the purity of art. He looked at life with the utmost sincerity, but this is not seeing something out of the window, he delved deep into the heart of life and so Dr. Swasti Mandal has said, "jamidān rābāndranāth barendra baigir mājkhāne ese bāṃlādēsh, pallēgram grāmīn bāṅgālīr jēbanke dekhhchen pratyakṣha abhīgyatāḥ sāhājye." 8 In his numerous stories which he wrote throughout his life the unadorned human qualities of human nature
have come out alive. Whether he saw life from close quarters or from a
distance, his stories reflect the eternal story of man, his joys and sorrows,
painted with the touch of his creative mind.

Like Rabindranath, Premchand also wrote his immortal stories about
man and his life. So this can be said without any hesitation that so long as
society will allow wrong, unprincipled activities, injustice, exploitation, etc,
his stories will act as a beacon light. And when human society free itself
from this injustice and oppression he will be remembered as the forerunner
in this path of freedom. So Dr. Dharmadhawaj Tripathi has said, "*samāj
me byapta sāsan utpātan aur āpādhāpē kē jindegē ka premchand ne
behata nāhī mānā hei.*"9 Because he lived this kind of life himself. So
Premchand expressed his own feeling through the life of Rupmani, the
heroine of his story ‘Ahuti’, "*agan yēh samāj vyevasthā yā ki tā banē
rahe, paīse kā sāsan, dharma aur jāti kā daman yā kā tā banā
rahe, sinjēon kā jagah gavindā ka gaddi paṅ behīhā diyā āye ta mei
ise swarājwa nāhī samajhtē. aise swarājwa kā nā ānā hē acchā
hei.*"10 Premchand vehemently opposed the two heinous crimes of the
society, exploitation of man and being indifferent to him and ignoring him.
In his opinion this attitude cut into the vitals of the society from inside.

In this stories Premchand has portrayed the uglyside of life in a very
realistic and heart touching manner. He wrote in his stories the true experience
of his life. His early life troubled by wants, the unfortunate behaviour of his
step mother, the indifference of his wife, exploitation and oppression of the
society, all these and many more of these have been portrayed in his stories
in natural colours and in a touching manner. In each of his stories the true
of the society has come out in a strange fashion. In his story, ‘Samar Jatra’,

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Premchand makes the rural people aware of their rights and also their duties and obligations and says, "apka bhag vilas se matlab nahē, naśa pānē se matlab nahē, apnē kām kārnā aur apnē dasā par santaśi. rakhnā yeh apkā ādarś he, lekin apkā yeh devatwa, apkā yeh siddhāpan āpke hak me ghātak ha'nahē hei. ..... āpke hunāta se sabhē rajgān chinte jāte hei, āpkā sanvānaś ha nahē hei, par āp ānkhe khalkar nahē dekhite."\(^{11}\)

In this way Premchand voiced his own opinions through voice of his heroines. We get a life-like pictures of the unfortunate condition of the Indian society of the time. He felt the sufferings of the peasantry as his own sufferings, and so his stories are the stories of the life of the peasants and the labouring class. Premchand stood in defence of the exploited people of a subservient India and wished to create a literature which will help in the awakening of the people. So we get a distinct creative understanding, a depth of thought, and a will to fight against the odds of life, in his literary works. They are the stories of the downtrodden, their poverty-ridden life, they are the mouth-piece of the dumb and suffering people and voice the desires and aspiration of the millions of Indian. In about more than three hundred stories Premchand gave his hopes and desires an immortality which carry the above mentioned characteristics. From his stories it becomes clear that he dreamt of such a society where humanity is not cursed by, discrimination, disparity, and distortion and where there is no artificial wall between man and man. Reading his stories people are encouraged to fight against all the above evils of the society. So Dr. Indra Mohan Kumar Sinha wrote, "unkē racanā pāthakna ke man me mānavacita manyūdā kā udrek aur sāhas kā sancār kar unhe saṃgrām ke liye taiyān kartē
In his historical stories Premchand created the background of the present condition of India. In the page of history he told the stories of the misery and suffering of the people of the present day.

In the stories of Rabindranath and Premchand, the two immortal writers in Bengali and Hindi, we get the social problems of the ordinary people rather than the lives of the kings, zamindars or the aristocrats. Rabindranath did not just tell us about the natural beauties of Bengal, the colorful changes of scenes of the six seasons, the influence of nature on human life or the role of man against the background of nature. The decadent feudalism, the misery and suffering of the Bengalis after the coming of the English, how the rural life was influenced by modern education, the dying aristocracy of the olden times, the attitude of the newly-come-up trading community, the external and internal problems of the life of woman, awaking of women, the political awareness of the people which came in the last part of the 19th century, etc. all these issues make their appearance in his stories. In other words, we get acquainted with the different problems of the rural and urban life of Bengal between the years 1891-1910, or a little more, in the stories of Rabindranath. But he did not look at the problems from the point of view of a sociologist, nor did he wish to play the role of a social reformer. He want in search of the eternal humanity against the background of the contemporary social problems, with the sympathy and wide experience of his creative mind. In the opinion of Buddhadev basu the stories of ‘Galpaguchha’ are realistic portrayals of contemporary Bengal. He had the opportunity to mix with the man in the street in his own estate. His Poetic temperament was hurt when he came to know about the social, economic
and personal problems of these people, and so he expressed his feelings about the trouble-torn life of the people by the power of his creative mind. And here we get the true acquaintance of the social awareness of Rabindranath as a writer of stories.

The whole gamut of Premchand's literary works in the triumphant cry of humanism. All his stories and novels centre around man and his society, and the man and the society are mostly of the rural area. This is because the major part of the Indian population lives in villages and there the people have always been the victims of exploitation. So we get the pictures of a society troubled by discrimination, oppression, humiliation, and exploitation in his stories. Before Premchand no Hindi writer of stories told us the truth of the ugliness of the daily life of the people who tried to stave away starvation which stalked them all their life. They are the most ordinary people, so fear-ridden that they don't blame any one for their misery and suffering. And here Premchand found the sweetness of the simplicity of the people who work all their life, who suffer and yet they never complain. Living in a society torn by economic disparity, suffering is the daily bread of their life. The fatalist, downtrodden, laboring class are ceaselessly exploited and oppressed by the Zamindar, the money lender, the landlord, the police, the priest class, and so on. These people have no social position or dignity. In his short stories Premchand wrote about this neglected humanity. Their little joys and more sufferings in a touching manner, and in this way they have become a true image of his social awareness.

Both Rabindranath and Premchand wrote in defence of the oppressed and suffering people of India. Since they were contemporaries, their stories
reflect the realistic image of the life and the society of their time. In their
own language their literary realisations were truly great and they went nearly
parallel to each other. Though, social awareness is less prominent in the
stories of Rabindranath compared with that of Premchand, but it seems
that there is a particular reason behind this. Basically Rabindranath was a
worshipper of nature, and had a universal awareness and was also a
visionary. On the other hand Premchand was influenced by the different
social forces of his time and was a writer who broke new grounds. The
conditions of the lives of these two writers of great genius of India were
different, as there was a difference in their language and style. Yet the thing
that bound them together was their thinking and understanding, which made
them complementary to each other. The thinking and understanding also
made them the pioneers of a social revolution. By the term ‘social revolution’;
we mean the awaking of the peoples awareness about the evils of the society
like, orthodoxy, bad customs, blind beliefs, etc. Social awareness is at the
centre of their stories which give them sustenance. The two literatures did
not write to show their sympathy and a broad outlook only for the suffering
Indian masses, in their wider aspect, their stories are the vehicles where
they raise their voice of protest in defence of the suffering humanity in
general.

2. The short stories of Rabindranath and Premchand : Art and Craft

The two great writers created a novel quality of art and craft in their
stories with the noble intention of bringing desirable and useful changes in
the society and the life of the people. Though they were born in a literary
tradition already in existence, but they did not inherit the true technique of
short story, they had to create the technique themselves. In his collection
‘Galpaguchha’ beat up his track himself and came to be recognised as the pioneer of modern Bengali short stories. Perhaps examining all these things Prof. Narayan Gangopadhyay said that, Rabindranath had to invent his own technique and style for his stories, had to establish Bengali short story in all its beauties and flavors, through endless experiments and constant cultivation. It was not simply because the short story was the latest addition in the realm of fiction, led by Rabindranath a new art form in literature - *The Short Story* - made its appearance in the 19th century and the early 20th century. Rabindranath was the true forerunner of Bengali short story. Not only from the point of external form; in the matter of variety of subject matter, the fragments of the ever flowing realities of life, and its drama and truth, with its ending with the feeling, “it ends and yet it does not end”, Rabindranath put the Bengali short story on a firm foundation. So Prof. Tarun Ghosh said, “ādhunik chatagalper bicitra dhārā tān hātei srīṣṭi haechila, ei aithihāsik satya bismita habān nai.”

As in other branches of Bengali literature so in this branch also Rabindranath was the pioneer, so Prof. Narayan Gangopadhyay said, “rabēndranāther upar cekabhen prabhāv nei - mapiśān o nai cekabh yeman ‘created his own world’ rabēndranāth o temni bhāvei tān nijaswa galper pṛthibē gāte niechen upekṣhita pallā bāṃlān mārmalake.”

The first artist and the introducer of short story in Bengali literature was Rabindranath, and in this matter he had no predecessor. May be the contemporary story writers of the West or those who came a little early, inspired him, but they did not influence him. In fact, he gave the short story its structure in Indian literature. So, Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay
said, "bdmldn chatagalpen janak o pradhān śilpē rabēndranāth thākur. ṭān hātei en pattan, paricaryā bikās." ¹⁵

Rabindranath mastered the technique of writing short stories in the matters of the form of modern short story, the use of language conforming with the subject matter, controlling the movement of the story leading to its predetermined goal, avoidance of all excesses, ending the story at the right moment in the right manner, etc. To achieve this success Rabindranath did not have to borrow ideas from anyone. He might have got inspiration from some other writer at best. He transformed this inheritance with the help of his originality of thinking, his personality, reasonableness in the choice of his subject, in the use of language, making necessary changes in the form for its improvement, etc. he created his own tradition. "ān saikhañei rabēndranāth atulanza ebun rabēndranāthke yini prabhābita kañechen sabceye bēzē, ṭān nām rabēndranāth." ¹⁶

In the hands of Premchand also this new art form of short story took a new shape. He wished to use fiction as a means to serve the end of social reform. His technique of writing shows his progressive outlook. In his 'Prabandha Kahani Kala-I' he wrote, "ākhyāikā me ek śabd, ek vāyā bhē eisā nā hanā cāhiye ja galpa ke uddesya ka spaṣṭ na kastā ha. iske siwā kahānī kē bhāṣā bahut hē saaral aur subadh hanē cāhiye. upanyās wahē lag paṭte hei, jinke pās rupyahei. aur samay bhē unhē ke pās rahatē hei, jinke pās dhan hataē hei. ākhyāikā sādhāran juntē ke liye likhē jātē hei jinke pās na dhan hei, na samay." ¹⁷

Premchand took literature to be something which should be beneficial to the society. He did not believe in the theory, 'Art for Art's sake' literature is for the entertainment of the individual, so he always said, "mei aur
So, he never admitted the description of the physical appearance of the protagonists of his stories, use of language for the purpose of expressing high emotion, to be a part of the art of literature. Because with these ingredients the true character of the contemporary age can not be faithfully represented. In his opinion this kind of literature gives prominence to the personal point of view which is the other name of egoism, it also widens the path of inertia and consequent downfall. So, "eisē kalā na vyekti ke rūp mei upayagē hei na samudāi ke rūp mei." Premchand based his stories on the foundation of this belief. His chief aim was psychological analysis, i.e. the natural portrayal of the realities of life where imagination will play a subservient role and feeling will be more dominant. Because Premchand believed, "anubhutiynā hē nacanāśēl bhāwnā se anukanjit hakar kahāni ban jātē hei." 

He felt that stories should not be the exact copies of the realities of life. The beauty of art is that, though it is not exact yet it gives one the taste of the exact. The reader can be at one with the story when he will find in it something more than the exact realities of life.

Premchand felt that characters should be multidimensional, there should be strangeness and variety of events, instead of curiosity there should be intensity of feeling and a newness of style, there should be the essential ingredients of a short story. To make this newest branch of literature more effective and influential, lesser and still lesser number of words should be used, not a single word should be redundant, where the very first sentence of the story grips the attention and every word and sentences serve the purpose of the story, and the language is easy flowing, simple and lucid. He
felt that there should be newness and simplicity in the style of the narration, it should rouses the curiosity and judgement, awaken the sense of beauty, and these should be everything in it to please the mind.

Premchand was ever enthusiastic about making his stories influential, attractive and popular. He wished to express the naturalness, i.e. the ideal and the sense of truth, in his stories. Stories as a branch of literature should develop in such a manner that they will not only reflect the image of life but will also better the taste of the people. So, in the words of Premchand it can be said, "jis taraha masālīna ke bāhulya se bhajan kā swād aur upayagītiā kām ha jātī hei, usē prakār sāhitya bhē alāhkārṇa ke dūrupayag se biktī ha jātā hei."20

He wanted to make his stories the successful medium for literary entertainment as well as social reform, "hamānē kamal aur pavitra bhānvānya ka pratsāhan mile, hamne satya nhiswārtha sevā, nyāy ādi devatwa ka ja aṃśa hei, wheh jāgrit hī"a.21

The stories of Premchand are manifestation of psychoanalysis of characters, the inner conflict of the mind, an easy flowing style introduction of problems in the subject matter, lucidity of language, restrained use of dialogue which are also weighty, etc.

3. **Artistic Principles**

The subject matter of a story waves itself around the form and the artistic principles of the writer give it life. The mainstay to express this artistic principles is the writer’s style of writing. The pioneering writer desires to translate his dreams into literature with the help of his individual artistic skill and style of writing.

Of all the above mentioned things perhaps the proportionately most
important is the skill of writing, because the writer is totally dependent on it for the expression of his thoughts and ideas. As it is true that a dead object or an unbelievable thing cannot be brought to life by the sheer magic of words, so it is true that a living object will appear to be pale and dead in the absence of a good writing style. Keeping this in mind it will be seem that the role of the style of writing is very important for a literary talent to express his literary plans.

Every writer has his own style and principles of writing and so he is different from all others. In English it is called ‘style’ and the English adage in this connection is ‘style is the man’. In other words, a person’s distinct individuality is revealed in his talks, dress, way of life, behavior, manner, etc. So, the style of writing of a writer is his own. So, Sunil Kumar Bandopadhyay wrote, “bahunukhē pratibhān saṃhata samanaye ye bektitwen udbhav, sāhityen nacanā sailē sei bektitwa nāmak bimūnta sattān ātmaprakāśer abalamban. sāmai o paristhiti tān āṅga rupen nānā raṅg, nānānekhā, kṣane kṣane tār bibantan, paribantan, kintu tār prakṛtitite śilpēr maula bhaṅgimār cinha sarbadāi suspaṭi aparibantanā. bektitwa yeman ekī bāstab satya, deher sāj sājjā yeman sei bektitwen cinha hahu, sahitye tār kāmanā-hāsanā, dhvān-dhārana prákāśe mādhyam ye nacanā sailē seti o temmi jēbanmūkhē, bāstab satya, lekhaken bektitwa mandita.”

Art has a definite role to play in fiction. The story writer is a sensitive person. He picks up his themes either with the help of his imagination or from life itself. The style of writing plays a very important role to organise the events of the subject matter in a systematic manner and to make it move smoothly. The beauty and the success of a short story is achieved by
originality and distinctive style of the writer. So, according to Dr. Dharmadhwaja Tripathi, “vāstav me śilpa ek aisi vyevasthā athavā paridhi hei ja rācanā, rācanākār aur pāṭhak ka ek sūtra me bhādline kā kānya kartē hei.”

The writer express his ideas and thoughts with the help of his writing style. In the matter of this expression, many events, situations, occasions, play characteristic roles. All these ingredients are organised and used in such a manner that an entirely new thing is created which is pleasing and inspiring, “inse mānav jēvan niśchit rūp se prabhābit hātā hei aur yeh prabhāv dūngāmē hātā hei.”

Rabindranath in Bengali literature and Premchand in Hindi, both have a very rich writing style which is extremely popular. Because of their distinctive writing style their stories have been recognised as unparalleled literary creation. The newness of their style, their originality, lucidity, and excellence have given Rabindranath and Premchand the dignity and prestige as literatures of supreme greatness. In the stories of his collection ‘Galpaguchha’ Rabindranath has left an extraordinary mark of artistic success. On artistic honesty and deep understanding of life stands the edifice of the stories of ‘Galpaguchha’. Rabindranath presented the whole of Bengal to his Bengali readers. The harmonious combination of love of man and an intense love for nature, have given artistic greatness to the stories of ‘Galpaguchha’. These stories are literary representative of Rabindranath’s own country and his own time, but they also speak about the glory of man in all countries and at all times. The stories have crossed the boundaries of time and space and have reached the peak of an honest understanding of life and depth of feeling. A reading of these stories
illuminates the reader of the writer’s realisation of life and art. He wrote stories touching all the aspects of the life of the bengali people. In the stories of Rabindranath we find the impression of our humanitarian feeling, our earthly and unearthly experiences, and our social and political thinking. So, Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay said, “bigata ek šatābdēr baṅgades o baṅga samājer chāyā pāleche tīnān galpe.”

Rabindranath has shown extraordinary skill in the artistic style of his stories. Making a sudden and unkind comment at the end changing the very character of the story (Postmaster), sudden beginning of the story, i.e. beginning from the middle of the events, (Sampati Samarpan), organising the story with a few brief events having some dramatic elements, a glimpse of the universal feeling against the background of events in an ordinary middle class family, (Kabuliwala), the insignificant role of man against the vast backdrop of nature, (Shasti), story with pungenl satire where dialogue is dominant (Strir Patra, Paila Nambar) etc. are few of the stories of Rabindranath where we find his uncommon artistic skill.

‘Nasta Nir’ is a modern short story. Written against the background of the heartless of Calcutta, it is a story where there is endless agony of the mind, without any respite or any solution, only suffering. Between Bhupati and Charu the writer does not erect a dividing wall, they have no place to hide. The ungovernable love which tears Charu apart can not be kept away by her from the eyes of the Bhupati with all her feminine writes, Charu receives no forgiveness, nor does she get the desire of her heart. It seems strange to think that Rabindranath could write such daring story in the early years of the 20th century. There is no compromise, art for art’s sake is the inspiration behind it.
Rabindranath wrote this daring story with consummate skill. We are moved at his restraint and organisational ability. No where there is any sign of verbosity, nor there is any elaboration. Woven around three principle characters, the story moves in a straight line with perfect artistic skill to an unfortunate end since there is no solution. This extraordinary artistic style is also seen in his other story ‘Shasti’. It is a cruel story which moves to its goal unwaveringly, devoid of all verbosity, and moving with great speed to its cruel end. The reader is deeply impressed by its extraordinary artistic style as he reads it time and again. Chandara is disillusioned about the love of her husband Chidam Rui, her intense pique at her husband’s betrayal which makes her walk towards the scaffold. The whole incident moves towards its inevitable end unfailingly.

When Chandara is asked by her husband to confess to the murder, she is struck dumb and stare at him. “tāhān samasta sāṃstāna yena kramei sāṃkucita haiā swāmē rakṣhārer hāt haite bāhin haiā āsībān cēṣā karite lāgila.”

When Chandara, who has lost all interest in life, is told that her husband wishes to see her before she is hanged, she contemptuously says ‘the deceitful rogue’. There is no better way to express one’s pique. In the organisation of this story Rabindranath has made use of a novel style.

Premchand has been recognised as a pioneering story writer in Hindi for his characteristic artistic style. He is established as a successful story writer for the originality of his subject matter, naturalness, and simplicity. The advent of Premchand started a new era in Hindi story writing. By giving his stories originality and newness with his characteristic artistic style and by creating his characters accordingly, he gave the world of Hindi
short story a new beginning. So, Dr. Ramvilas Sharma said, "wah ek yug
nimātā sāhityakār the, keval sāhitya me yug kā nām denewāle
nahē" 27

His stories have become extraordinary by the choice of his novel
subject matter and for his characteristic artistic style. All readers will
unanimously admit the truth of the assertion of Janardan Prasad Jha that,
the stories of both Rabindranath and Premchand are beneficial to the society,
after his study of the social awareness of both the writers. "rabindranāth
aur premchand dana lakapayagē kalākār hein ..... rabindranāth
me bhāvukatā adhik hei, premchand me vividhatā adhik hei." 28

In fact the stories of Premchand have thrown light on those problems
of India which are not just related to the oppressed and suffering people of
the country, rather it may be said that they are related to the suffering humanity
the world over. So Dr. Ramvilas Sharma has said in his book, 'Premchand
Aur Unka Yug'. "premchand duhkē hindusthān ke gārēṅga ke lekhak the. unkā sāhitya tamām pēṅita kā mānasīk sambal hei." 29

'Ek Anch Ki Kasar' is an extraordinary story of Premchand. "ek
dusre prakār ke vyahga sālē .... bhandā phar sālē kā upayag weh
ek ānc ke kasan nāmak kahānī me karte hei." 30

A study of the story shows that Jasodanandan himself tried to please
his friends by his modesty and his established position in the society. He
spoke about his hateful attitude towards the dowry system before his friends
and to establish this point he arranged the marriage of his younger son
without any dowry. He wrote a statement in this regard, asked his son to
read it out and goes away to attend his business. In his return he heard that
instead of reading his statement his eight year old son read the letter of the
bride's father regarding dowry. The letter written by the bride's father to Jasodanandan was said this, "āpke patra se vidit hatā hei ki āpka mujh par viśwās nahē hei. mei ēśwar ka sākshē karke nivedan karī hē ki niirdiṣṭa dhan āpkē sevā me itne gupt rēti se puhuchēgē ki kisē ka leśmāṭra bhē sandēha na hagā.")

Here we find a wonderful artistic style. The letter reveals that Jasodanandan was not the kind of unselfish man what we wanted people to believe of him. His so called progressive outlook was just a pretention to deceive the people. In this way the writer exposes the meanness of Jasodanandan before his readers. A single letter was sufficient to expose his true character before his friends. So Jasodanandan at the beginning of the story and Jasodanandan at the end of it stand at the antipodes.

In the story 'Kaphan' Premchand, the Kalam ka Sipahi, shows his great power of description. So, Dr. Pushppal Singh said, "ganēbi aur beēntihē ganēbi kā tthē mārnik aur prāmānik varnan kanne wālē kalākār abhē hamāre pās nahē hei. weh bhukh ke satya ke amar kalākār hei.")

In this story we find how brute, physical hunger can destroy all humanitarian feelings. Budhia is in the terrible agony of labour pain when Ghisu and Madhab, father and son, eat stolen roasted potato with great relish, hunger makes them deaf to cry of agony of Budhia. They don’t feel the necessity of going near Budhia in her trouble. Budhia should be an object of affection to her father-in-law Ghisu, and object of deep love to her husband, Madhab; but all their finer feelings have been burnt in the fire of hunger. Giving a description of this Dr. Pushppal Singh said, "bhukh hē unē mānāvēya samvedānē ka catkār jātē hei, bhukh ne unē maha,
Ghisu says while drinking by the side of dead Budhia, "kaphan lagāne se kyā milta? ākhir jal hē ta jātā. kuch bahuke sāth ta na jātā," \(^{34}\)

To make such a philosophical remark setting by the corpse of a loving person of the family and drinking nonchalantly can be found perhaps only in the stories of Premchand. This story 'Kafan', has given Premchand a highly respectable place among the short story writers of the world. The writer has shown uncommon talent in the artistic organisation of the events of the story.

3.1 The Narrative or The Subject Matter

From the Sanskrit word 'Kathā', a verb, the word 'Kathanak' has been derived which means to 'say something'. So to support the word 'Kathanak' is to prepare or arrange some events or occasions. The writer chooses the events himself. Then the events are elaborated with the help of some significant and some less significant words when a perfect story is created. Which sometimes gives joy and sometimes pain to its readers. In other words, an understanding is achieved between the writer and his reader through the medium of the story.

In the fictions preceding the age of Rabindranath and Premchand, we notice the attempts of the writers to arouse curiosity, to marvel, to entertain and to create romance. But these two great writers of the 20th century left behind the thoughts and ideas of their predecessors and came close to the life of man. So, we do not find in their stories the old techniques of their predecessors. The stories of Rabindranath and Premchand stayed away from romance and came down to the harsh realities of life. In this
context we may recall the admission of Rabindranath. He mentioned this in many places, particularly in his ‘Chhinnapatra; “ämär abāk lāge, tamā jakhan bala ye ämär galpaguccha gīti dharmē, ek samay ghure beriechi bānlār nādēte nādēte. dekhechi bānlār pallēr bicitra jēban yātā. ekī meye nauka kare saśur bātē cale gela, tār bandhurā ghatē nāile nāile balābali karte lāgla, āhā ye pāglāte meye, saśurhātē giye ar kinā jāni dasā habe. kiṃbā dhana ekī khyepāte chele sārā grām duśāmīr cāte mātiye beṭāi, tāke haṭhāt ekdīn cale yete hala sahare tār māmār kāche. eituku cakhe dekhechi, bākātī niyechi kalpanā kare ...... āmi halba ämär galpe bāstaber abhāv kakhani ghāteni. yā kichu likhechi, nije dekhechi, mārne anubhav karechi, se ämār pratyakṣa ahbigyata ....... bheve dekhele bujhē pārhe āmi ye chaṭa chaṭa galpa gula likhechi bāṅgālī samājena bāstab jēbaner chai tātei pratham dharā paṭe”

And again the poet wrote elsewhere, “sedin kabi ye pallēcitra dekhechila nihsandehe tār madhīye rāśṭrēk itihāser āghūt pratighāt chila, kiṃtu tār sriṣṭīte mānab jēbaner sei sukhi-duḥkher itihās yā sakal itihāske atiknam kare bārābar cale eseche kriśikhetne. pallē-parbaner, āpan pratyahāk sukhi-duḥkhha niye kakhana bā magal rājatte, kakhana bā inrej rājatte, tār ati saral mānabatta prakāś nitya caleche — seītei pratibimbita haechila galpagucche, kana samanta tantra nai, kana rāśṭra tantra nai.”

Sometimes Rabindranath saw the village women at the bathing place on the bank of the river and said, “abārēse yakhan yātār samay hala takhan dekhlum āmar sei cul chūātā galgāl hāte bālā parā, ujjal saral mukhāśrē meyčikē naukē tulle. bujhum becārā badhai bāper
This is the life and soul of the story 'Samapti'. So, Prof. Pramatha Nath Bishi said that these glimpses of the rural life show the trend of thought in the poet's mind.

From the above discussion it seems to be clear that Rabindranath dealt with the joys and sorrows and the neglected life of the most ordinary men and women of the society as the subject matter of his stories. Again in the stories of the later period we find the newly found importance of women, the widening of the horizon by scientific inventions and discoveries. In the themes of the stories of Rabindranath we find a strong desire to go deep into the life of man. He did not have to take trouble to bring variety in the themes of his stories. Because the ingredients of his stories were all called from his personal experiences of life. So it cannot be denied that he is unrivalled in the matter of variety in his stories. The backgrounds of his stories are sometimes the village and sometimes the cities and towns. The narrative part of his stories are sometimes about the quiet and serene beauties of nature, or sometimes it is steeped with almost heartless indifference. The subject matter of some stories is sometimes the familiar present or, sometimes it is hidden in the mystery of the past. Sometimes he speaks about the dowry system and elsewhere he speaks about brotherly love, or loyalty to the master or love for one's mother. Sometimes the stories are about the sweetness of romantic love, sometimes the strange and wonderful agony of love or, again the complex, cruel and devious ways of love. What he said about the themes of his stories are all intimately mixed up with the rural life of Bengali. He hurled fiery satirical comments against many social customs, practices and rituals. So, heart-touching a story like 'Dena Paona' will be a rare find in the world literature. The extreme conflict between the
individual and the society comes alive in the story 'Haidar Gosthi'. Stories like 'Strir Patra', 'Paila Nambar' speak about the demand of the woman to get proper recognition in the society.

In the stories of Rabindranath written in the third decade of the 20th century contemporary issues have found their places. He could not totally avoid the contemporary political issues. On many occasions contemporary political issues against the background of the National Movement have cast their shadows on his stories. In many cases it is seen that due to strong political convictions humanity is suppressed by ideology, party-interest overrules the individual. The subject matter of the stories, 'Namanjur' and 'Sanskar' speaks against this view. So, Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay said, 

"lekhaken byeîga ⁹ar haîṣita haîche nāînêtin guîṭha mantranâ, byektîtta damankârâ dalîya śnîîkhalâ o unnattatâr prati.""³⁷

The stories show how political interests trample down humanitarian values. As Rabindranath has told us the realistic facts of life, so Premchand also wrote stories which, "cetanâ kî kalâtmak utkanś xe sampannahei."³⁸ Novelty, originality and the flow of contemporary changes are noticed in his stories.

The themes which Premchand choose for his stories are about the lower stratum of the Indian society. Like Rabindranath he has also portrayed the rural life of India where the majority of the Indian population live. He thought that it was his sacred duty to expose the ills of the society and help to remove them. The reason which worked behind such choice of his subject matters was his personal experience. The age in which Premchand lived and worked saw the weakening powers of feudalism and the people’s struggles to shake off its shackles. In his autobiography Pandit Jawaharlal

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Nehru portrayed a realistic picture of this age. He said that the political movement in the country was limited to the middle class only, and both the extremists and the moderates were trying to find out solutions in their own different ways. Those who made considerable improvement of the conditions of their life in the British rule were against any sudden changes, and the moderates thought it better to give them the leadership because they were afraid that their own interests would be otherwise jeopardized. The extremists, however, were the representatives of the middle class and the poor. The factory workers and the peasantry suffered from a sort of inertia who were the victims of poverty and were always exploited by the Government, the landlord, the policies, the official class, the lawyers, the priests etc. On one side there was the growing discount against the Zamindary system, and these was now added to it the sudden uprising of the working class which was coming to life side by side with the growth of capitalism. While living in the village Premchand got the opportunity to have first hand experience of these social and political changes from very, close quarters. He knew that the increasing burden of tax was eating into the vitals of the people. "unhane dekhā thā ki kis prakār gaȳ kānuni tārīke se unke khet̄a aur jhapdiȳa se bedakhal kar diyā jātā hei, kyāse weh unke rakta ka cusne wāle kārinda, mahānjana aur pulis ke sipāhiyā se ghīre hein." 39

He also saw that the crops which they produced with their endless labour were not their own, they had no right over them, on the contrary their lot was to suffer humiliation, insult and exploitation. It appeared that to live a life of starvation was their destiny.

Premchand took these events of his own experiences as the themes
of his stories. So, it may be said, “Premchand yadi mahān hei, ta is liye ki unhane kisāna ke mānasik gaṇthān aur madhyavarga ke dṛṣṭikān ka us samay atyanta biśwās aur utsāh ke sāth vānē dē.”

Most of the problems which appear in his stories actually came across his life. Whenever he portrayed a middle class or a peasant’s character, he did it true to life. He exposed evils deeds of the Nawabs, the inhuman oppression of the Zemindars, and the system of taxation without any rounding of the corners. So, Indra Nath Madan Said, “Yeh baṭā nacak hagā, yadi ham unkē tūlnā ek dusre aise baṇḍe baṅgāli upanyāśkān se kare, jissne apnē kalātmak kṛitiyaṁa me sāmayik saṁasyāyyna kā samādhanā khajne kē cēśā kē hei. Sārat candra caṭṭapādhyay ne apne upanyāśya aur kahāniyarna me madhya aur ucca madhya vangēya jamindāryna kā varnan kiyā hei.”

The inertia, illiteracy and ignorance, blind beliefs, lethargy, hate and malice of the middle class rural life have been exposed in the stories of Premchand. The editor of a Urdu daily, ‘Tairange Khayal’, published from Lahore, once asked Premchand how he chose the themes of his stories and he answered, “menē kahāniyā prāyāh kīse preranā yā anubhav par ādhānit hatē hei.”

If ever he chose his subject from history, he was always conscious to relate it to social, real life, and here lies the characteristic quality of the choice of his themes. And so we have got stories like, ‘Sadgati’, ‘Ek Anch Ki Kasar’, ‘Pus Ki Rat’, ‘Mantra’, ‘Bidhwangsa’, etc. from his pen.

Like Rabindranath Premchand also did not get the love and affection of his mother. He lost his mother in his early childhood and grew up under the strict and harsh rule of his stepmother, which made him suffer greatly.
The affection which is seen in a mother for her own children, is not found in a father. Premchand thought that the life of a child was cursed who had lost his mother in his childhood. Rabindranath also lost his mother at the early age of 13 and like him Premchand also did not enjoy his mother's affection for long. Because, "abhijāta pariśārak tattālān prabhā anyāyāś sıśunā mātristānaye pariśārak dhātā śtānaye pālita o puṣṭa hata. bhumiśṭha hoā mātra māyer ko theke tāder chātiye nie ek ekī dugdha dhātā dāī o ek ekī paryabekṣhan kāninā paričānikār dāyē tule deoā hata, māyer sange tāder kana samparkai thāktanā. rabindranātheh kṣhetre o ei prathā anusṛita hae chila."\(^{43}\)

The story ‘Dudh Ka Dam’ of Premchand has been written on such a theme. Mother of many children, the mother of Rabindranath was the wife of a zamindar. So the major part of his childhood was passed in the company and under the care of Ramu, the servant. Discussing on this Dr. Nitai Basu said, "dāśdāśāder śāsan, mātri snehen bancanā o adhikāṃśa śikṣaker kāche nīras adhyān cancā rabindranāth ke pariśārak kāle sıśu o chatrader prati gabhān bhāve sacetan kare tale."\(^{44}\)

When Premchand was only seven years old his mother Anandi Devi left this world, "ānandā debē mar gayē. sab raye, dhanapat rāy ka tab samajh me nahē āyā thā ki lag na kyu nahe hei. aur jab samajh me āyā ta wah itnē raye ki apne sāhitya me ājēvan mātri prem ka varnān karte nahe."\(^{45}\)

Short story, a powerful branch of modern fiction strikes its root at the very heart of life, reveals itself in relation with the society. As a result different aspects of social life are reflected in it and along with them many other things also appear being associated with them. We find social
awareness in more than 50 stories of Rabindranath. His first story ‘Dena Paona’ deals with such issue. In this story poor Ramsundar Mitra fails to pay up the full amount of dowry for the marriage of his only daughter Nirupama, and the unfortunate girl becomes the victim of this crises. It may be a mistake to think that the easy and emotional appeal of the story only attempts to entertain the reader. But we get the proof of how acutely consious was Rabindranath about this in one of his letters to Buddhadev Basu, “....māṣik patra anek samay lekhakeder asatarka kare dei, lekhāi sastū dāmer manaranjanē pralep byebahān karbār dike jhūak āse”

So, we may safely assume that Rabindranath avoided this cheap, sentimental appeal of his stories very consciously. The themes of his stories have gone through an evolutionary process in the matter of the awareness of an individual’s distinctive identity. In this evolutionary process the awakening of the woman’s distinctive identity has come at different stages. In his stories he concentrated his attention on those problems of the society which involved women. So we have got from him stories like ‘Dena Paona’, ‘Tyag’, ‘Mahamaya’, ‘Strir Patra’, ‘Aparichita’, ‘Laboratory’, etc. His other themes are economic disparity. In this context Udaychand Das said that, the extra oridnary divisions which are created in the society due to economic disparity have been revealed in the stories, ‘sampatti samarpan’, ‘thakurda’, ‘master masai’, ‘manihara’ etc. which shows the author’s sense of realism. Again in some stories the themes are contemporary politics where the author reveals his own realisation of the total impact of if which added a new dimension to the socio-economic issues of the time. As he did not keep himself away from politics, so he also did not involve himself in it totally. Rabindranath “ titār chaṭṭagalper kṣetrē rājñētike dure
In some of his stories involving politics he said about the Swadeshi Movement of the time, its unruly character and the wide difference between words and deeds. In some other stories he saw the aggressive character of imperialism as it should be seen, and attacked it without mercy. In his themes he discussed issues like boycott of English clothes, rejuvenation of the native handloom industry, national awareness and the attitude to stand against the oppression of women, and in some place communal harmony has found its place. Sometimes he said about the oppression of the poor laboring class of rural Bengal.

In his stories we find the picture of the society of rural Bengal, the life of the poor and the economically backward, and the darkness of despair that engulf it. Property dedicated to god, enjoyment of property without paying the taxes, legal battles, attempt of murder and start a riot, illicit love affairs of the Zemindars, bankruptcy of poor subjects due to their unequal struggle with the landlords will all these as his subject matters.

"nabêndranâth mātir kāchākāchi jēbanek swâdke galpe tule enechen."  

Like Rabindranath, Premchand also chose the social life of the ordinary people of India as his subjects. Once he said, "mei ja cāhatā hau wâh yeh hei ki kahāniya ke plat jēvan se liye jāyge auren jēvan kē samasya kîa kā hal kare." All his life Premchand tried to speak about the problems of life and find out their solutions in his stories. Following Dr. Dharmadhwaja Tripathy it may be said, "premcand ne apnē kathā vastu ke antangata sāhitya, sanskritī, sabhyatā, dharma, darśhan, rājnēti ādi sabhē ka
One of the great points of view of Premchand in the context of reformation, was to change the heart of the people. Admitting this attempt at the change of heart to be an unquestionable characteristic of Premchand's outlook on life and his creative power, Sri Ajit Kumar said, "mankā badal jānā" is the main themes of Premchand’s short stories.

Not only the early stories like, ‘Panch Parameshwar’, ‘Bade Ghar Ki Beti’, ‘Namak Ka Daroga’, but also stories like, ‘Nasha’, ‘Pus Ki Rat’, ‘Kafan’, which are very powerful stories also prove the authenticity of the above comment. In fact the stories of Premchand centre around the realistic presentation of life.

Premchand not only depicted the different aspects of Indian life in a realistic and touching manners, he also tried to give them an idealistic form. For this characteristic Dr. Nathan Sinha not only considered him a great story writer, but also called him an efficient "Social Engineer."

Though in his stories Premchand gave social reform the primary importance and art played the second fiddle, yet he admitted the style of expression to be the heart and soul of his story and created his world of fiction accordingly.

Premchand wrote more than 300 stories on different subjects which are all replete with varieties and strangeness of events, created by the skilled hand of the writer. In his creation Premchand was never dependent on artificiality, unnaturalness or only imagination, though he got inspiration to become a story writer from ‘Tilasme Hosruba’, ‘Chandrakanta Santati’ who wrote rather unnatural stories based mainly on imagination. And for
this reason the stories of Premchand successfully portray the life of man in all its aspects. Premchand has established himself as an epoch making writer for his choice of themes, their originality and their idealistic goals. So we may agree with the opinion of G. Sundar Reddy that, the popularity of Premchand’s stories is due to their variety of themes because they are free from any ornamentation of artificiality. He does not draw the themes to him by force, rather it may be said that the themes are drawn towards him spontaneously.

3.1.1 Characters

Characterization is an important part of a story or a novel. As it is impossible to construct a building without bricks, though other materials like, cement, iron roods, sand, etc. are available. So inspite of the presence of all the ingredients of a story, a story can not be successful without suitable characters and characterization. The stream of the events of life hold on to the characters and become expressive. The truth of life reveals itself through characters and there can be no dialogue without characters. So, it should be admitted that there can be no story without characters. So Premchand himself said, “mei kathā sāhitya ka mānāv caritra kā citra māntā hūn.”

It is also said in the Mahabharata “nahē mānuśāt parantarāh hē kincit.” This assertion is true for all great literature. Because in it lies the assertion that the true portrayal of man is of great importance. The objective of the writer is to know man and represent him truly in his stories. This outlook is distinctly found in the stories of both Rabindranath and Premchand.

We know that,”chatagalper sēmita paribāre biśad caritraśyanen
The reader of a short story gets a fleeting glimpse of the characters as if he is looking at it through a window, or sometimes the vision lasts a little longer. For this reason all the aspects of the character cannot be fully developed. They remain unsaid and only in the imagination of the sensitive reader than get their final shape. The totality of the appeal of a story comes from a limited world, through the events of a brief period of time. The precedents do not get any importance here as they get in a novel. The story writer has also to master the art of compact expression. In the words of Henry Janes it is “Fore shortening.”

The reason why the character of a novel remains in the memory of the reader for a long time is that, it appears before the reader again and again as the novel passes through different stages of development, so the reader cannot forget them. But in a short story the scope of a character to come before the reader frequently is quite limited. So, though the interest of the reader about the character is roused, it does not get satisfaction. In the story of Rabindranath the role of the characters and their appeal is very great. As the stars shine brightly in a moonless night, so do the characters of the stories of Rabindranath. In the small mirror of his stories Rabindranath has reflected the momentary flash of the very intimate individual identity of men and women.

In his essay ‘Sahityer Tatparya’ Rabindranath said, “manusher caritra eman ekti biti yaha jata biti nitya amader indier dwara ayattagamya nahe. .......ei dhana-bhurdhur ateti bitita manab caritra, sahitya ihake o antarlok hatite bhire pratishhita kariye ca. atyanta duruha kai. kaan manab caritra sthir nahe, susanyata nahe; tahar anek amisha, anek star; tahar sadan-andare abarita gatibidhi sahaj
This assessment is the fruit of his mature years. Yet these thoughts germinated in the early years of his literary career. In the stream of the short story which is a part of the vast world of literature, the nature of man has been beautifully portrayed. In the manner of its presentation an unlimited variety is found. So, Basanti Mukhopadhyay opined, "He has delved deep into the unknown world of the soul through the medium of what is revealed and visible, and has shaped it in an expressive language. He laid more stress on the creation of characters than on the creation of an emotional atmosphere. So, the poet wrote, "In his attempt to unravel the mystery of the soul of that image he has expressed the agony and the ecstasy of the human soul in his stories.

The door of the Tagore household of 'jorasanko' was open to men from all walks of life. Many of them came from the progressive middle class. So, from his very childhood Rabindranath came in contact with many different kinds of people. The other thing which should be noticed was his habit of reading books on different subjects. Rabindranath tells us of his studies in the pages of his 'Jiban Smriti'. From his childhood he enjoyed unlimited liberty in the matter of reading all sorts of books. Incidentally we may recall the story 'Poulabarjini', published in the magazine.
'Abodh Bandhu'. It needs special mention as an introduction to the discussion of Rabindra literature. In the foreword of poulabarjini Buddha Kathak said that, it is an ordinary story of ordinary men. The tender mind of the young poet was attracted by the simple and unostentatious life described in the story. From his early childhood he observed everything with intense curiosity. The insignificant things of this material world assumed great significance in his world of thought. So his mind always moved in the unconventional and beyond the beaten tracks. He was always merged in a world of intense thoughtfulness. From the beginning of the flowering of his talent this thoughtfulness of his nature could be seen. Seen against the background of the turmoils of the 19th century this was rather surprising. For this reason Rabindranath was so deeply interested in the ordinary man which appears in the pages of his stories.

In the characters of the stories of Rabindranath we sometimes find the intricate portrayal of a single character, sometimes the world is seen through the eyes of a child and sometimes we see the brewing of a storm in the life of a couple hit by the harsh realities of life. But never the dignity of man was ignored by him. He left the marks of his talent in the characterization of Nirupama in the story of his first period 'Dena Paona'. Rabindranath has shown his unique artistic skill in the description of the life of Nirupama the daughter-in-law of a wealthy family, who suffered humiliation, oppression and starvation and eventually succumbed to her endless suffering. So, Basanti Mukhopadhyay wrote, "कैक्ति मानुषीं समान्ते प्रकाशित समाज-शास्त्रीय कालीभेद में भी दिल के भावनात्मक सक वृद्धि और प्रथम निर्माता की दासी प्रायोगिक शैली में रहित निर्माताओं ने गलप प्रतीक्षा की।"56
In the characterization of Nirupama has shown an original outlook on life. In this story he has shown how dangerous can be the consequences of the dowry system and tried to open our eyes to this evil custom. Like Rabindranath, Premchand also wrote a few impressive stories on this despicable custom of the dowry system of the society. In his story ‘Sajjanata Ka Danda’ we find that Sardar Sahib Singh cannot get his daughter married to an established lawyer of Meerut because he cannot raise the amount of money to meet the demand of the dowry. Here lies the similarity between Rabindranath and Premchand that both of them wrote against evils of the dowry system. Nirupama had to take her own life because her father could not pay the amount of dowry in time to the father of the groom. And in the story of Premchand the heroine cannot get married the son of the lawyer at all. But in his story Premchand does not show any attitude of his heroine which reveals her self respect when her marriage cannot take place.

However, the character of Kusum, the heroine of the story ‘Kusum’, is as if a prototype of Nirupama. The hero of this story is not on talking terms with his wife from the time after his marriage he even does not wish to see her face. Because according to his words Kusum’s father could not raise the money required for the groom’s passage to England. Inspite of Kusum’s fervent pleadings in many letters she does not get her husband’s love. At last Kusum’s father comes to know of the discontent of Kusum’s husband and somehow manages to raise the promised amount of dowry. But now Kusum does not agree because her self respect is hurt. Does not she have her individual identity? Should her individuality and personality be measured in terms of the amount of dowry? So Kusum raises her voice of revolt. But though Nirupama Protests against this evil social custom but her
revolt is passive. She surrenders meekly to the oppression in the house of her father-in-law being unable to assert her protests and leaves this world with an intense pique against the society. But the Kusum of Premchand declares a revolt, does not wish to maintain and relation with her husband and wants to face life on her own. Her heart is torn and bleeding and coming to the end of her patience she raises her voice of protest loud and clear. So, Kusum speaks firmly, "ja ādmē inā swāntē, inā dambhē, inā nēc hei, uske sāth meṇā nīrvāh na hagā. mei kahe detē hū, wahīnā rupaye gaye, ta mei jahan khā luṅgē, ise dillagē na samajhnā mei aise ādmē kā mūn bhē nahē dekhnā cāhatē . .... maïne swatantra nahne kā nīscay kan liyā hei." 57

Rabindranath was acutely responsive to his age and he portrayed his characters in conformity with his age. Written against a social background the character Muliya of the story ‘Ghaswali’ of Premchand and the character Chandara of Rabindranath’s story ‘Shasti’ seem to be the obverse and reverse of the same coin, though their situations are different. The eldest brother of the Rui family, who are landless, low-born agricultural labours, kills his wife with the strike of a chopper on her head. The younger brother asked Chandara his wife, confess to the crime of the murder, because in his opinion a person can always get a wife if one is lost, but if a brother is lost no one can get another. Chandara understands with intense bitterness in her heart the place of a woman in the society and she walks to the scaffold protesting against this hateful attitude of the society towards woman. Muliya of the story ‘Ghaswali’ also belongs to the inferior caste of the society, but Premchand loses himself while describing her beauty. "gehūñā rān thā, hīzan kē si āṅkhe, nēce khūcā huā cibuk, kapālōṇa par halkē lālimā,
But giving a description of her physical charm was not the objective of Premchand, he had other things in his mind. In fact, the description of the beauty was only an introduction which would serve a specific purpose. In the later part of the story we find one Chain Singh, a high-caste person, proposes to Mulia to have a sexual relation and says, "teen dayā cāhatā hnu." Mulia's womanhood is deeply humiliated and she answers contemptuously, "kyā ghātki kināre mujise kahī sunder auratiye nahē ghumā kartī? mei uski barabarē bhē nahē kar sakī. tum usme kisē se dayā kyun nahē māngle? kyā unke pās dayā nahē hei. magar wahi tum nahē jāoge, kyunki wahi jāte tumhārē chatē dahaltē hei. mujhse dayā māngle ha, isliye na ki mej camārin hnu?"59

This awareness of Mulia's self respect brings Chandara to our mind. If wife is lost one can get another but if a brother is lost no one can get another. These words arouse the sense of self respect of Chandara and so she does not wish to go back to her monster husband. Situations are different, the descriptive matters are different, and yet in the characterization of such types Rabindranath and Premchand have come very close to each other.

Some characters in their early youth are found both in the stories of Rabindranath and Premchand. Where the narrative is important the characters have helped its development, organised its events and added to its beauty. And elsewhere the narrative has followed the characters where everything revolves around the characters. Both Rabindranath and Premchand have shown extraordinary skill in the portrayal of child characters. In the basic
problem in a story of Rabindranath, the individual or the psychological problem of the youth characters are also quite important. The author has analysed the psychological issues (Phatik in the story ‘chuti’, Tarapada in the story ‘Atithi’, Nilakanta in the ‘Apad’) like a skilful psychoanalyst. So Dr. Samaresh Majumdar has said that in the analysis of these characters, “pūnna bayaska mānuṣer jābaner saṅghāt saṅśay saṅkāṭer ceye kam uttikhyagya ekathā lekhak mane karenī.”

The young character Hamid of the story ‘Idgah’ of Premchand, seems to be a friend of Phatik, Tarapada and Nilkanta. Hamid, an orphan, was being brought up under the loving care of his grandma, Amina. Their days passed haltingly with endless troubles of the household and then the happy days of the Id festival came in his life like a drought of gentle wind. Hamid wore his old cape and he had no shoes, he was in a happy mood, but his grandma, “abhāgēn aminā apnē kaṭhrē mei beithē ro rahē hei.”

Premchand does not say anything about this any more. So, Ananda Prakash says, “premchand aminā ke vidhavā aur putra evam putra budhuhinā hane kā sirf saṅket karte hei kyun ki jis bace ke swar me weh ek ke bādārānē vivaran prastut kar nahe hei use kisē ke marne-jēne se kyā matlab?”

But the fact was that on the day of the Id Amina did not have a grain in the house. Since the three paisa-gift of grandma would not buy anything, many philosophical thoughts came in Hamid’s mind and he felt a strange peace in his mind. At last he bought a pair of tongs for his grandma because her hands frequently got burnt while making bread. With a gesture of wrong-doing Hamid explained why he bought the pair of tongs, “tumhārinē
And we get an impressive young character in the story of Premchand. This is like the character of Phatik of the story ‘Chuti’ who loved his mother deeply. To go to his mother he not only ran away from the house of his maternal uncle, rather it may be said that, he left this world to stay with his mother for ever. So, we cannot forget his heart rending words at the time of his death, “mā, ekhan āmār chuṭi haeche mā, ekhan āmi bāṭi jācchi.”

At this confluence Phatik’s love for his mother and Hamid’s love for his grandma meet. In this way we find in the stories of both Rabindranath and Premchand characters from all walks of life, women, youth, the low-born of the interior caste, peasants, the labouring class, government officials, professors, leaders, clerks etc. who move before our eyes like the changing patterns of a Kaleidoscope.

3.1.2 Dialogue

Dialogue plays an important role in a story. The protagonists of a story describe events and situations through the medium of dialogue. Hence a skilled writer uses dialogue for all development of his themes. A good dialogue brings life to a story and also create dramatic situations. Both Rabindranath and Premchand admitted the characteristic role played by dialogue for the easy and natural expression of human life in a story. So, in their stories dialogue plays a responsible role which helps the movement of the story and for the revelation of the individuality of the characters. While discussing the use of dialogue in the stories of Premchand, critic Sri Hardayal said, “samād (kathapakathān) premcand ke kathā sāhitya ke saṅacanā kā anibārya aṅg hei.”
To establish his point he again said, "premchand samvad lekhan me siddhahast the." As an illustration we may take the case of Hamid in the story ‘Idgah’. The gift of his grandma Amina, only three paisa, cannot buy anything in the fair of the Id festival. But some of his friends were buying sweets and others bought toys. He also wants to buy but cannot afford, because his fortune is only three paisa. So, young Hamid becomes a philosopher and thinks, that toys, "miṭṭē ḥē ke ta hei, gīne ta caknācur ha jyāye." And when he cannot buy sweets he says, "miṭhāi kaun batā nemat hei. kitāb me iskē kimē burāiyāgā likhē hei." 66

In this way Premchand transforms a child Hamid into a philosopher. Hamid through this talk to his own self. We wonder at the words of Hamid and think that this could only come from the pen of Premchand. The stories of Rabindranath are quite realistic but often they are enriched by a romantic poetic quality. This particular aspect is also found in the dialogue of his stories. From the very beginning of the story we may notice the strange penchant of the writer in the matter of the use of language for the dialogue. Many of his stories have come closer to life for the proper creation of dialogue. A stone thrown in the water of a pond creates ripples which moves away in ever widening circles and reach a long distance. In the same way a single dialogue in the stories of Rabindranath gives it movement which goes to a long distance and in which there is a dramatic curiosity about the ending of the story. In the story ‘Tyag’ when the newly married couple are cooing words of love in a moonlit night in the spring, they suddenly hear the voice of the angry father like a bolt from the blue, "bauke ekhani bāṭi haite dūn kariā dāo." 67

This unexpected and cruel utterance of the father not only shocks
the here of the story but the reader also are shocked to speechlessness, and they become intensely curious to know the reason of such utterance, i.e. the past events and how it will end.

Again in the story ‘Mahamaya’, in the second section, we see the unfortunate victim of the cult of ‘sattee Mahamaya escapes a horrible death from the funeral pyre for the blessing of a timely shower and she comes running to her lover Rajib covering her face with her wet cloth and agrees to be his wife of one condition, “yadi pratigyā kara, kakhana āmār ghamtā khulibenā, āmār mukh dekhibenā – tabe āmi tamār ghane thākite pāri.”68 It is not perhaps difficult for the reader to guess the reason for the imposition of such a condition, but still he remains on the tenterhook of suspense where and how the story will end as a reaction to this condition. This single meaningful dialogue plays an important role in shaping the remaining part of the story.

In the story ‘Dena Paona’ we find the unbearable agony of the bride and her father, the unfortunate victims of the dowry system, and the story acts like an educative blow on the conscience of a society which allows such cruel customs to continue. Rabindranath has portrayed the cruel pictures of the oppression of daughters-in-law which sometimes ended in their murder. Not a mechanical narration, not all males are oppressive in a male dominated society. The groom himself raises his voice of protest against the commercial outlook of his father, “bar sahasā pitrideber abādhya haiā uthila. se bāpke baliā basila, kena becā dardāmēr kathā āmi bujhinā; bibāha karite āsiāchi, bibāha kariā yāiba.”69

With this one meaningful talk Rabindranath created the example that if necessary a son could be disobedient to his father in history about 110
years ago. So, the ‘marriage took place in a dull and joyless atmosphere’,
without any dowry.

Again, when Niru says, “ tákā yadi dāo tabei apamān. tamār
meyer ki kana maryādā nei. āmi ki kebal ekti tákār thali, yataksam
tákā āche tataksam āmān dām. nā bābā, e tákā die tumī āmāke
apamān karanā.”70

Then we notice the extraordinary skill of Rabindranath in the creation
of a dialogue. Through this assertion of Niru her sense of self respect and
awareness of her rights appear distinctly before the readers.

The stories of Premchand have become artistic and excellent because
of the superb use of dialogue. While discussing the characteristics of the
dialogues of Premchand, Krishna Lal Sharma said, “premcand ke
saṁvāda me ek ajāswītā hei ja saṁasvāyya aur saṁgharṣna ka
pāṭhakṣa ke samakṣh rakhne me saphal hatē hei. saṁvād hē pāṭha
kē kriyā kalāp ka abhivyekt kante hei.”71

The reason for such comment is that, Premchand has always taken
the help of dialogue for the description of his subjects and the situations of
the characters in his stories. As an illustration we may take the dialogue of
the character Nadir Shah of the story ‘Pariksha’ “jab kisē kaum kē
auratṇa me gyerat nahē rahatē, ta wah kaum murdā ha jētē hei.”72

He used such type of dialogue in his stories, ‘Ek Anch Ki Kasar’,

The dialogue which Premchand has put in the mouth of Madhuri in
his story ‘Veshya’ shows his awareness of social issues, “purusū itnā
nirklajja hei ki uskē durbasthā se apnē vāsanā tript kartā hei aur
iske sāth hē itnā nirday kē uske māthe pan patitā kā kalaṅk lagākar
use durbashtā me mante dekhā cāhatā hei. kyā wah nārē nahē hei? kyā nārētwā ke pavitra mandir me uskā pavitra sthān nahē hei?" 

And we hear the voice of Premchand in the voice of Madhuri. These words express the agony of women who are physically oppressed to satisfy the lust of men.

Usually the dialogue used by Premchand in his stories gives momentum to both the characters and the subject matter. In the opinion of the critics like Indra Nath Madan, in the stories of Premchand where the dialogue takes the upper hand, art plays the second fiddle. But they forget that Premchand wants to create his characters according to his own ideals, and this is the Objective of his writing. And so his characters reflect his ideals and opinions. So, in the opinion of Indra Nath Madan and Hardayal, these types of dialogue of Premchand, "premcand kē tippanēynā hei."

The reason for the use of such type of dialogue is, that the ending of many of his stories is extremely natural, and hence very touching. Besides this, the stories acquire a new character when it becomes argumentative instead of being idealistic. As illustrations we may mention the stories, 'Bade Ghar Ki Beti', 'Panch Parameswar', 'Kafan' and 'Pus Ki Rat'.

1. gyaō me jisne bhē yeh hrittānta sunā, usi ne in sabdāna me ānandē kē udārātā ka sanāhā – bațe ghan kē betiynā aisē hē hattē hei.74

2. algu rane lage, is pānē se dana ke dilṇā kā meil dhul gayā. mitātā kē munjẖāyē hui latā phir se harrē ha gayē.75

3. phir dana nācne lage. uchle bhē, kude bhē, gire bhē, matkē bhē, bhāv bhē hanāye abhinay bhē kiye auro ākhīr naše me badmastr
In the above mentioned illustrations of dialogue, we notice more curiosity and inquisitiveness in the last two examples than what we find in the first two. And hence they are more lively, dramatic and inquisitive. In this way Premchand has shown his extraordinary skill in the analysis and depiction of his characters with the help of his dialogues.

3.1.3 The Background

The meaning of the ‘background’ implies the portrayal of the culture and civilization, social customs, traditions and practices and the political conditions of a country and its people. In literary fictions the background means the time, the society and the people of a particular country, which are portrayed in it. It portrays all the characteristic aspects of the people and the society of a country which reflects the veracity and naturalness of the fiction. While explaining the purpose of the background Acharya Sitaram Chaturvedi said, ‘kisē katha ke mūl tatwa ke rūp me nahē varan sajāvat ke rūp me us katha ke liye dīśya bhāṣā beś. ācār-vicār aur vyevahār kā sathik vistrit varnanā denā.’

Dr. Sarojini Tripathi echoes the same opinion, “manuṣya aur usse sambandhit ghaṭāṇāyē paxisthiti yā vātāvanān kē den hatē hei. vātāvanān se udbhut ghaṭāṇāyē ka jab usē vātāvanān kē prīṣṭhbumē me varnit kiyā jātē hei tabhē abhiṣṭha prabhāv kē sriṣṭi hatē hei.”

The reason for such assertion is, that the background of a story portrays the whole life story of the characters and all the events and situations.
Both Rabindranath and Premchand were conscious writers, conscious about their time and the people. They desired to reflect in their stories, the contemporary social awareness, political consciousness cultural rejuvenation, patriotic feelings, attitude of the people related to national consciousness etc. So, while discussing Premchand Dr. Shiva Prasad Singh said, "Premcund apne yug ke sanādhik jāgarūk sāhityakān the, parināmaṁaṁ unkē rasanāya me tatkālēn sāmājik vātāvaṁan kā citrāṅkaṁ bahut sukṣma aur nānā arthbhadhak dhanig se upasthit huā hei."

In this stories of Rabindranath the age and the people have been wonderfully drawn. The contemporary time and the society appear in almost all his stories without fail. Western education started in the country in the beginning of the 19th century. This benefit of the coming of the English was quickly advanced by Calcutta University. Passing out from the university many people got into independent business. An educated middle class grew up comprising, public servants, legal professionals, teaching, medical profession etc. and a new economic order began in the society. In one sphere there were the Zemindars, the landlords, their employes, stewards, rent collectors, club wielding private army, moneylender etc. In the other sphere there were the landless agriculturists, sub-tenants, the poor, ordinary people exploited by the loan-sharks. Between these two now came the new middle class with their western education. This class also included the independent professionals, clerks, lawyers, barristers, muktears and their clerks etc.

In his collection of stories "Galpaguchha" Rabindranath has portrayed
this new social and economic order very truthfully. The poet had first hand experience of the Zemindary system. He looked after the affairs of the family estate at Shilaidaha, Sajadpur, Patisar etc. and skillfully managed them. He has also drawn the service holder, the professionals in his stories. From the sub-tenant Dukhiram-Chidam to the Deputy magistrate, all have been picked up from the contemporary society and time. When he went to Shilaidaha to supervise the affairs of the estate He came very close to the ordinary people and their society. The ripples of the Contemporary Political situation touched His mind, and so the people, the society and the political condition of the time have come in his stories spontaneously. The country and the society of the poet was under colonial rule at the time. The poet himself so that the rulers of the country insulted and oppressed the people and were partial in their judgment. The agony of the mind of a dependent people hurt The feelings of the poet intensely. The way in which the self respect of the people was trampled by the alien rulers bled the heart of the poet. This political situation of the contemporary times came in his poems and essays. They also came in some of his stories and of these we may mention, ‘EK Ratri’ and ‘Megh O Roudra’. In the story ‘Ek Ratri’ Rabindranath has drawn the contemporary political situation of the country. The narrator of the story promised to his father “ājē ban bibāha nā kariā swadeśer janya mariba.”

So, the hero of the story who is engaged in collecting donations to liberate his country according to his promise, does not feel any pang when his love Surabala gets married to lawyer Ramlochan Babu. In the story ‘Megh O Roudra’ this oppressive rule of the British has been described. How a class of native people flattered and help the ruling class and
encouraged and emboldened by this, how the ruling class oppressed the Indian masses is the subject matter of discussion of the story. Written in the year 1123 BS, Rabindranath has narrated the chronicle of Shashibhusan and Giribala, and he has also shown the cruel oppression of the ruling class, how the Indian people, alien in their own country, were pitilessly treated and how justice was betrayed in the farcical trials in the courts of law.

Like Rabindranath, Premchand was also agonised at the misery and suffering of the Indian people under the British rule. He desired that India should acquire independence as early as possible which would end the people’s suffering. With this end in view he wrote several stories which dealt with political issues. Of these stories we may mention ‘Samar Yatra’, ‘Patni Se Pati’, ‘Istifa’, ‘Adhikar Chinta’, ‘Satyagraha’, ‘Jail’ which are worthy to remember. Through the medium of the stories written against a Political background Premchand wished to awaken political consciousness in the people. In the 12 stories included in the anthology ‘Samar Yatra’, he wrote about the different antigovernment activities of the people in most of them. So, Victor Balin said, “us samay ke tuphānē jindāge, mitiṅga, haṭṭāṇa, bahīskārīṇa, sarbājanēṇ pradaṛṣṭāṇā, aḫiṅsak janatā par galiṁna kē bāṛśā, āṃgrejna śāsakna ke bāṛbāṛ āṭamkā tathā desbhāktīṇa kē gīrāpṛtānē kē yeh kahāṇīṁṇē pratibīṁbit kānte hei”.

In the story ‘Samar Yatra’ he has shown that under the British rule the poor people starved and yet the burden of agricultural tax went on increasing. The employees of the Zamindars did not give them any respite and most of the avenues of income were closed for them. The income from the spinning wheel could not feed the family for cloths were imported
from England. There could be enough production of salt indigenously, but the Salt Act prevented the people from making their own salt. Which became a crime. The story "Samar Yatra" reveals all these sufferings of the people. Boycott of imported cloths was an important part of the political movement of the time. The events and the occasions of the boycott of imported cloths described in the stories, 'Suhag Ki Sari', 'Patni Se Pati', 'Holi Ka Upahar' etc. have the contemporary political situation as their backgrounds. Rabindranath brought this issue of the boycott of imported cloths in his story 'Pan Raksha'. In his stories 'Ek Ratri', 'Megh O Roudra', 'Durasha', 'Rajti', 'Nastarir', 'Panraksha', 'Strir Patra', 'Namanjura', 'Sanskar' and 'Shes Katha' Rabindranath has portrayed the contemporary political events and situations.

Both Rabindranath and Premchand have dealt with the contemporary social problems and anomalies in their stories. These problems have been dealt with by Rabindranath in his stories, 'Dena Paona', 'Aparichita', 'Strir Patra' etc. and Premchand discussed these issue in his stories, 'Bade Ghar Ki Beti', 'Kusum', 'Ghaswali' etc. So considering all these points, we may assert that both Rabindranath and Premchand picked up their themes from the contemporary times.

3.1.4 Language

In Sanskrit the word 'Bhasa' has been derived from the verb 'Bhas'. Its purpose is to talk or express. Thoughts are expressed in language. The only way of self expression of a writer is language. The writer builds up the edifice of his literary creation by arranging word after word in proper order. Needless to say that this is true for a story writer also. The language which is created by the artistic arrangement of meaningful words, helps the writer
to write his narrative, illuminate his characters, give life to the environment. Again by the skillful use of language he creates his imagery and gives it a musical melody. In other words, the author’s ideas and opinions and also his outlook on life are intimately related to language.

The famous French writer Flanbert believed that in the proper marriage between the beauty of thought and the beauty of language, lies the artistic success of a piece of literature. Being aware of this inseparable bond between the theme and the language Flanbert wrote, “If you know exactly what you want to say, you will say well.”

This importance of the language is no less weighty in story writing so the story writer has a great responsibility what language he will use in his stories which will be influential and understandable to more and more people.

The language of Rabindranath has always been in conformity with the script of his themes. Of course, occasions of deviations from this are there, but they are negligible. He planned his language according to the need of the theme of his story, the portrayal of his characters, the creation of the environment etc. so that they can be truly artistic creations. In the matter of writing prose literature he had Bankim Chandra as his predecessor. Probably for this reason he gained maturity in the language of prose before he could achieve it in poetry. But he realised that it would not do for him if he followed the footsteps of Bankim Chandra. He realised that the language used in the story ‘Bhikharini’ following the style of Bankim Chandra was a failure and so he did not take up his pen to write a story for long 7 years. So, we see that he gradually abandoned the style of Bankim Chandra in ‘Ghater Katha’, ‘Rajpather Katha’ and the drama ‘Mukut’.

The most important thing about Rabindranath is that he never allowed
himself to be influenced by stories of foreign languages. So, Rathindranath Roy wrote, "নান গল্পে বান্ধন জল মাতি যেমন নুপ পেয়েছে, তেমনি এর কালাবংস ও নান নিজাসব।"\(^{33}\)

Next to his songs and poems comes his short story. It is not only that there was no Precedent of writing short stories before him, he had also to create the language of his stories. Rabindranath said himself about this, "গাদ্যের ভাষা গাঁতে হাচে আমান গল্প প্রাবাহের সাইগে সাইগে। মাযাসন মা তা সব বাড়ির লেখকের কথা প্রায়ই বালা, তানাতাঁতি ভাষা পেয়েচিলেন, লিখে লিখিতে ভাষা হালে তুনাদেন কি দাঁ হাতা জানিনে।"\(^{34}\)

There was not even the minimal likeness between the language of poetry and the language of prose literature of Rabindranath who was actually responsive to his age. For this reason the emotional outburst what we find in the language of the period when he wrote the 'Sonar Tari' group of poems, is not found in the language of his stories. Here the poet and the story writer seem to be totally different. So the language of 'Manas Sundari' is quite different from that of 'Dena Paona', 'Strir Patra', 'Shasti'. The language of 'Dena Paona' is quite ordinary and colloquial and so easily understandable. He has described the problem of the Bengali gentlemen to get his daughter married because of the atrocious dowry system in a very restrained language. Through there is enough cause for great agony in the story but the author does not allow his emotions get the better of him. So, Kshetra Gupta said, "প্রথম থেকেই ভাষাতে কাহিনী কাহিনী বেনেগা ও কাটুকাস্য ভাষা বেয়েহার আশ সাধারণে কুঁ জে লেগেছে।
As for example after Nirupama's birth, "প্রথম চেলের পর যাকান এক কান্যা জাঁমিলা তাকান বাপ-মায়ে অনেক আদার কাজিতা তাহান নাম নাখিলেন

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Then we find the skill of Rabindranath in the use of a bantering language. In the story ‘Shasti’ also we find the same ordinary, colloquial and easy going language. For a whole paragraph language moves fast with the images of public life with Chandara in bondage at the centre. “bandinē haiā candarē nirīha kṣudra cancā kautuk priya grām badhu, cīra paricitā gārmer path diā, ratthalā diā, hātēr madhya diā, ghatēr prānta diā, majumdār der bātīr sanmukh diā, paštāpis ebaṅ iskul ghārer pāṅśwa diā, samasta paricitā lōken cōkkher upar diā, kalanḵker chāp laiā cīrakāler mata griha chītā calīā gela.”

We also find innuendoes in the use of language at the end of the story. When the kind Civil Surgeon says to Chandara that her husband wishes to see her once before her execution her answer is, ‘the deceitful rogue’. This telling expression reveals her attitude to her husband to a great extent.

In this where Rabindranath speaks of the landless peasant family he picks up his language from the commonest people. The poverty of the subjects their misery and suffering, the oppression and exploitation of the Zemindars, all have been told in a straightforward manner and unhesitatingly. So, words like ‘hag’ (Magi in bengali) have come in this story easily, and words like, “shall I go out to earn money on my own” have been put in the mouth of the eldest daughter-in-law of the family, which implies earning money by a woman in an illicit way. Rabindranath was a man of sophisticated and cultured taste and the time of his writing was 1300 BS, but the realism he has shown in his language in that far away past, in truly surprising.
As the assertion of the woman’s individual identity has come in their expressive language, so the same will be observed in the case of the male characters. The man we saw in the magistrate husband of Nirupama, we see the same man but in a more nature from in the character of Hemanta in the story ‘Tyag’. So, Hemanta is ready to ignore the anger of his father and risk the loss of his inheritance. So, he firmly declares, “I will not abandon my wife”. And to the last question of his father he answers, “I do not admit of the caste system.” The words which Rabindranath has put in the mouth of Hemanta show the letter’s unbending mind and character.

The vast edifice of stories of Rabindranath has been built by the use of easy unostentatious language but with a beautiful strangeness of variety, which is always in conformity with the themes. The stories involving the problems and the joys and sorrows of the people of rural Bengal or of the ordinary families, have been mostly written in plain, colloquial language which make them very lively. So, citing the example of the murder of the wife in the story ‘Shasti’, Buddhadev Basu has even said, “ghātanā yekhāne khub jamkāla dharaner, xekhānei rabīndranāth sabcēye nēcugalāi kathā balen eban balen sabcēye kam.”

But this comment is applicable to all the stories of Rabindranath.

In the stories of Galpaguchha, verbs, objectives, comparisons and imagery make them colourful like the dispersion of light through a prism which illuminate the soul of the story and that of the characters. The language is sometimes monodimensional and sometimes multidimensional. As an illustration we may cite the example of the story ‘Rajpather Katha’ “balika uthila, duṭṭāila, cōkh muchila - path chāti ā pā̀śwabartē baner madhye calīa gela.”
Here, three verbs express three different acts, behaviors and state of mind of the girl. Again in the story ‘postmaster’ we see, “paśmāśīr tāhā dekhite chilen ebaṁ bhāvite chilen, ei samay kāche ekṭi keha nitānta āpanār lok thākita – hāṭdayer sahit ekānta sāṅlagna ekṭi sneha puttali māṁabmūrti.”

The verbs create an image of a heartfelt desire for a woman of his dream as he looks on the rain clouds sailing across the sky. Sometimes the language of the stories is replete with adjectives. To avoid all elaborations in the narration of the stories selected and telling adjectives have been used. “sei sandhyālakte komaḷ bāliseṇ upare ekṭi āsat kliṣṭa kusum pelab mukh; o saṁyamita cūkna kuntil lalāṭer upar āsiā pāṭiṭche ebaṇī lajjāī āṇamita baṭa baṭa cokhen pallaṭ kapoler upar chāyā bīṣṭār kariṭāche.”

An impressive image of beauty and love of the feverish face, the eyes and the wisp of hair on the brow of Kankchampa, has been drawn with the skillful uses of a few adjectives.

By the use of words having sound effect the poet has often created a melodious atmosphere. In the story ‘Mahamaya’, world of sound has been created by the use of five sonorous words in only one sentence. Such as, “manḍīrē gabākṣhe baṣīa pāiṁa bakaṁ bakaṁ kariṁ ḍāke, bāhīre śimūl gāchēr śākhaṁ baṣīa kāṭhthakrā ekghēye thak-thak sabda kare, śuṣka patrānāsīr madhya diā gīṅgīti sarsar śabde chutiā yāi, hathāt ekṭi uṣṇa bāṭās māḷheṇ dik haite āsiā sāmasta gāchēr pāṭān madhye jhan-jhan kariṁ uṭhe ebaṁ hathāt nadēr jal jōgīā utiā bhiāgā ghūṭen soppānem upar chalāṭ-chalāṭ kariṁ āghāt karite ṭhāke.”

A particular form of artistic beauty has been achieved by creating
imageries with the use of comparison, hypothesis, allegory etc. in the stories of Rabindranath. The mysterious beauty of an image which Rabindranath creates with the deep insight of a poet takes us to a different inner world beyond the resplendent world of reality. Needless to say that, here lies the difference between the visible world of reality and the invisible world of imagery. As an illustration we may cite the story ‘Aparichita’. In this story Kalyani cannot get married to the narrator of the story because of the lust for money of the latter’s maternal uncle. The narrator hears the sweet voice of the girl which is firm with the assertion of her own identity while travelling in a train. But in the dark night the narrator-hero of the story was overwhelmed by the strange, beautiful voice. He never saw the girl and never knew her identity, yet the sonorous voice aroused in his mind a beautiful image - a poetic feeling created by comparison and hypothesis. “se yena o i tānāmayē nattrin mata .... kē āścāya pariṇāna tumi - cancāl kāler kshudna hridayer upare phulān matā phuṭiāche athaca tār dheu lagiā ekī pā̰pti o tale nāi.”

In some stories we find suggestive and symbolic image in its title and it appears that the whole story is coloured by its variegated beauty and a realistic representation of life, such as, ‘Megh o Roudra’, ‘kankal’ etc. When we think about the role of language in the stories of Rabindranath to create an atmosphere of realism, we particularly remember the wide use of colloquial and homly words. While portraying the life of the ordinary Bengalees – whether rural or urban – Rabindranath used innumerable such words. Stories writing from the last decade of the 19th century till the time of his death, there is free and liberal use of such words in his stories. The examples of these lie scattered in the pages of ‘Postmaster’, ‘Shasti’,
A multifaced long and evolutionary history of the language of Bengali prosetiterature has been built in the stories of Rabindranath. The person who truly initiated the beginning of the Bengali short story, naturally had to give its language its expressive and suggestive qualities. But the from and style of the language never suffered from an inertia, it has always been moving and lively. He had to change the structure of the language to meet the need of the subject matter. The kind of language while he used to express the joys and sorrows of the life of the rural people had to be abandoned when he portrayed the life of the urban people and the language became more polished and sophisticated. Besides this he brought poetic suggestiveness in his language with comparison, hypothesis etc. according to needs of the stories. Even in the last part of his life he used a highly polished and stylised language with epigrams, paradox, etc. according to the needs of his characters, environment and atmosphere. So it may be said without any reservation that, for a long period, from the time of ‘Hitabadi’ to ‘Tin sangi’ or even later for nearly half a century Rabindranath left a unique creation of an artistic language almost at every stage of the development of Bengali prose literature.

Like Rabindranath, Premchand the undisputedly the greatest writer of Hindi stories, created an epoch-making history by creating the language for his stories. It was in his hands that Hindi short stories got its artistic form. The predecessors of Premchand who wrote stories were divided into two categories in the matter of language creation. One category of writers used a mixed language using colloquial language with original Sanskrit words (Tatsama) and were inclined to Sanskritize their language which made
it rather stiff. The other category used a language with words from Arabic, Persian and Urdu mixed with original Sanskrit words. None of these two types of language was acceptable to Premchand good enough to be used in writing stories. He opened the doors of the Hindi language for the entrance of words of other languages currently used in India. As a result the Hindi language became enriched by words from English, Persian, Arabic and Urdu and also other Indian languages.

The presence of a poetic language is comparatively less in the stories of Premchand than it is in the stories of Rabindranath, the initiator of modern Bengali short story. Perhaps we shall find the reason of this mainly in the difference of their environment. The time, the environment and the situation in which Premchand was born, gave him little opportunity to use a poetic language in his stories. Besides this, the most important identity of Rabindranath was that, he was first a poet and then a story writer. So, naturally there is a difference between their languages. Living with the people, Premchand used the language of the people in his works. As a result we find a so called lack of literary embellishment in the language of a Premchand than what we find in that of Rabindranath.

If we study the whole gamut of Premchand’s works we shall find that the form of his language is not always the same. In his creative writing his language is continuously developing and becoming more and more mature. So, a gradual development of the language is seen in the works of Premchand. Since he came from the Urdu language we find the dominances of Arabic, Persian and Urdu language in his early works. With the noble objective of making his literary works serve the people and the society, he wished to use the language of the people as the language of his literature.
So, he took great care to make his language come very close to the language what the people use in their everyday life. For this reason we find noticeable changes in his language, i.e. he tried to make his language free from the influence of Urdu gradually. As he came to his stories ‘Kafan’ and ‘Pus Ki Rat’, his language became more clear and mature. Dr. Gopal Rai has given clear opinion in this matter, “yehga tak ākār uskē apnē ja pehecān khaṭī hatī hei, wah keval premcand kē bhashā na rakhkar apne yug ke kathā sāhitya kē bhashā ban jātī hei.”

Echoing this assertion Dr. Dharmadhwa Tripathy said, “yeh premcand kē bhashā saktī kā hē pramaṇ hei ki unkē bhashā yugēn sāhitya rācānā ke liye ādān ś siddha hatī hei.”

The opinion of Dr. Ramvilas Sharma seems to be very much true that the chief cause of the literary success of Premchand is his language. He knew the people and the language they use. A misunderstanding started between the languages Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani in his time and Premchand tried to find out a solution of this with reason and arguments. He vehemently asserted, “hamaṃē rāṣṭrēya bhashā wahē ha saktē hei jiskē ādhār sarvā sāmānāya badhgamyātā ha, jise sab lag sahajatē se samajh sake.”

Premchand was a staunch supporter of using the Hindustani language in literature which is a combined form of the Hindi and Urdu language. And he has shown in his own literary works how this language problem can be solved and how convincing prose literature can be written in a natural, powerful and colloquial language.

From the very beginning of his writing career Premchand, who came from the Urdu language, desired to take up the characteristics of Hindi
literary art, and he succeeded in his attempt. He left a very important contribution in the development of Hindi literary style. We find a simplicity in his works which has given them a wonderful liveliness and strength which come spontaneously. Where the situation is sweet and gentle the language also has become soft and gentle effortlessly. To express anger and protest the language becomes harsh and uncompromising. In places where there is a show of neglect, or censure, or insult and humiliation, he uses words which are expressive of indignation, contempt and hatred. To make his language conform to the character and express different attitudes and states of the mind, Premchand has used the language of the people as his base. By using ordinary and colloquial words of the ordinary people he has made the language of his stories more expressive and powerful. That he might be rated as a second grade writer for these tendencies did not bother him at all, rather he took it as a challenge. Words which are used by the man in the street in their conversation, dialects, insinuations and figures of speech used by the unlettered rural people, have found their places in his stories. This he did because the poor and the ordinary people are at the centre of his vast realm of stories. He thought that it would be more natural and honest to express their problems and attitudes in their own language. In the words of Dr. Ramvilas Sharma it may be said, "dehātī boli aur hindī ke ekēkaan me unhe itnā saphalatā milē hai ki gnāo kā rahnewālā pāthak bhī premcand ke kisāna kē bāt sunkar use aswābhāvik nahē kah saktā."

The structure of the language used by Premchand in his stories is based on the rural colloquial language used by the people. The phrases and idioms, comparisons, humour, what we find in the stories of Premchand
were the fruits of his own personal experience, picked up by him from his own rural language. We cite below a few examples to show how this was done by him:

(1) \textit{nagghu khāne béithā, to kaun vis kē ghūat jaisā lagtā thā.} ..... \textit{da cār grās khačar uth āyā jaise kise priyajan ke śráddh kā bhajan ha.} (alagyojhā)

(2) \textit{muliyā us usar me gulāb kā phul thē.} (ghāswālī)

(3) \textit{vaidhavya ke sók me murjhāyā huā muliyā kā pēt badan kamal kē bhūtī arun ha uthā.} (alagyojhā)

(4) \textit{jaise āg kē ānych se lohā lāl ha jātā hei, waise hē ranē kā mukh lāl ha gayā.} (rājā handaul)

(5) \textit{knadh kē agni sadbhāvyo ka bhasm kar detē hei.} (pāp kā agnikunda)

To bring his language closer to the language of the people, Premchand did not hesitate to pickup words used by the rural people, words derived from Sanskrit and words taken directly from Sanskrit, and Arabic, Persian and even English words. He used these words according to the situations of the characters and the contacts of his stories. In this language of the people there is not only simplicity, easiness, intimacy and sweetness, but there is also a clear expressions of the feelings of life, the desires and aspirations of the of the people. This is the reason why the language of Premchand influences his readers so deeply. A few words used by him in his language are given here—

\textit{pangiät, khatauli, bmcakh, bhinsār, marjād, jaijāt, takalluf, kurk, amēn, nāliś, najań, saluk, ātmaviśwāś, rekard, pragrām, kaunsil, kameći, demakrasź, eleksan, naštś, ministan} etc.
From the above examples it seems to be quite clear that he used the most conversational type of words in his language. Words have come directly from Sanskrit, words derived from Sanskrit, native and foreign words have come easily and got mixed up with the language of the people. So we may agree with the opinion of Dr. Dharmadhwaja Tripathi without any reservation,

"premchand kē bhāṣā me mānab jēvan kē un tamām anubhutiyya kē abhivyekti hui hei, ja sab prakār se saraal, sahaj, swāhhāvik, vāstavik aur prasaṅgānikul hei." 96

A wonderful characteristic of the language Premchand is an impressive union between proverbs and moral sayings. In the morale assertions of his stories we not only find the essence of life’s truth, but also the power to touch our hearts. The following examples are proofs of this -

(1) jawānē kā naśā ghamand hei, nindayatā hei, swāntth hei, śekhē hei, viśam vāsanā hei, kaṭutā hei aur wah sabkuch hei ja jēvan ka paśutā, vikār aur patan kē or le jātā hei. (ghāswālē)

(2) kul manyādā saṁsār kē sabse uttam vastu hei. (vahīskān)

(3) prem apamānit hakar dweś me badal jētā hei. (lānchān)

(4) jisme tyāg hei, wah budhā bhē ha ta jawān hei. jisme tyāg nahē, gainat nahē, wah jawān bhē mītak hei. (sujān bhagat)

(5) apne uttandāitwa kā gyān bahudhā hamāre sāṅkucit vyēvahāra kā sudhārak hatā hei. (panch pānamēswar)

So, it is quite evident that not only in their readability and ‘kissagoi’, but rather, the active principles of the language of Premchand was to reduce the gap between literature and the people. For this reason there is a characteristic attractiveness and credibility in his stories. The chief virtue of the language of Premchand is that it is very close to the colloquial language.
So, we may agree with the opinion of Dr. Ramvilas Sharma, "Premchand ke pātra kēḷ bhashā ek adhyān karne kē vāstu hei. dehāti, hindī, urdu, aṅgrejē aur inke mīrāne se bane anek prakār kē bhashā salīyūkā ek yug ke sāṃskṛtik ādān-pradān kē īthās hei. 'kaphan' ke camārṇa se lekar 'satranj ke khilāṭē' ke bēte yug ke nawābhu tak saikīṇya śrenēyā ke pātra kē unkē swābhāvik bhashā se bātcē karānē samāj ke adbhut gyān kē sākṣhē hei."

4. The influence of Rabindranath upon the short story writers of the following generations

The objective of literary composition is to create. The process of creation is always concerned with newness and originality. There lie in it new energy, strong feelings and other impressive different qualities. This energy, feeling and their fast movement are related to life. And the author analyses and explains the moving stream of life. For this reason he is a builder, i.e. a creator. This process of creation of the writer is not just bound with the present, it is also linked with the past and the future.

A literature is a very much conscious and sensitive person. At the time of his writing he always thinks about the welfare and happiness of all people which his creation should bring to them. This outlook is a humanitarian outlook, since man is always at the centre of his creation. Story writer Rabindranath was an author who, through the medium of his stories, wished to leave a blissful wisdom for man which will be remembered for all time to come. The thought of man's past, present and future, that is, the whole perspective of human life, was always in his mind, and this thought has been reflected in his literary works. The whole gamut of the world of his stories is intimately related to humanitarian ideals.
All along he was concerned with the different aspects of human life and always put his efforts to establish the liberal identity of man.

Rabindranath wrote about the social injustice, exploitation, oppression, economic disparity in his short stories and the short story writers of the following generations were all influenced by this. Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Narayan Gangopadhyay, Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay, etc, all came under the influence of Rabindranath and made social injustice, exploitation, etc, the theme of their stories.

One of the important short story writers after Rabindranath was Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay. The subject matters of his stories are varied and wide spread. He moved in the unlettered society of rural Bengal as freely as he moved in the sophisticated, modern European society. His own personal experience lies at the bottom of this. The portrait of life as it is actually lived and the flowing stream of life are the chief characteristics of his stories. Like, Rabindranath he realised the inherent attraction of man for a good story told in an attractive manner. So we find in his stories a flawless narrative and in the end a sweet contentment.

In the stories ‘Yajneswarer Yajna’, ‘Tyag’, ‘Haldar Gosthi’ etc. we find sons raising their voice of protest against the injustic of the father. Perhaps the influence of this inspired. Bijit Ghose to write his story ‘Dhwasta’ in the later period. This is the story of a son’s anger, hate and spite, who stood against an unkind, merciless cruel, inhuman and profligate father because of his deep love for his mother who was a victim of her husband’s ill treatment.

As Rabindranath wrote against wrongs and injustics in the family in his stories, ‘Strir Patra’, ‘Haldar Gosthi’, etc. So, did Ashapurna Devi in
her stories, ‘Seemarekhar Seema’, ‘Anyaswar’, ‘Taser ghar’, ‘Nikhad’, ‘Prithibi chirantani’, etc, in the later period and the story ‘Shankha’ of Dipendra Nath Bandopadhyay. In all these stories many wrongs and injustices done in the family have been exposed. Though the member of stories exposing the evils of the family written by the short story writers after Rabindranath is not much, Yet we get characters in the stories of Ashapurna Devi whose voice of protest is even louder than what we find in the stories of Rabindranath. The character of Mamata of the story ‘Taser ghar’ reminds us of Mrinal of the story ‘Strir Patra’. Like Mrinal, Mamata also leaves behind the security and comfort of a family life and steps into the wide world in search of her own identity.

It is because of the influence of Rabindranath that Ashapurna Devi could draw a character like Mamata in the later period. Like the first artistically successful story in Bengali literature, i.e. of Rabindranath, ‘Dena Paona’, Kedar Nath Bandopadhyay also wrote a story ‘Madhurena’, protesting against the evil of the dowry system. The heroine of this story, Shaila brings Nirupama of the story ‘Dena Paona’ to our mind. At a time and in a society when to have an unmarried girl of marriageable age in the family was a veritable offence, a heroine of that time did not bow down to the notorious social custom. She showed the way how to preserve one’s self respect. Shaila ignored a society which was greedy for dowry. She told her father quite firmly her absolute disagreement in the marriage.

"tumi ēmān janya pātra khujte ān jeonā bābā, e sab pūc bachar āgesambhab chila,
This appears to be some thing like an echoe of the words of Nirupama. ‘bābā tumī yadi ār ek paisā āmār swaśunke dā o, tāhale ār tamār meyeke dekhte pābenā ei tamār gā chyue ballum.’ That Kedar Nath could not disregard the influence of Rabindranath, the story ‘Madhurena’ bears witness to it.

In his story ‘Musalmanir galpa’ Rabindranath expressed his vehement protest against blind religious beliefs. Perhaps this attitude is revealed in a later period in the story ‘Sada ghora’ by Ramesh Chandra Sen where the author protests against communal disharmony. The story ‘Kaiser’ by Atin Bandopadhyay. Written in a later period, should be mentioned in this context. In this story, Hasin, a muslim boy, risks his life to save his hindu friend Paran. He even kills two men of his own community to take revenge for the murder of his Hindu friend. The story which Rabindranath wrote before his death with a fervent desire to bring harmony between the Hindu and the Muslim communities inspired many other writers at a later period. ‘Dangar Samay’ by Balai Chand Mukhopadhyay, alias Banaphool, ‘Swakshar’ by Achinta Kumar Sengupta, ‘Abad’, ‘Ekti Shatrur Kahini’, ‘Ijjet’ by Narayan Gangopadhyay, ‘Danga’ by Somen Chanda, ‘Abad’ by Samaresh Basu, ‘Dressing Table’ by Salil Chowdhury, ‘Biswas’ and ‘Satyagrahi’ by Tara Shankar Bandyopadhyay, ‘Hatya’ by Parimal Goswami, ‘Hindu Muslim Danga’ and ‘Ekti Dangar Kahini’ by Manoj Basu, – all bear witness to this.

The authors of all these stories written against the background of communal riots, tried to make it clear that religion has no relation with communalism or casteism. The objective of religion is to bring men together to a single fold, and not to push them towards the sin of communal
disharmony. Casteism is a man-made thing, we may see the evil hands of imperialism behind communal disharmony. This disharmony between people and people only helps the profiting class. Through these stories the authors have tried to appeal to the goodness in the human heart. They appealed to the people to keep away from the evil of communalism and to build a new society where all men will remain united by the bond of love and friendship.

Rabindranath never gave much importance to religion. This new awareness about religion came to Rabindranath when he was writing the ‘Chitra’ group of poems. At this time he wrote a letter on 5th October, 1895, included in ‘Chinnapatra’. Which is very important, "āmarā bāīrer śāśtra theke ye dharma pāi se kakhana āmār dharma hae athenā, tān saīge kebal ekṭā abhyāser jog dṛīṭha hae āse – ye dharma āmār jēbaner bhitarē saṁsārer duḥsaha tāpe krīṭalysed hae uṭhe sei āmār yathākṣtha. .... sei jinīśṭāke nijer madhye ubbhuta kare talai mānīser pākshe manusyaṭwe caram phal. caram bedānī tāke janmadān karte hai, nijer saṁśī die tāke prāṇdān karte hai - tār pare jēbane sarbatābḥāve sukhe nā hae o caritāṅkha hae marā yēte pāre." He tried to establish this point in his story ‘Durasha’. The nawab’s daughter believed the brahministic practies of religions rituals of Hindu Kesharlal, to be his true religion. When the daughter of the muslim nawab absorbs these religious practies in her own being with constant endeavour for a long time and becomes the wife of Hindu Kesharlal then it is suddenly discovered, "ai ācār dharma ādau kēśarālāleśa antaraṁga swadharma nai - tā śudhui ekṭā abhyāser dharma mātra; abhyās badaler saīge saīge kēśarāleśe ācār o budle gieche anāyāse."

What Rabindranath wanted to say in the story ‘Durasha’, he said the
same thing in the story 'Musalmanir galpa' written before his death, his age-old and true realisation of religion. So, Kamala could easily say to her father Habir Khan, "bābā āmār dharma nei, āmi yāke bhālabāsi sei bhāgyabāni āmār dharma. ye dharma ciradin āmāke jābaner sab bhālabāsa theke bancita kareche, abagyār āstākṣṭer pāsē āmāke phele rekhe dieche, se dharmer madhye āmi ta debatār prasannatā kanadin dekhte pelumā. ..... ye debatā āmāke āśray diechen sei bhālabāsār sanmāner madhye tākei āmi pujā kari, tini-i āmār debatā – tini hindu o nan, musalmān o nan."¹⁰¹ Not only in his stories but in his essays also Rabindranath followed the same ideology, and we may recall the essay 'Hindu Musalman' in this context, "ye deśe pradhānata dharmer milei mānuṣke melāi, anya kana bhūdhane tāke bhūdhete pārenā, se deś hatabhāgya. se deś swām dharmaśe die ye bibheda sīṣṭe kare seite sakaler ceye sarbanese bibhed. mānuṣ balei mānuṣer ye mulya seitekei sahaj prātīr sānge swēkār karāi prakīta dharmā buddhi. ye deśe dharmai sei buddhiśe prātīta kare rāṣṭrēk swārtha buddhi ki se deśe bhācāte prre."¹⁰²

As Rabindranath wrote against the administrative oppression and injustice and corruption in his stories, 'Durbuddhi', 'Megh O Raudra' and 'Namanjur', so in the later period Tarashankar wrote 'Ganadevata', Manik Bandopadhyay wrote, 'Choto Bakul purer yatri', Ramapada Choudhury wrote 'Aaj Kaal Parshur Galpa', under his influence. The environment, background and the realism which is found in the superb story, 'Ganatantra O Gopal Kahar', by Mani Mukhopadhyay, "rabindaṃaṃāti saṃsāti galpaśe kathā māne kanie dei."¹⁰³

Rabindranath was not happy with the prevailing system of education
in the country, and its present condition is still more undesirable. There are many reasonable grounds for not being satisfied with the educational system of the present time. In his story ‘Tota Kahini’ Rabindranath spoke against the mechanical character of the educational system of our country. And in the later period Manik Bandyopadhyay in his story ‘Pass Fail’, and Narayan Ganguly in his story, ‘Mananiya Parikshak Mahashai Samipesu’, spoke against the hollowness, defects, insincerity and corruption in the present system of education, Shaibal Mitra wrote the story ‘Haradhanu Kahiniir Punarlikhan’, in 1943. In this story he ridiculed with severe irony the outwardly pompous system of education which was really hollow inside, for there was everything in it but education, which Rabindranath did in his ‘Tota Kahini’, Shaibal Mitra exposed in the most unkind satire the lack of even common knowledge of the students, teachers and even the headmasters and also the lamentable ignorance of the other workers connected with education. No one, the education minister, the government the editors of newspapers, escapes from the salvoes of satire of the author.

The social awareness which Rabindranath has shown in his short stories by exposing the disparity, injustice, exploitation which are true-to-life, has also been shown by writers of the later period under his influence, but with one noticeable difference. We should take note of the evolution of the language of the writers who came after Rabindranath. The writers of the post-Rabindra period faced many problems and issues, strange social conditions and changes, different political movements, communal disharmony and riots, India’s independence, many problems of the post-independence period, etc. but still they could not be totally free from the influence of Rabindranath. The pioneering way which Rabindranath has
shown in his social awareness and his efforts for an all-embracing welfare of the people, inspired the writers of the following generations, consciously or unconsciously, it still inspires them in the present and will continue to inspire in the days to come. And in this way Rabindranath has gained an unprecedented popularity as a writer of short story.

5. The Influence of Premchand Upon the writers of the following generations

The literary works of Premchand are about the people and for the people. He was always with the people like a close kin and shared their joys and sorrows of life and also their struggle. The popularity of his literary works show that the literature which stands for the people who suffer from exploitation, social injustice and oppression, becomes deathless and is not bound by time and space. The literary works of premchand have acquired the dignity of crossing the barrier of time and space because of the characteristic artistic skill of his works.

The subjects which the story writers, who came after Premchand, chose for their stories, are all related to man and his society. In the stories of Jainendra. Renu, Bhairab Prasad Gupta, Rangeya Raghab, Dr. Rahi Masum Raza, Ram Daras Mishra, Krishna Agnihotri, etc, we find the trend and stream started by Premchand. Besides these writers, Yashpal, Viveki Rai, Nagarjun, Uday Shankar Bhatta, Dr. Lakshmi Narayan, etc. also carried forward the stream of the tradition of the stories of Premchand. Amar Kant, Shekhar Joshi, Markandeya, Bhisma Sahani, who also wrote stories, followed the method and style of Premchand. The social, political, economic and humanitarian problems which Premchand dealt with in his stories, were thoroughly analysed by him logically and he also showed the possible ways
for their solution. The writers of the later period also made the social problems and conditions the subject matters of their stories with their own characteristic style. Though the social conditions and environment were different at the time of Premchand and the time of the next generations of writers, yet we find many similarities between them in the matter of their method of composition.

Dr. Ganga Prasad Vimal gave his opinion in the context of influence of Premchand in short Story, “premchand jahna swayam apne samakal ke prasangik anubhav ke upaj hei, wahn bharaatya jatiya viswake aise adhisthata bh he, jinhane bhantya kal cetana ke sahaj aur udan rush ka apne racan k dhyey banaya hei.” The reason behind such opinion is—that, the environment and social conditions which Premchand chose for his stories, were all credible and very much true to life. For this reason the characters portrayed by Premchand are so lively and so very close to us.

The story writers Phanishwarnath Renu, Nagarjun, Bhairav Prasad Gupta, Rangeya Raghav, Bhishma Sahani etc. chose the economic, social and cultural issues of the rural area of the post-independence period as their themes, and they also made attempts to relate their literary style with the tradition of Premchand. In their stories they dreamt of building a new society and also discuss their internal conflicts and anomalies. It is true that in their works we do not get the feel of the vast experience of Premchand covering all aspects of life, and the analytical discussion of psychological issues is also absent. The chief features of the works of the writers who came after Premchand are discussion and satire.

Sometime after independence a new tradition called ‘Nayi Kahani’,
in story writing was created. This new tradition of story writing carefully studied the changed living conditions of the country and by their faithful portrayal made a very important contribution to it. Critics are of the opinion that Premchand’s realistic approach to life is comparatively more prominent in his stories than in his novels. After Premchand many new methods started to be used by writers like, Markandeya, Shekhar Joshi, Amarkant, Bhishma Sahani. For the exact portrayal of the realism of the individual, and of the society. The stories of Premchand reflect the life of the rural people as well as the newly come up middle class, the anomalies and maladjustment of their life. We also get an idea of the life of the people who migrated from villages to towns and cities, portrayed successfully and truthfully. In the stories ‘Badbu’ and ‘Ustad’ by Shekhar Joshi we get the image of the life lived by the industrial workers. In his most ordinary characters and themes, Markandeya has come down to earth. This is scattered in the pages of the stories ‘Mahuye Ka Ped’ and ‘Kalyan Man’, etc.

Some very significant stories have been written by Amar Kanta about the realistic life of the lower middle class and the psychology of the young generation of the time. There is discussion in them and also a hint of satire. ‘Chief Ki Dawat’ of Bhishma Sahani and in some stories of Shekhar Joshi the psychology of the petty bourgeois class has been harshly ridiculed. As in the stories of Premchand so in the stories of these writers the life of the ordinary people has been drawn. This should also be added that as in the stories of Premchand so in the stories of these writers the manner of presentation is frank and open, there is no attempt to play hide and seek. So, the very ordinary things and characters have gained literary values.

Critic Sudhish Pachouri said that, the most important characteristic
of the manner of writing of Premchand is that, he observed the contemporary social life from many different angles and portrayed them in his stories. He never tried to distort it or give it any other shape guided by his personal outlook or philosophy. In the stories where there is an issue like change of heart, he goes back to analyse the antecedents to make his story perfectly credible. While trying to portray the natural and realistic picture of the social conditions of his stories, Premchand said that his pen was deeply and intimately related to human life. There were many writers who were connected with the ‘Nayi Kahani’ movement who learnt many things from the literary style of Premchand and then developed them. The tradition of the stream of the stories of Premchand was built by these writers. Of the writers who can be included in this group we may mention the names of Amarkant, Bhairav Prasad Gupta, Bhishma Sahani, etc. A study of their stories will reveal the fact that even those who were actively connected with the ‘Nayi Kahani’ movement could not escape from the influence of Premchand. The representative nature of the characters, the manner of telling the narrative, and the true-to-life description of the contemporary society, are sufficient to show that these writers were the inheriters of Premchand’s tradition. When the other story writers admit of these characteristics, consciously or unconsciously, in their stories, then according to the characteristics of fiction they come very near to Premchand. For this reason, "āj bhē premchand kē rācānā paddhati kē purē jānkārē hamāre kathākārya ke liye āvāsyak hei aur kahānē kē rācānā paddhati kā kāc bhē nayā prāyag premchand kē rācānā prakritiẏā ka hridayayāigam kaēke hē saphālatā pūrvvak kiyā jā saktē hei."105

The roots of the tradition of the stories of Premchand have gone so
deep and they are so widespread that it is not possible for the writers to ignore it. Whatever new method or style may be adopted by the writers in the name of modernism or newness, it must be admitted that the structure and form of the story which Premchand had created is very important, useful and appropriate. The objective of a story is to portray man and the story of his life. So long as writers will continue to do this, the name of Premchand will be remembered. So critic Sri Charu Mitra said that, through stories Premchand desired to leave such wisdom for the next generation in which these will be an unimpaired confidence in life.

Being influenced by the characteristic quality of the stories of Premchand Sri Amrit Lal Nagar said in 1959, "Premchand lokmānas ke anakhe pārkhē the aur is rūp me āj bhē baṭe-baṭe taknikdhā, sahitya cintan kē painē-painē bāṭne karne wāle kalākār bhē premchand kē is mahatwa ke āge baṭe phēke lagte hei. Premchand hamārē wah nidhi hei jīse lekar kam-se-kam do pēdhiyā ab bhē samṛiddha ban saktē hei." 106 This comment was as relevant in 1959 as it is now, for the influence of Premchand and his works have not lessened even now. In the present days also we find the same scene all around us which was described by Premchand years ago. Though the country is now independent and the conditions of life and living have gone through many developments, yet the life of the man in the street has not changed much and there is hardly any improvement in the sense of the values of life. The tradition of the story literature of Premchand is based on a firm foundation and its influence is far reaching. There is hardly any doubt that he will continue to influence the literary works of the future generations.
6. Summing up

From the above discussions it seems to be evident that sometimes a
nation becomes fortunate to have among them a few persons of great genius
whose influence upon the life of the people is deep and abiding. Though
they are born to particular parents in a particular family, yet in course of
time they go beyond the boundaries of family tradition and influence and
stand at the centre of the life of the nation. As the genius of Rabindranath
cast its spell upon the life of the Bengali people in all its aspects, thoughts,
works and ideals, so Premchand is also a towering personality in the literary
world of the country in general and Hindi world of the country in general
and Hindi literature in particular. The realistic pecture of human life with
perfect exactitude which they portrayed in their stories with great skill, is
the chief quality of their literary works. In their literature, the sensitiveness
and the individuality of man, his social environment and his humanitarian
outlook have come out clear and distinct. Their literary works show that
they always tried to find out solutions of the contemporary social problems.
After making a comparative study of their literary works it may be admitted
without any reservation that though there are certain differences in their
outlook and style up they wrote for the people and they command so much
respect and popularity.

Rabindranath belonged to the upper meddle class so we get the
picture of the life, the hopes and aspirations of the educated intellectuals in
his stories. But still, the life of the ordinary man, the joys and sorrow of his
everyday life have never been neglected. He never ignored the social and
economic problems of his time, though at times his stories are lost behind
too much analytical elaboration and sometimes the objective of his stories
fades behind his philosophical outlook and dissertations. But despite of all these the society of his time comes alive in his stories. Dr. Indra Nath Madan has made a very important comment in this respect in his book ‘Premchand’.

The reason of his such comment is that, basically Rabindranath is a poet, a philosopher, an intellectual and meditative person and a worshipper of beauty. As he laid stress on the universal goodness of love, beauty and welfare, he was also conscious of the injustice and exploitation prevalent in the society of the country and also in the whole world for that matter, and he tried to change it for the better. A humanist and with a historical outlook, Rabindranath was always grieved at the suffering of man and in his stories he came very close to them. We are surprised at his deep insight in his treatment of the relation between man and man and man and his society. But yet it cannot be denied that the chief objective of his literary works is concerned with the society and the revelation of the truth of his age, with his awareness of the moral values, his philosophy of life, his counsel and his sense of beauty, expressed through his stories. Of course, there is but little doubt that art stands on contemporary themes, but when the contemporaneous themes cross the barriers of time and space and acquire a universal meaning, then it reaches its supreme achievement. In the works of Rabindranath the contemporary themes shine brightly against the background of eternity and have made the artistic skill of the poet deathless.

Compared with Rabindranath the literary works of Premchand and the group of writers who followed him, are related to those particular things or class which admitting of a particular stage of moral precepts, have used their literary talent in the service of the society and the solution of social
problems. The central thought of the stories of Premchand is chiefly concerned with the society. He does not stand aloof and away in his portrayal of the life the peasantry and the lower middle class, rather he makes himself a part of their life. For this reason his art is steeped with humanitarian love for the poor and the suffering humanity. In the critical period of his time the capitalistic system of economy was eating into the vitals of the agrarian society and brought untold problems and sufferings to the peasantry. At this time Premchand gave utterance to the people’s sufferings, drew a concrete picture of the thoughts and the state of mind of the poor peasants and took up his pen against the reactionary forces of the time and carried on this noble mission till the day of his death.

We should bear it in mind that the different ways of the solutions of social problems of Rabindranath and Premchand is due to the difference in their outlook which originated in the difference of their environment. This difference was due to the difference between the educated and progressive society of Bengal and the underdeveloped society of the Hindi speaking people. But inspite of this basic difference in the way of thinking and the literart style of the two writers, the common bond that brings them close to each other, and the objective of their literary works which makes one complementary of the other, is that, the two great writers were equally worried about the social problems of their time and desired to find out a solution in their stories. This was because they realised that the solution of the social problems was their great responsibility as writers. As they exposed the social problems standing in the centre of them in their stories, so they also analysed them in their stories, sometimes. So, in summing up we may say that inspite of some differences here and there, both Rabindranath and
Premchand wrote their stories for the people and so they became people's literature. And so, Rabindranath in Bengali literature and Premchand in Hindi, the two greatest writers of their time, have acquired deathless fame and glory, not limit by time and space.
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