CHAPTER - 5

SHORT STORIES OF RABINDRANATH AND PREMCHAND:
AN EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL AWARENESS
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1. The Concept of Marxian Theory

To divide men and women into two distinct classes viz, the 'Rich' and the 'Poor' the 'Haves' and the 'Havesnots' and determining their positions in a society on the basis of the wealth, the Rich, the affluent, the dominant do possess, and the poorer section, deprived of it, is a concept to be regarded as modern. The social and philosophical writers whose progressive thinking gave birth to this idea, are Spencer, Hegel, Karl Marx and others. Of them Karl Marx is the principal figure "The life of Marx was a life of poverty and overstrain. He had to flee from one country to another due to his conspiratorial activities." and endowed him with a clear vision and a piercing judgement as to why men in a given society are divided into two distinct classes. It is not any other, but the money that has made this essential difference.

The view of Marx is that there are three classes of men in a society. Viz., the Landlord, the Capitalist and the Proletariat. These who are economically dominant, live at the expense of these poor people. They capture and control the means of production. For all these there is a difference which is bound to occur in the status they hold. Considerable difference exists in the ways of their living, affecting their outlook, value conduct etc. making them conscious of their class distinction. Marx very clearly pointed out, in course of his discussion that this class distinction is not eternal. That is, it did not originally exist in an ancient society from where individual ownership was absent. But then emerged this difference
as a result of the desperate isolated of some individuals to capture the means of productions which ultimately shattered the moral basis of the former society of living together, thus adversely affecting man’s condition of living. As a teacher of a new philosophy putting forth his firm faith in communistic doctrine Marx in his Communist Manifesto expressed that history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle, which lies at the base of social conflict. The belief of Marx is that as and when this individual domination over means of production will disappear, the distinction between the classes for cease to exist will disappear at the very moment.

But today in the capitalistic set up “each class stands in a definite relation to other so far as the process of production is concerned, the sum total of which forms the economic infrastructure”

A clear history is available of the growth of capitalism both in the western and European countries, as well as in India, though the nature of it is very different in European world and social perspective. In Europe it was rooted in the very feudalistic set up, such as in England and in France from the early 13th to 19th century. It continued in the capitalistic society throughout the early and late 19th century, whereas the Indian people conventionally believed in and depended on fate and luck. From the very early man and woman were guided by this feeling and sentiment. What was adverse in India was the nation of caste and creed sect and such others. Prejudiced by all these persons belonging to the higher class ruthlessly exploited the poor as a result of which vehement displeasure grew in the minds of the tortured and exploited people. Yet the class conflict did never become so intense in India as it was in the western countries. The labouring,
the peasants and the poor never were organized into distinct classes. They always avoided a direct clash and this weakness to avoid a direct conflict paved the way flourishing feudalism, and expansion of capitalism. Today however the feudalistic setup has disappeared casteism has almost been destroyed and men belonging to different castes and creed have almost converted into one. Dr. Ram Vilash Sharma has rightly observed this charges and said "युक्ता - नेता का भेदभाव दुब्रा हुआ यथार्थ है, वर्गा का निम्न, जातिवर्ग, महाजागा के किलाप गरिब किसान का संघर्ष, उत्ता हुआ जातार्थ है .... हर तरह के जातीय, हर तरह के संप्रदायक वाद का ही इलाज है- वर्ग संघर्ष।" ³

The history of our country shows that from the very beginning of the twentieth century, the Indian men and women were getting increasingly conscious of the thoughtless imperialistic rule – the political and economic exploitations of the alien rulers. As a result irrespective of the sect, – the peasants, the workers, the revolutionaries raised a unified voice of protest against the selfish, ruthless, tortures and the domination of the foreign rulers over the Indian masses. To this the progressive thinking of Karl Marx must have added a new force, gave the whole movement a new direction and added to it a new dimension creating in the minds of the suffering people, an aspiration to liberate and emancipated the mankind from the yoke of the foreign rule.

If we make a brief survey of the social history of the world, we find that there are three distinct divisions of man in any society, viz. the upper class, the middle class and the lower class. The middle class may again be sub divided into 1) Upper Middle Class 2) The Lower Middle Class but these two are inclusive in the term the middle class. Therefore, it is essential
here to discuss and determine the characterising of these three classes as mentioned viz. (i) the upper class (ii) the middle class (iii) the lower class.

The Upper Class: while we study and interpret Marxian thought we find that in feudalistic setup, the affluent or the upper class people were almost equal in rank and status to the ruling class who, too, were rich and prosperous as that of the rulers. In India no difference practically existed between the Upper Class and Land Owners in the position. But still the feudal lords who were straight away the rulers were esteemed as higher than the rest. In this connection we may refer to what Dr. Indranath Madan wrote, "sāmantsāhī kā sambandh us samāj yā samāj kē us śaṣāk saṅskṛiti yā vārg se hei ja pramukh rūp se kṛṣi sambandhit rāhē hei aur jisme sampatti kā pradhān rūp lagān rāhē hei."  

This class donot perform any labour by themselves, but increase money and wealth and enhance power by which they dominate over others. These characteristics of the feudal lords are reflected in the behaviour of the aristocratic or the enormously, rich, the affluent people. The following observation of Indranath Madan makes it adequately clear that "samāj kē us śaṣāk saṅskṛiti yā vārg se hei ja pramukh rūp me punjivādē hatē hei jisme sampatti kā pradhān rūp vyāpār, ya udyag dhando se prāpt hatē hei aur sattā biseṣ kan us vārg ke hāth me rāhatē hei, ja vyāpār yā udyag dhando ka swayam rāhē kartā, varan dusre ke šān ham par lābh kamātā hei."  

The History of the Franch Revolution is pointer to this where and in which a section of the upper class were seen participating in this peoples struggle, the armed revolution of the peasants, the artisans and the working class. In the Indian struggle for freedom a section of the rich and powerful
men took an active part. But we did not forget that the havidual role of the
rich and privileged class has been that of the exploiters. They seldom or
never give up their tendency to benifit themselves by others toil. But they
never desist from the act of torturing and exploiting the weak, the poor
and the wretched people.

The Middle Class: It seems essential also to study and adequately know
the characteristics of the middle class and the role they play in the society.
To do it our first duty should be to as certain how did this class actually
emerge. To realise it fully we should carefully study the expert opinions
of some eminent writers and critics. One of them is Nripendra Chandra
Bhattacharjee who in his ‘Banglar Arthanoitik Itihash’ has observed that
the term ‘Middle Class’ originated in India during the English rule. Even
in England there was no such concept as middle class before the Industrial
Revolution. But then emerged this class who depended for their livelyhood.

Before the English rule in Bengal there existed no middle class. There only had been two classes — viz, the rich and the poor. On one side
there were kings and emperors, lords and immensely rich section, Nawabs
and zaminders and landlords etc., on the other there were peasants and the
ordinary dwellers of a particular area or locality. It was not that there had
been no middle class. Those who were dependent on what they earned
from jobs or business they performed. Before the rule of the English in
Bengal however there had been only two classes, viz. the Rich and the
Poor. On the one hand there were immensely rich persons, kings, emperors, Nawabs and zaminders; on the other there were the peasants and the common inhabitants of a locality. There had also been persons of middle status between these two classes. But their number was so insignificantly small that they had little or no importance or recognition as a class at all.

In this regard the view of Rajeswar Guru has observed that “śāmanti sabhyatā ke sāth bhārīya grām vyevasthā kā ant huā aur punjēvād, sāmrājyavād kā chatrachāyā me vikasit huā. punjēvād ke sāth vang cetanā āyē aur madhyavarg astitwa me āyā.”

The opinion of Dr. Mahendra Bhatnagar, the rise of the middle class is the result of English dominion and imperialistic role in India. “bhārat mein madhyavarg kā uday imrejē śāmrājya ke phalswanup huā.”

The celebrated writer and critic Humayun Kabir’s comment has thrown adequate light on how the middle class really emerged in India. The English rulers needed well educated class in their various offices and enterprises to administer the country smoothly. To fulfil their need, they established schools and colleges. An emergence of the well educated class from these institutions took place and these well educated class come to be regarded as the members of the enlightened and thoughtful middle class, who lived more on their education, power of thinking intellect and acquired talent. In this context Dr. Indranath Madan has said, “jīvan ke prācēn aur navēn ādānś ke saṅghārṇ ke bēc se ubhārkar madhyavarg astitwa me āyā.”

He uniquely expressed that this middle class further arose out of the clash between the old and the new ideals. This middle class is closely associated with the capilastic system, many of whom, it cannot be denied,
accumulated a large sum of money. On this middle class were lifted influences of western civilization and culture as well as that of the Indian reformers - their thoughts, philosophy and culture. Hence the middle class assimilate in them qualities of many kinds. They thus have no single shape, but of many curiously, this middle class is free from the orthodox thinking, as a result of which their minds and thought are reform to a great extent. Such elevation of thought and ideas have separated them and given them a special status among the entire middle class living in the rest of the world.

There is no denied of the truth that the middle class in India is the most meditative thoughtful class of people. It is true however that they traditionally possess certain weaknesses for that have led them to imitate the ideals of the rich. But despite it if they cannot be equal to that of the affluent class and that is for their lack of money or wealth. Their waivering between two different ideals or between two very opposite poles have deprived them of being self possessed and independant in the life. As a result, they are found compromising often with contrary, very different ideals since it is beyond them straightway to face or confront conflicts they always make same kind of adjustment, compromise their thought and endeavour are being engaged in that. As they do not prefer a massive, a revolutionary change in the society, this middle class remain always eager and to accept the moral ways of living. It is so because this class sincerely believe that it would be beneficial for them to be guided by simple morality and ethics. These middle class people do always liking for logic and debates. They demonstrate their love for science also. This class of people prefer modernity and progressive thinking. They are self assertive and it has been pointed out by Humayan Kabir in the following manner.
"The middle class refuse to be content and are often aggressive, self assertive and loud. They seek to justify themselves by criticising others."\(^{10}\)

As a result the members of this class become introvert which create an impression that they are proud. As such it is difficult at times to distinguish them from the privileged moneyed class.

**The Poor Class:** The British Rule and administrative set-up had badly shaken the very foundation of the Indian social system. It was during the British rule that all ventures whether in industry or in agriculture, transport and others, there emerged a new class, the labouring class, who were tempted to earn money at the cost of physical labour, they were tempted to flee towards town and cities living behind villages. In India before this the source of money of the native had been her traditional industries and other resources, the productivity of which depended on the honest labour of men. But during British rule the Indian had to feel and endure the results of the thoughtless adverse policy of the British ruler to initiate new changes in industry and other fields of production. As a result the labouring or the working class became the worst sufferers. What was more condemnable that to increase the sales of products of their own land, the Britishers did not hesitate to destroy the old and traditional industries of India. As a consequence of which a large number of confident Indian citizens were came down to the low level of manual labourers.

Today, a sizeable population of our country have been reduced to labourers, and that for their extreme monetary and fiscal want, which compelled the people to accept this low life. According to the modern concept of class division, those who stand today on the lowest stair, are the lowest, the poorest class who by losing their former place in the society
have come down today to the state of the poorest.

Yet what is still unique in them is that they never blame others for their misfortunes. Perhaps, their honesty and good fearing nature have prevented them from accusing others for their ill fates. In this context Dr. Swasti Mandal says, "ezā etai dharmabhāṣa ye tādeś bhāgya biparjok, janya tāxā kāuke doṣārap karate pārēna."

Instead they reconcile to their own situations and comply with what the rich and affluent class dictate to them. They are deprived monetarily and exploited politically for the endless greed of the privileged class yet these poor people are the only those who labour hard and the rich prosper at the cost of the poor people.

It is relevant at this point to quote what Rabindranath Tagore in his 'Russian Chithi', has spoken which is sufficiently illustrative of the conditions of the poor and distressed people of our country. Tagore's letter are sincere compliments to the poor on one hand and on the other the philosophic writer has called the poor 'The lamp bearer of human civilization'. He says, "tāxā sabhyatā pālsūj, māthāi pradāp ni khān, doṣānie thōke -- upačer sabāī ālo pāi, tādeś gā die tel gātī paicē."

It is true however that in a democratic country it is the workers who, by dint of incessant, toil and sacrifice enrich the civilization of their country. It is their labour by which increased money and wealth of a nation. But it's a pity at the same time, that despite this humanitarian job and sacrifice they always force the poor community to live most of their time in inhuman condition. They are deprived of all what the society can afford all privileges to promote health, education, knowledge, science and enlightenment safe and stable existence in life. Instead of getting them, the poor enhance
all their energies for the comforts of others. By the inhuman tortures of rich the whole structure of small rural societies are now shattered and the poor becomes poorer. Thus they are compelled to love a condemned life of a nameless labour of a factory.

2. **Existence of different classes in the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore and Premchand.**

   The whole human society divided in several distinct classes is uniquely depicted in the short stories of Tagore & Premchand. By the uniqueness of their art, sense of realism and keen observation their characters appear before us as very real, living and throbbing with life. They figure in the pages with all their distinguishing features, their merits and flaws. There vivid and lifelike potraits are also suggestive of the deeply meditative qualities of the writers minds and art. As socially conscious writer knowing fully their duties to the society, the story tellers have devoted greater portion of their tales to the depiction of the oppressed, common human. Thus their tales bear distinct proofs of their love and sympathy for the poor, the tortured, sad and pathetic humanity. What is further evident form their short stories is that they sincerely wanted the end of these heartless exploitation and with that the defeat of the deep design of the exploitation. These writers also wanted to see the abolition of the convention, superstition which have lost all their relevance in life.

   In each of their tales, they protested against the mentality of the zamindars, the capitalist, the usurers -- the two writers always protested against their thoughtless greed what is further mentionable is that each class in the society with their very distinct, separates characteristics are present in the stories of Tagore and Premchand. The discrimination of
these characters are a clear proof of the writers penetrating in sight into human nature.

The principal characters of Tagore’s celebrated work ‘Galpaguchcha’ – a unique collection of tales, are man and woman representing various section of the society. Most of them are engage in professions of many kind. In them there are the money lenders and miserly rich persons. In the same way there are present the business class, the organizers of some big, profit making trades. But there are the zaminders and their servants though zamindari is now in a broken, a deplorable state. The Brahmins belonging to the middle class, also live as part of the same society. Besides them, there are men who is keeping with the old manners & customs of the society, have taught their sons & words to be dependent absolutely on the various job connected with the zamindery itself. In conformity with this, some of them learnt to be dependent on the small pieces of land for their livelihood. These characters reveal sufficiently the follies of the decaying aristocracy such as their meaningless false pride, cily, childish conduct etc, indicative of mental immaturity and disorder. Besides this what Tagore’s stories have further revealed are the selfish cruel and oppressive nature of those who were the direct employees of the land owners. The further inclusion of the characters are those who belonged to the society’s lowest strata – weavers, fisherman, farmers and such others. Their distinct portrayal is indicative of the fact that Tagore had observed them closely, knew their lives quite intimately. His own comment is being a proof of this. “nijen jamidārītei ekdin āmi tāder mājkhāne gie kāj karechi. āmi dūre thākini, thākte pāzini. kāran āmi ekū pari purnatāke bhālabechechilum. ei dāridra, hicchinnatā, malinatā dekhā jāynā; tā
Nothing can be a more clear evidence of the greatly compassionate mind of our writer than this. The world of Tagore’s short stories is also the world of the common men and women. Here, in this world, we note the presence of the kings, the land owners, zaminders, the weakers, the fishermen, the peasants represents all classes of human.

Rabindranath had closely observed and intimately known the life lived by the people in the villages of Bengal. Hence in his pages we note the life like portraits of the middle class with that of the rich, affluent class. In this regard Dr. Swasti Mandal says “ei bāstav chetanā niei nabendranāth bāṃlān mukh’, sukh-dukhā, āśā nirāśāy bhara daṣidra-kṣudra bāncanā satwe o ‘rupasē bāṃlān’ anādi ananta mānab itihās kei yathārtha bhāve tule darechen.”

Having possessed with a love for and a knowledge of the real, Tagore had succeed in perfectly drawing a vivid and a realistic picture of rural Bengal a life like face of her which reflects alike the joys and sorrows, poverty, hunger and deprivation. The immortal writer memorably depicted in his tales the whole human history, from its very beginning and that in an original and commendable manner.

In the same realistic manner Tagore exposed thoroughly the futility of the luxourious life of the prosperous class who lived in the towns and cities of Bengal, their hollow meaningless, boosts. This stories have further exposed the excessive dependence of the rich to the very ordinary men and women who remained half fed and half clad. They were sleeped in
ignorance and superstitions. The rich sections were engaged in ruling the poor, the poverty stricken people. Thus in his stories we found thousands of hunger stricken, unfed and half fed man and woman. In this context we are able to find that "ardha aśan ardha bāsan o saṃskārer andha dāsatte bimūṭh kaji kaji grāmīn munurṣa mānuṣ anyadike śahure dhanē o śikṣitān bicitra rangaśāḷā."\(^\text{15}\)

Tagore himself was born in a rich family, yet he unhesitatingly raised his voice of protest when he saw the peoples belonging to the middle and lower class having been mercilessly exploited. As this love for mankind was sincere and genuine and he was fully conversant with the problem of his own days. He had a sincere love for the lower class. All these are sufficient evident from his writing "des balte āmarā yā bujhi se hacche bhadrālaker des' janasaśdharanke āmarā bali chatalok, ei saṅgātā bahukaś theke āmāder asthi majjāi prabeś kareche. chatalokder pakṣhe sakal prakār māp kāṭhi-i chaṭa. tāra nije o setā swākār kare nieche. baṭa māper kichui dābh karbān bhanasā tāder nei. tāra bhadrālok er chāyācar tāder prakāś anujal. athaca deser adhikānśai tārā."\(^\text{16}\)

In his work entitled 'Upekshita Pally' Tagore has further indicated how the selfish human world has artificially made this difference between the poor and the rich "burtamān sabhyatāi dekhi, ek jāygāy ekdal mānuṣ anna-uptādaner ceśṭāi nijer samasta sakti niyag kareche ār. ek jāygāy ār ekdal mānuṣ swatantra theke sei anne prāṇḍhāran kare. onāder yeman ekpiṭhe andhakār anyapiṭhe āla, e sei rakam."\(^\text{17}\)

What is remarkable in Tagore – his thought and writing, behaviour is that though born in the midst of affluence, the class interest could never influence him much. Whenever he noted the middle and the poor class
being unduly tortured, he could not restrain himself from raising a voice of protest. When dwelling in detail on the complexities of civilization in our country he did not hesitate to tell us about the possibilities of a revolution. “ek dhārei sab kichu thāke, ār ekdhāre kana kichui nei, ei bhār sāmanjasyer byāghātei sabhyatār nauka kāt hae paṭe. ekānta asāmyei āne pralay .....ei āsanna biplaber āśāṅkār madhye āj biśēś kare mane rākbān din esech                               ye, yārā biśiṣṭa sādhāran bale ganba kare, tārā sarba sādhārankeye parimāne bancita kare tānceye adhik parimāne, nijekėi bancita kare-kenanā, śudhu kebal krini ye punjibhūta hacche tā nai, sāstīo uthche jame.”18 All these are sufficient revealing of the fact that Tagore was equally sympathetic to all sections of people.

As in Tagore’s short stories, we note the presence of all sections of men and women, so in the short stories of Premchand we find the characters who represent various sections of people. While some characters of his short stories belong to the rich, some are from the middle and the poorer sections. Some are good natured fellows, while others are dishonest treacherous. Some are excessively modest while others are evilminded who by their physical strength, power and money go on exploiting others. There is another group of people, who are the farmers and workers, who live by the sweat of their brow. But what is worse than this, being exploited by the rich they have compelled to live a mean, low life. In this society there are the priest class who are superstitious and directly abuse religion. In Premchand’s writings there are unselfish, pious women devoted to her husband and to the family. But there are also a class of woman who are the blind imitators of western fashion. The characters of Tagore and Premchand are distinct and real. Since writers had a perfect study and understandings
of the people of different class. And that is why their characters are so real, so original. This will be further evident from what Hazari Prasad Dwibedi has written regarding the thought and writing of Premchand. Dwibedi said, "āp bekhaṭke premchand kā hāth pakāṭkar māṭna par gāte hue kisāya ka antāhpun mein mān kiye priyatama ka, kathī par baiṭī huṃ bāzbanitā ka, saḥas pakāyan camārin ka, ḍhaigī panditīna ka, ratiyā ke liye lalakte hue bhikmaṅga ka, kūṭ parāmarṣ me lien gaṇḍā ka, ḍhāvā pakāyan prapheṣaraṇa ka, duṅval hṛiday bekārīya ka, pharehē putawānā Z ka, niścātay amārīna ka, dekh sakte hei auṃ niścint hakan viśvās karā sakte hei ki ja kuch āpne dekhā wah galat nahē."

Dr. Nalthan Singh’s observation echoes what Dr. Dwibedi already said “premchand samāj ke pratyek sthiti se tathā pratyek kona se awagat the, isliye unhane uskē samyak vyakhyā apne kathā sahitya me kiyā hei.”

Premchand in his short stories engaged in depicting the human beings miserable conditions of life. His characters are the representatives of all sections of people living in different parts of our country. Premchand was inevitably influenced by the social and communist doctrine of Karl Marx. In his early life he had already known the class conflict, class struggle. Hence his social awareness grew very strong. He realised that all disorders prevailing in human life and society are the direct result of the inhuman tortures done to the poor, weak and defenceless people by the rich, the privileged few of our society.

The foregoing discussions may should have clearly indicated that both Tagore and Premchand had little sympathy for those who were the exploiters. But they evidently had love and compasion for the middle class and lower class people. Unlike Rabindranath who was born in a rich family,
Premchand had his birth in a family of middle class and from that condition of life, its limitations, he stepped steadily into the literary world by dint of his talent genious and love for the people belonging to the working class. Hence, his literature contains an exact, a perfect portrait of the middle class and the poor, the weak and the helpless man and woman.

2.1 The Upper Class : Its tyrannical and oppressive motives.

Covetousness and lust for luxury at the cost of the poor.

In the short stories of Rabindranath and Premchand, their writer have depicted the characters belonging to the upper class with all their defects and flaws. They have clearly suggested while narrating the stories of these affluent people, the various problems peculiar to them. What is evident from all this is that the story tellers, Tagore and Premchand, have studied thoroughly the kind of life these people lived. Thus while depicting them in their tales, they succeeded in providing concrete proofs so that the characters appear to us as life like real. There is no dearth of money in the lives of the zaminders and the capitalist class. This is why they spend their lives indulging in sensual pleasure and performing selfish and arbitrary acts as an evidence of low moral. As a consequence of this, there is no place of moral and ethics in their thought or conduct. A good number of stories of Premchand and Tagore have exposed the want of the ethics and moral in the characters and behaviours of this upper class people.

‘Dena Paona’ is the most successful story of Rabindranath. In this story, we get a clear picture of the society of the upper class. Nirupama, the heroine of the story, was married in a rich Raibahadur’s family. The father-in-law possessed enormous money and wealth. But he did not hesitate to torture Nirupama as she could not carry with her enough...
dowry as demanded by him. As a consequence of it, she died a miserable death. Nirupama’s mother-in-law was not sad at this. Rather, she performed the last rite of her gorgeously. And so elaborately she performed it, by placing the corpse on the pyre made of sandal wood, that it created an impression that such an expensive burial was only possible in the family of Raibahadur. A rumour was heard that for this they were to be in debt. By writing thus as above, Tagore brought before the readers the low mentality of the corrupt upper class. But the writer had to tell further more. He exposed the cruelty of this upper class ruthlessly, by telling his readers that when Nirupama’s husband had sought to take her with him, the heartless wife of the Raibahadur wrote to her son in the following manner

"bāhā tamār janya ār ekī meyēr sambandha kāiāčhi, ataeb abilambe chuṭi laiā ekhāne āsibe. ebāre biś hājār ūkār ūn ebaṃ hāte hāte ādāi." This is an example showing how Tagore dealt with the unkindness and cruelty of the upper class and presented them before with all their flaws and moral lapses.

Premchand, too in his memorable short stories exposed the heartless and cruelties of the rich, affluent class with that of the zaminder as their representative. In his story, he has showing how having possessed enormous money, the land owners lose their hearts, the most precious procession from Premchand’s short story ‘Vidhwansha’ is an example on the point. The story unfolds that the childless ‘Bhungi’ could not pay to zaminder Uday Bhanu the rent of the land. As a consequence of it, the unkind employees of the zaminder broke the oven she had made for frying and cooking chick pea or gram for sale. It was her only means of livelihood. As soon as she rebuilt it, it was destroyed by the corrupted zaminder. Seeing
no other way, Bhungi temporarily made an ovan by burning the leaves, and that, too was mercilessly broken by zamindar’s servants. Unable to bear the tortures, Bhungi jumped into the flame and died. In this way, in Premchand’s story, the writer has exposed the cruelty of the zaminders, causing untold suffering to these poor people.

Premchand observed that the zaminders normally lived in cities, as a result of which they had no chances at all of being conversant with the lives and living of the peasants. These corrupt landlords used to spend their days in the midst of luxury and merriment at the expense of this poor people. The only task of these degraded class was to exploit the poor and distressed humanity and neglect their immediate problems. For example, the zaminder of Premchand’s story, ‘Nasha’ tortured the tenants so mercilessly that it seemed that he was despatched by the God to this world only to inflict such inhuman tortures on the poor and bereaved people. This landlord never considered that these poor and miserable people had been endowed by God with the spark of the soul and mind. It was the belief of Kunwar Bishal Singh of ‘Pachtava’ another story of Premchand, that it was wrong to behave with the tenants softly and tenderly, as these poor subjects were unfit to get such polite treatment. The heartlessness of this Bishal Singh was further exposed when he filed a suit against these helpless people accusing them that they had not paid the arrear rents of their lands. He did not even hesitate to force and compel his tenants to sale their paddy at an auction. Other instances of such heartlessness are there in the short stories of Premchand. Halku of Premchand’s ‘Pus Ki Raat’ had to guard the crops in the field, in the severe cold of winter so to buy a piece of warm cloth, he somehow saved a small rupees but when the
zaminder suddenly demanded the arrear rent of the land, he handed over the money to him to save himself from torture. One winter night in its shivering cold, he fell asleep on the fields. When he woke up, he found that the paddy fields were completely empty. His wife was sad at this, but Halku was relieved out of a consideration that he was no longer to sleep on the fields in severe winter "रित केठांडै मेइन याहु झान ता ना पालेगाँ." Halku ultimately lost his land in his endeavour to avoid the zaminder’s tortures. Halku lost his only means of livelihood, but it created no repercussion on the life and thought of the zaminder.

Rabindranath, too in his tales revealed such inhuman tortures done to the poor peasants. In his story, ‘Samasyapuran’, he had dealt several with the undue enjoyments, sensual desires, attraction to the female sex-the immortality of such acts, which the zaminder Krishnagopal had performed. Krishnagopal was known to the people as generous, but he gave birth to Achimuddhi illegally on the lap of Mirjabibi. But it was done so secretly that this misdeed was not known even to Bipin Bihari, who was Krishnagopal’s son. But one day at last he heard it from the mouth of his own father and took steps to liberate Achimuddi from all harassment of the court.

In many of his stories, Rabindranath dealt with the zaminders as a separate class and the immoral acts they performed, as characteristic of this class. Among them are found many honest and dishonest persons. His dealing with these characters reveals to us that his sense of reality was very strong, and his knowledge exact and perfect. The writer’s vision was not obstructed by the outward glamour and zeal of the zaminders’ household. Although Tagore originally belonged to this class, he did not
hesitate to the least to expose the dark sides, the sinful immoral acts of this class.

In the same manner, Premchand ruthlessly exposed the immoralities of this landlord class. They, too indulged in coarse sensual pleasures. In their indisciplined life, there is no place of morality and honesty, chastity and purity of character. In his short story, ‘Jiban Ka Shap’, Premchand has furnished an example of this through its principal character, Sapurji, who was an immensely rich man. Sapurji was a cotton merchant having being this owner of a vast property, he soon became addicted to several intoxications. Among others, he felt an irresistible attraction to ‘another wife’ as a result of which his own wife, Siri was unduly deprived of the companionship of her husband. Gradually she became accustomed to such a pathetic life, and the money and property given to her by her husband once became insignificant irrelevant and useless to her. She revealed her intense sorrow to Kababji, a friend of her husband, in the following language. "yeh dhan ka xabxe bald abhisap hei. upri sukh samasti ke neev. kitne aag hei yah ta uske vakt khaalita hei, jab jwalaamukh phata patita hei, wah samajhte hei dhan se ghar bhankar unhe mere liye wah sabkuch kan diyaa, ja unka kastavya thaa aur ab mujhe asantashti hane kaa karan nahin yah nahin jaante ki eis ke liye saman us misri tahikane me gate hue padarth ke taraah hei, ja mitaima ke bhag ke liye rakhe jaate the."23

Premchand through this story has tried to show how the rich class having possessed enough of money, live a direct life and how their wives are compelled to live a solitary and distressful life as a result. In the short story, entitled ‘Veshya’, we find a repetition of this sinful act. The leading
character of this story, Shingar Singh used to visit the prostitution in a regular way Dayakrishna, Shingar’s friend wanted to know about the immortal acts of Shinger from Nila, his wife, She told Dayakrishna in a painfull voice, “rupaye kē balihārē hei, aur kyā? isliye ta budhe markarke kamābheī, aur manne ke bād laṅkā ke liye chaṭ jāte hei. apne man me samajhte hange, ham laṅkā ke liye baṅthne kē thikānā kiye jāte hei, mei kahati ānu, tum unke wāranwanās kē sāmān kiye jāte ha, unke liye jahan bae jāte ha. pāpāne lākha rupaye kē sampati na chaṭē hatē ta āj yeh mahāsāy kīsē kām me lāge hate. kuch ghar kē cintā hatē; kuch jimmedārē hatē; nahē ta benk se rupaye nikāle aur uṭāye.”

In the same manners Rabindranath has depicted in his short stories. The enjoyment of the base pleasures of their endless greed in a distinct and perfect manner. The story referred to, is the story of Calcutta city in the last part of the nineteenth century. Tagore in this story has indicated sufficiently the realities of the city-centred life. It is true, however, that when Rabindranath wrote his short stories, villages frequently came as background of his writing. But it does not mean that he had no understanding of the type of the life lived by the people of the city. Rabindranath in his short story, ‘Manbhanjan’ depicted a scene of Gopinath’s household. Gopinath’s wife Giribala, used to live at the topmost floor of Ramanath Sil’s three-storeyed house. 

"ramānāth śēler trītal aṭṭālikāi sarbacca tāler gharē gopēnāth śēler stri gīrībālā bās kare. sayankakṣaṇer dākshin dwārer sanmukhe phuler tābe guṭī kātak belphul ebān galāp phuler gāch — chāṭṭī ucā prācēr die gherē - bahirdriśyā dekhībān janya prācēn mājhe mājhe ekī kariā int phāṅk āche. kabār gharē nānā beś ebān bibēs bīśāsta bīlāti nariṃūrtē bṛādhāna"
Through this story, Rabindranath wanted to show how the lazy and worthless members of the rich families wasted the money, their fore-fathers had amassed. This is not all, the story itself also contain the writer’s stern rebukes for the inhuman and unchaste acts of Gopinath.

In the short story ‘Thakurda’ Tagore has presented to the readers another character. He is Kailash Chandra, the representative of a different family of the zaminders which is now fallen in a state of decay. The zamindary does not partically exist now and so he is the powerless extinguished member of that family in the village of Nayanjore. Yet as the representative of that class, his polished manners tell one of the aristocracy of his forefathers. Forcefully he wanted to keep apart the poverty of his life. For want of attendant, he often shut the doors of his room and wore his loin cloth tucked at the front and frilled loose shirt in his ludicrous attempt of dressing himself eligently. He did so when he had almost no means of obtaining his livelihood. Thus, he created arround him an unreal, absurd world. By such foul attempts he wanted forcibly to shut the door of reality even by deceiving himself recollecting the past glamour of his family. His meaningless pride of the past made him now a comic figure. The famous writer and critic Prof. Narayan Gangopadhyaya has rightly observed and said that, “atē ter swapnācchanna saral mithyān pasārē nayan jaṭer kailāś candra pāthaker kāche o kautūker upakaran hae aṭhen.”

In the story ‘Pratihingsha’ also Rabindranath exposed how the family
members such as the wife of the zaminder was unnecessarily jealous of
the beauty of the wife of Ambika Charan an employee of the zaminder.
Rabindranath also was critical to the attitudes of the female members of
the zaminder family for their love of gold and ornaments. Tagore did not
only reveal the cruelty and unkindness of their females belonging to this
upper strata, but further exposed to us all the different side of their
characters. And it is in this way, that the characters have become to us
very real.

Premchand also in his short stories has realistically drawn the
characters of the rich and affluent class with all their base immoral wants,
sensual pleasures and greed. In several of his short stories, Premchand
thoroughly exposed the adultery, fornication or incestuous acts of this
corrupt zaminder class. One such character is Kunwar Chain Singh of
‘Ghaswali’ who always disturbed mulia to fulfill his immoral desire. One
of his devices was to mention and praise her bodily beauty. According to
Premchand, nothing is impossible for the people of this class. They are so
fallen that they do not even hesitate to take bribe or if necessity, send their
wives as bribe. The example of this immoral conduct is not very far off.
An instance is there that in his short story, ‘Sabhyata ka Rahashya’, when
certain rich person became entangled in a murder case, he unhesitantly sent
his wife along with twenty thousand rupees as ‘bribe’ to the judge, Ray
Ratan Kishore: “ākhīr jab kahi bās na calā ta naēs kē strē ne ray
sāheb kē strē se milka saudeh paṭāne kē thānā. rāt ke das bāje the.
dana mahilānā me bānte hane lagē, bis hazār kē bāicī the.”
Premchand has shown how the corrupt rich murderer won the case by the
strength of his money.
In another such story ‘Dieree ke Rupaye’ Premchand has shown how Kunwar Saheb, a degraded character murdered his manager, because the victim had mistakenly intuferred into the immoral luxurious living of the farmer. When the secret was divulged, Kunwar Saheb by playing a heavy bribe of Rs. 20 thousand to a high official, justice Mirza Nayer, made the verdict pronounced in his favour Premchand has set a further example of such corrupt practice through the conduct of Alopodin, in the short story, entitled, ‘Namak Ka Daroga’. In the story ‘Mata ka hriday’, Premchand has furnished an instance of corruption of the higher class. The police officer Mr. Bagchi, belonging to this class, was promoted to the higher post for his inhuman tortures to those who offered passive resistance for the establishment of the reign of truth in our country. Bagchi organized a grand feast in his Bunglow to celebrate his promotion.

In the words of Premchand, “aur yeh marc ka mukaddam kay thia? wah jiisme niraparadh yuvakna ka banawati sahadat se jail me thius diya gaya thia.”

In the last part of his life, in his book Galpaswalpa, Rabindranath presented epistle ‘Manager Babu’. In it he wrote about a self-seeking, self-concieted manager of a zaminder who loved to be engaged in an affray tortriot. Rabindranath didnot hesitate to portray such a character mercilessly.”

Rabindranath sternly reprimanded this character by using a rare
language fit for reproof, without which the villainly of this mean minded person who mercilessly tortured to poor by hiring professional fighter with sticks, would not have been brought to book.

Premchand maintained an adverse opinion about industrialization. Rabindranath, too often spoke unforwardly about the industrialists. He had shown how the money and wealth as a whole had been concentrated in the hands of these capitalists. To them, their selfish interest was all, and they did not pay even the least alienation to any philanthropic public work.

Needless to mention, both Rabindranath and Premchand studied well the good and adverse effects of industrialization.

As an illustration of it, Premchand has presented in his tale 'Damul Ka Kaidi the character of Seth Khubchand owned a mill. During the period of freedom movement, there was an extraordinary demand for native clothes. Taking the advantage of it, Khubchand engaged himself fully to earn enormous money and that by depriving the workers of his mills of their due. When the workers protested against it and resorted to strike under the leadership of Gopinath, the heartless Khubchand shot him dead. It was because he feared that if the workers grew enough strong in an organized manner, through such movements, they would openly revolt against the owner and their deprivations.

In ancient India, people were divided in four stages, such as students, householders, hermits and ascetics, as enjoined in the Veda. It was done in order that they might perform their respective duties. Later on, this system was vitiated and perverted entirely. In the next stage, men were divided according to their birth. In respect of this, Dr. Indra Mohan Kumar Singh in his work, entitled, 'Premchand Yugin Bhartiya Samaj' has observed
the following: "parinām swarup vibhinna vāṅga mein uṣch-nāc kē bhāvanā kā prādūrbhāv hū. ek vāṅga dusre vāṅga ke sāth vaivāhik sambandh ta sthāpit kartā hē na thā, sāth hē khān-pān me bhē chuā-chut mānne lage. vaivāhik sambandh ke ādhār par hindu samāj jātiyā evaṃ upajātiyā me bhaṭ gayā. is jāti prathā kā kutsit parinām yah huā ki samāj kā sabse adhik sevā karne wāle vāng ka samāstā. ādhipāṅga se vuncī kar diyā gayā.""39

According to this new arrangement, the untouchables were deprived all their legitimate rights, social, economic, political, religious and others. They lived as Hindusin mere name, and nothing more. As a consequence of it, they were not allowed to take part in any work of the society. Tagore became vocal against such oppressions and practically revolted against these, and did it in all his representative writings, viz. his poetic and polite literature, short stories, essays and others. Throughout the centuries, these people pertaining to the lower class have been neglected and abandoned, and it is humanity that has been abused by such acts. The God in man has been disgraced, neglected and insulted. But the Brahmins and the castes have failed to realise the gravity of this wrongful acts, done to humanity. Tagore has written: "āmāder deser harijan samasyā o hindu musalmān samasyār mūle ye manabikār āche tār mata bānbaratā prithibēte ār kē āche jānī nā. āmarā paraspare biswās karte pārinā athaca se kathā swikār na kare nijede bāncāna karte cāi."31

Tagore has further written: "kintu en ceye duhsādhyā samasyā hinduder, yārā sāswata dhanmer dahāi die eki sampadāyēr madhye mānuṣē prati subuddhi bīruddha āsannākār nirantarhak bhāg-bibhāg nitya kare rākhe."32
Men belonging to the higher castes do not want to realise that they should not have behaved inhumanly with men belonging to the lower castes. Ridiculously, they know the opposite how to oppress and exploit the poor and they take it to be their duties. In Tagore's short story 'Sanskar' we note inhuman tortures inflicted by the upper castes on the people of lower castes. In his story, Rabindranath has painted a realistic scene in which a person angaged in sweeping and belonging to the lower caste, is found mercilessly beaten by a person of higher caste on a very flimsy ground that the former though belonged to the lower caste, had touched him. The aim of Rabindranath was to produce in the hearts of the oppressors a feeling of regret, repentence for their past deeds. Rabindranath made it clear that it was because of their unjust behaviour, many Hindus gave up their religion to make themselves free for good from such tyranny and oppressions. Evidences from history will show that many of them were converted into Muslims to escape such unjust tortures.

Premchand too, in his short story entitled 'Mantra' has exposed such social abuses and wrongs. Because of the low mentality of Doctor Chadda of Premchand's tale 'Mantra', the patients from lower class had to pay more fees to him. Death was certain to those who failed to pay such exorbitant fees. With the help of such examples, Premchand thoroughly exposed the anti-social and anti-people policies of the upper class - such works and deeds, which are not beneficial to mankind. The greater humanitarian writer, Rabindranath, like Mahatma Gandhi has always esteemed the poor and untouchables, as very dear to God. This is why Tagore always extended his support to the progressive mass movements of the Indians initiated by Gandhi. Both Tagore and Premchand have
believed that the real strength of a country is concentrated in the hands of the ordinary people. It rests in them, and it is only by their awakening, any new change in the country is possible.

Both these writers at the same time, believed in the unlimited, inexhaustible strength of common people. But it is the adverse policies of the alien government, the artificial divisions it created among men that is responsible for whatever abuse and insult we find in the society that affected humanity. Instances show that the rich upper class by dint of physical force and monetary power have constantly tortured and harassed the ‘small’ the ‘weak’ and the ‘distressed’ people. Thus the bonds between men and men have gradually become weak and there have been several artificial divisions among men, as mentioned already. Repeated wrongs and inequalities have created the artificial divisions of separations between men and men who are deprived of their legal and humanitarian rights. Rabindranath and Premchand in their immortal short stories have depicted these inhuman acts done by the rich, which have created wider divissions and distance between the higher and the lower class.

2.2 The Middle Class: Their progressive social thinkings – 
keen sense of morality and ethics and their revolutionary ideals.

Rabindranath had a genuine sympathy for the middle class, although he emerged from the privilieged land owner class. It was for the first time in literature that Tagore depicted the ordinary middle class and their social problems, instead of the kings, the privilidged aristocratic few. Not only does his literature contain the colourful beauty of the season in Bengal and the bounties of nature, the influence of the nature on the life of man and his role in the world, but also the feudalism in its decadence. He
has further written about various confusions and conflicts in the society of Bengalees, as well as the impact of the modern education on this class of people. The old aristocracy, now in state of decay; the mentality of the new bourgoise class, the problems of women, inside the family and outside new consciousness and reawakening of women; the political consciousness of middle class men and women; the struggle for attaining independence; the conflict and contradiction between, two types, viz. one guided by the past culture and the other influence by modern thinking in a new environment – all these have been finely dealt with and incorporated by this great writer in his tales. It will be evident from his short stories that Tagore in them dwell on the manifold problems of the middle class life. It is true that he did not write always from the standpoint of a theorist or a social reformer, yet a greatly creative writer as he was, his writing always has contained a silent hint of the need of changing our social outlook, for ensuring permanent human good. His compassion for humanity, his deep study and keen observation of life enabled him to invite and portray in his pages mankind itself, in its living form. The eminent critic, Buddhadev Basu, in his Rabindranath: Kathasahitya, very justly has observed: “galpaguli tatkālēn banīga samājēn ekēbāre hubahu pratilipi, tabu itihāser ahāser ālekhya mātra nai. prāner bege spandamān, yena āmāderi jēban prabāha tāder madhya die baye caleche.”

The middle class life in Rural Bengal has very vividly and accurately been presented by Tagore in his short stories, with its good or bad, sorrow and distress, simplicity, meanness and complexity. Clashes for ownership of property, dowry, partners quarrel and so on.

Rabindranath did not hesitate to raise his voice of protest wherever
he found the middle class to be the victims of social injustice, inequality, just as we find the lower class - the weavers, fishermen, the poor, professional builders of huts, in his short stories, so in them we find pleaders, professors, past-masters, school teachers, traders physician and other belonging to the middle class. In the midst of ugliness of daily life, we observe the hungry middle class always on move in their desperate attempt to survive. To this category also belong those who are God fearing people. They are so humble that they hold none responsible for their sad fate and pathetic existence. But among them Tagore has found out a real flow of life. Despite sorrows and hardships they ceaselessly work. Yet ridiculously in this society, discriminations, injustice and oppressions are maximum. These poor people are the worst victims of inequality, injustice and oppressions done to them by the land owners, capitalists, the privileged class.

Rabindranath has been criticised certain occasion quite unjustly for his prose style. Some of his critics are of the view that his prose has often been written in a manner, to be termed as poetic. It is poetic prose that he has practically written. But this can be refuted on the ground that all good prose should have the rhythm of verse. Bipin Chandra Paul and a few other critics have blamed Rabindranath for producing - imagery and romantic prose devoid of substance. But the stories of Tagore presented by him in Galpa Guchcha, render this criticism as baseless, futile. The stories referred to, furnish an evidence, contrary to this views. They doubtlessly prove that Tagore has furnished in them the real pictures of the society of Bengal presents on its every page. What Tagore himself said in course of his talk with Rani Chanda is sufficiently indicative of
this quality of his prose. “ামি একটা কথাবুঝতে পারিনে, আমার
galpagulike কেনা গীতিধার্মে বালা হাই। এগুলি নেহাত বাস্তব জিনিস। যে
dekhechi তাই বালেচি, বেহু বালপান করে আর কিছু বালা যেতা; কিন্তু
tাতা কারিনি আমি।”34 Again he said in another situation, “বেহু
dekle বুঝতে পারি আমি যে চাঁদ চাঁদ গালপাগুলা লিখেচি বাঙ্গালি সামাজের বাস্তব
ejébaner চাবি তাতেই প্রথম দ্বারা পাতে।”

The real theme of Tagore’s short stories is constituted small
happiness and sorrows, torture and exploitations of which are the middle
class worst victims, superstitions, yet having hope and faith, and a strong
moral concern as mentioned already. To this great author, the stories were
very dear. He loved his own creations for the reason that, “মানাবজে
েসি সুখ দুঃখে ইতিহাস যা সকল ইতিহাসে অতিরক্ত করে বাংলায় কালে
এসেচে ক্রিয়াক্রমে পাল্লে পানবানে, আপন প্রাত্যাহিক সুখ দুঃখ নিয়ে”35

Unlike, Tagore who was born in an affluent Zamindar family,
Premchand took his birth in a middle class family and lived in the midst of
sorrows and difficulties of life. But the benefit he derived from this was
that he grew quite familiar with and intimately know the middle class
society. Thus it is evident from this that whatever we get from his short
stories is what he had derived from this community. They are the outcome
of Premchand’s intimate study, his experiences and appraisal of this middle
class life. They are the portrayal of the truth of what this story teller studied
and realised about the life of this struggling middle class. We appreciate
that he was really a progressive writer we understand that the appeal of
his writing is not only confined to his own age in the context of which he
wrote his immortal tales, but it extends the age beyond and becomes
permanent universal. The immense popularity of his stories is owing to
the clash between the old values and ideas of former middle class society and the new middle class generation. The middle class people could neither completely abandon the old concepts and values, or could they accept wholly the influences of the modern social ideals and outlook. Capitalism and the western influences had already disrupted the life of the people creating a deep wound and gap between the two lives one that of the middle class of today and the pattern of life they lived prior to this.

As he studied fully and exhaustively the lives of this class of people, he did not only suggest fully the merits and defects of these people, but also the ways and means of rectifying these wrongs. These virtues of our writer drew him close to these people, and he really lived as one of their intimates and a near relation of this middle class men and women. In this connection we can quote the view of the editor Rajeswar Guru, who has observed as follows, "प्रेमचंद का प्रगतिशील मान निरंतर उसे दिला में बाध नहीं ठाठ।"36

Since Premchand spent whole of his life in the midst of these people and knew intimately their joys woes and worries, what he wrote is like a member of this class. He sincerely endeavoured to make the lives lived by the these people free from all the demerits and vices which vitiated the life of this class. His sincere wish was to eradicate all evils - narrowness, disorder and absence of harmony – which have plagued the middle class life. He did not hesitate to lash vigorously at the vices, if they were not curable by ordinary means. His view is that luxury and wealth in life actually retord life’s progress. Moreover there cannot be any meaningful advancement where the poor, the labourers, peasants and lower class are ruthlessly exploited. This is the reason why in his writings stresses have been laid
on the following— the Hindu Muslim Unity, the conflict between the upper
and the lower class helplessness of women and other grim realities of the
day depicted vividly in his writings. In his short stories entitled ‘sawa ser
gnehu’, ‘Kalah’, ‘Hawa ka rukh’, he has sketched the scenes of sufferings,
of the naked and hungry people, the lower class and the untouchables. His
tales also realistically depict the kings, zamindars, maulavis, students,
professors and teachers, pleaders, physicians, together with the common
people. For this reason he emerged as the most eminent writer among the
writers of his own age. His unbounded sympathy for the poor and the
distressed, whom endless tortures and miseries have rendered speechless
and dumb, have made the author a great humanitarian. Premchand has
elaborately dealt with the living conditions of the peasants and workers in
his short stories, since he considered that these people have traditionally
played a vital role in building a stable social life and social structure. The
observation of Rambriksha Benipuri appears to be quite relevant here “iskā
śaṣān aṅgrej sankār karti hei, jamindār aur kārīnde karte hei. samāj
me iskā samarthan kaē nahē kartā. yeh asaṅgāthit avasthā me hei.
premchand in kisan aur majdurke himāyatē rathanēkār hei.”

It will be evident from what has been discussed both Rabindranath
and Premchand have rendered real the life and existence of the middle
class by the unique gift of their art and speech. We greatly impressed by
Tagore’s realistic tales ‘Post Master’, ‘Samapti’, ‘Khokhababur
Pratyabartan’, ‘Rajtika’ and several other writings. Premchand alike in
his short stories entitled ‘Sawa ser gnehu’, ‘Hawa ka rukh’, ‘Kafan’ has
done almost the same thing. He has vividly portrayed the lives of these
middle class people who have struggled hard for the purpose of living, yet
despite sorrows, there is novelty and charm in that life. There is also a rhythm and speed in it. In the life of these people who ceaselessly work despite untold sorrows. They are tortured, yet are unprotesting. They have endured in human tortures without uttering a single word of protest. That Rabindranath and Premchand have portrayed vividly and most realistically the lives of this class, is further admitted by Dr. Pushppal Singh are the following- "apne yug aur samaj kā eisā jēvant aur kalātmak ālekhān unhone kiyā hei ki unkē kathā sāhitya tatkālēn yug aur samaj kā prāmānīk dastāvej ban gayā hei."38

2.2.1 Political Consciousness

Rabindranath and Premchand are equally vocal against the dowry system superstitions, religious and communal clashes, the injustices of the ruling class and feudalistic capitalistic exploitations. These writers could successfully accomplish it as they had a clear and distinct ideas and knowledge of such social and political clashes. Rabindranath had carefully noticed how with the changing time there appeared silently a whirlwind of politics. He understood how in the conscious minds of the enlightened class, there emerged a silent protest against all forms of exploitations oppressions, various forms of degradation in own national life. If we study carefully the history of our struggle for freedom, people's protest and struggle against the attempt of the alien rule to divide Bengal, we realise that all these were indicative of an uprising of the Indian nation in those days. Young Rabindranath also perceived an affinity of his mind and ideal with all these progressive moments. So in his poems, 'Rakhi Bandhan', 'Shivaji Utsav' etc. he has celebrated these movements which were aimed at achieving the unity and integrity of our people. He was, however opposed
to extremism of any sorts, but as an intellectual, favoured that sorts of movement which were conducted from humanitarian and humanitarian stand point. As he wished humanism to conquer, he did not admit anything that would be contrary to the broad human interest. It would be further evident from the following remarks of Rabindra critic Dr. Saroj Mitra "ei kāranei jamidān banīše janmagnahān kane o tār madhye ekā swabindadhi chila. anya jamidāndek mata andha ināñj toṣan kakhana tini pachanda karten nā, ināñj tahabile mātā tākā die khetāb arjaner pathke tini āasyakar mane karten. vidyāsāgarer mūrti nā gāte sār ālphred kṛaphter mūrti nirwāner janya tākā talā tini samarthan karte pārteni."³⁹

In the same way Munshi Premchand has pointed out how the anti-British movement in India under the British could no longer be suppressed or contained easily by the alien rulers. What was unique was that in this movement against imperialism the workers of the rural areas as well as that of the towns and cities were combined in this desperate fight of the valiant youths to abolish the foreign rule, the females also actively participated. The patriotic Premchand with his love of democracy could not isolate himself from this great historical movement. In the salt movement headed by Mahatma Gandhi, Premchand took active and meaningful part. He also did not hesitate to extend financial help whatever he could, to the volunteers of this movement. Even his wife Shiv-Rani Debi took initiative to organised the patriotic women. She was also sent to jail in 1931 for her picketing before the selling units of the foreign clothes. As a result, in all Premchand’s writing have been reverberated the echoes of this mighty movement. In the notable works of the time viz. ‘Hansa’
and ‘Jagaran’ edited by Premchand the contemporary political situations in India have found a prominent place. The writings of Premchand made his countrymen enthusiastic about and eager for freedom of their native land. In this way, the writer Premchand also became involved in the political world. While making an estimate of it and analysing it, Premchand wrote “hamārā laṛāi keval angrēj sattādhārāiyā se nāhe, hindustānī sattādhārāiyā se bhē hei. hame aise lakṣhaṇ nājar ā rahe hei ki yeh dana sattādhārā īs ārthik saṁgrām me āpaś mein mil jāye īgaur prajā ka dabākan īs āndalan ka kaukhal kē kauśīs karengē.”

Victor Balin have very rightly observed that, “premchand ne bhārtiyā janaṭā ke desbhaktiśūryā āndalan mein, swādhēnati prāpti ke liye knāntikānē kānā mein bhāg liyā aur unhe khub pracārit kīyā.”

Here we note the affinity between the outlook and attitudes of the two writers – Tagore and Premchand. Rabindranath too returned his knighthood to the British ruler as a protest against the massacres and genocides they had committed in Jalianwalabagh in Punjab, done under the command of general O Diare. Tagore further observed the following in respect of the political events of India in 1932. He regretfully stated, “āṁāder abastā paśubat.”

Both the writers Tagore and Premchand vigorously protested against the insults and humiliation done to the people of our country by the foreign rulers. Thus, through their writings, they endeavoured to create in the minds of our people a feeling of love and patriotism.

Indian politics has found its place in almost forty short stories of Rabindranath Tagore. Politics have entered into these stories, though
suddenly yet so easily, as it is an inseparable and integral part of it. As for example, in his short story ‘Megh O Roudra’ written in 1301, he brought politics in a direct and straightforward manner. In this story has further been reflected the miserable of the alien administration the tortures and other injustices done by the owners their managers to the people, lack of justice in the verdict of the judges, oppressions on the poor and lower class people, done by the servants of the British in the last decades of 1301. The protagonist of the story Sashi Bushan, restrained and unexpressive by nature, while protesting against such abuses and wrongs, turned into a political character contending against all these. His somewhat slow and leisurely life became meaningless futile atleast, by political blows and resultant shocks. In this short story have also been depicted the misrule of the British, the unholy relationship between the rulers, their employees and the administrator and rent collector of the zamindars the undue pride of the English judge the enmity of the native employees of the British to our countrymen, the weaknesses of the subjects torturous oppressive, and so on.

In Tagore’s contemporary society people’s feeling and understand of their country’s actual need were greater. Compared to the their prayers, narration supplications, the effects thereof, were limited and almost insignificant. This story is a concrete proof to show how the content of this story and such others, are responsible directly or indirectly for the growth of political consciousness in the minds of the middle class.

Tagore was gradually growing impatient about the unjust and shocking behaviour of the English rulers. But Rabindranath was more distressed at the callousness of the Indian who did not know how to protest
against such oppressions. What appeared to Tagore more ridiculous was
the conduct of some men who silently enjoyed these when others were
humiliated. This is the content of Tagore’s essay ‘Apamaner Pratikar’ where
he observes that it is cowardly of persons who helplessly cry and remain
unprotesting when beaten pitilessly.

It is with the medium of short stories viz. ‘Durasha’, ‘Rajteeka’ etc.
Tagore has shown how political consciousness grew in some of their
characters. In the stories mentioned above he presented diverse facts having
different appeals. Tagore expressed his profound sympathy to those who
had taken part in the ‘Sepoy Mutiny’. By revealing his admiration and
sympathy for these who had taken part in this historical movement, occurred
a few years before, Tagore was born, he rectified a major lapse which the
educated Bengalis had committed, they had not spoken a single word in
those days in support of this movement on the contrary, they supported
the role of the British in such cases. But Rabindranath instead of criticising
and condemning the movement, perceived the glory hidden in it. Tagore
did not hesitate to condemn the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the English
rulers adopted to misguide our countrymen and this may be clear to us
once we read his story ‘Durasha’. In his critical review of the story
Kshetragupta has observed “nabayuger bānjlīi buddhi jēbinā ei
samgrāmer gaurab swēkār karenni, tātparya mene nenni. exup
parishthiti rābindranāth tār galpe upādān hisābe eke grahan karechen,
tinaskār karenni baram nānā bhāve ek mahimā prakāś karechen.”43

Durasha bears a proof of the fact that casteism and communalism
never was injudged even for once in the thinking of Rabindranath, although
he took it and used it as ingredients of his short stories. In this abovenamed
story Rabindranath practically dealt with the heroism and glory of the characters of the sepoys, irrespective of their religion. We can quote the remarks of Dr. Swasti Mandal which bears a further testimony to it, "śipāhēder ei bidraher madhye tini sāmnāiyabāder biruddhe pratham bidraher gaurab o dekhte peyechen. e thekei bojhā yāi rabindranāther samāj cintā, nājaitik badh udārmukta mānabatābāder dwārā samṛiddha."44

The hero of 'Ek Ratri' written in 1299 having been inspired by the nationalism of 19th century, preserved the ideals of Matasini and Garibaldi sacrificing all happiness of his own for the sake of motherland. His only aim was to create in the hearts of his countrymen a strong nationalistic feeling. In this short story 'Ek Ratri' Tagore has drawn a life like realistic picture as to how actually took place. Rabindranath personally was opposed to imperialism of the alien rulers and could not support the then Congress party which was partially responsible for this. Rabindranath never restrained himself from lashing at those who had been the flatterers of the foreign rulers. He did not like that somebody should make a false pretence. In Tagore's short story Nastanir (1308), the main problem of them is not politics, yet as a part of Bhupati's thought, the national and international topics have been brought and discussed in it, through which Tagore's reproach and violent insinuation English imperialism has been clearly revealed.

In his 'Strir Patra' written in the age of Sabuj Patra has been combined political conscious with a different social problem. As a wife of a rich family, Mrinal has observed that all the males of her husband's family devoted to their English masters, lack personalities. Contrary to it
her brother, Surat who is a freedom fighter and a revolutionist hates the English rulers. With all the nobility, generosity and munificence of revolutionary ideals, Sharat easily stood firm against the abuse and dishonour of the females. Mrinal was inspired by Sharat’s revolutionary zeal, while the members of father-in-law’s house could easily match their orthodoxy with flattery to the English masters.

In his story ‘Sanskar’ Tagore wrote about non-co-operation boycott of foreign goods, freedom of the depressed class among the Hindus and so on. Tagore felt that if the countrymen followed these ideals, the liberty of the country would be attained very soon. The heroine of this story, Kalika had her initiation in this ‘Ahinsa’ movement. But although she was inspired by the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, she could not rise above her limitations and her prejudice about untouchability, prostrality. It was she who opposed her husband’s proposal to lift the tortured scavenger in the car, and in doing so, she instantly forget all her former principles – her generosity and liberality to these small people. Rabindranath cited this as an instance of artificiality in a section of people who live otherwise a comfortable life, a life of affluence in our society.

The heroine of another short story ‘Namanjur’ like Kalika in ‘Sanskar’, who indulged in politics and had a fancy to move an political platform, to earn chief fame. Rabindranath depicted such characters with his characteristic humour and ridicule who outwardly posed or pretended to be brave, yet at heart were extremely narrow and superstitious. Such short stories of Tagore as ‘Sanskar’, ‘Namanjur’ etc. are examples how he did not approve of participation in movement by these who could not overcome such limitations as narrowness in thinking, jealousy, cruelty,
prejudices and so on. The realistic writer Tagore regretted and condemned the ideas of war and the ruin and devastations it brings upon mankind, the worst victims of such mad pursuits. The feeling was expressed by Tagore in his short story ‘Dhangsha’ when the writer’s eagerness for peace has also been revealed in a cautious and disciplined manner. In another short story ‘Badnam’ its heroine Saudamini has rendered active help to its revolutionary hero. The main idea of this short story is that a revolutionary does not only fight for the freedom of his country, but also brings to his countrymen a genuine hope and message for freedom. This is why having been steady and devoted to her duty, she could tell her police officer husband the following, “āmi tamār stri haechi tāi bale kē pulīšer cañer kāj kanba?” The political idealism of Rabindranath has found its distinct and unambiguous expression through the short story.

In the same manner, Premchand too, observed how the tortures inflicted by the British and their oppressions to the Indian people had rendered their lives in tolerable. Thus the middle class started to take part in different kinds of freedom movements. The English rulers too, tried their level best to hinder their national family and destroy wholly all these movements at their very inceptions. But the Indian masses met the challenge of the British rulers with great courage. In Premchand’s short stories we read and come to know fully the facts of our people’s bold and courageous compontation of all adverse and anti people policies of the alien rulers. The history of all the struggles of the Indian people are available in twelve short stories of Premchand included in his work ‘Samar Yatra’. In them we further study the mentality of the middle class in those days of their glorious struggle. We come to know how the speedy life they lived in
those days, the middle class people organised meetings, boycotts, picketing and strikes, exhibition confronted indiscriminate firings of the British on the Indians, the terror and horror of the British rule and the arrests of the Indians, all available in Premchand’s book. It was for this that Victor Balin has written as follows, “anubhav kē agni me tapkar unkē bhāvanaś ispātē ha gayē thē, jantā ke liye swādhēnatā prāptī kē unkē icchā aum adhik dhīdha ha gayē thē aum is mahān uddeśya ke liye duḥkya ka swecchā se apnāne ke liye weh tāiyār ha gayē the.”

It is evident from all this that when Premchand noted down the facts of the independent struggles of the Indian masses his main aim was to create in the minds of our countrymen, political consciousness. The organizers, leaders of such movements were the common or ordinary middle class. These middle class had their faith in the traditional ways of living. The credit of Premchand and his significant contribution to the country is that it was he created a new conscious in the minds of the Indians that they have something more ideal to perform, besides the life they lived so long. Thus the enlightened men of our country were combined and putting faith in a united movement, started it forth with for liberating their motherland from the cruel clutches of the British rulers.

What was unique in Premchand was that he did not write stories for stories sake or to attain any person or political gain. But in his short stories, entitled ‘Patni se Pati’ (1930) ‘Sharab Ki Dukan’ (1930), ‘Julus’ (1930), ‘Maiku’ (1930), ‘Ahuti’ (1930), ‘Samar Yatra’ (1930), ‘Jail’ (1931), ‘Holi Ka Upahar’ (1931), ‘Anubhav’ (1932) he effectively suggested and showed the way how the state’s or country’s problems may be effectively solved.
participated in the processions, endured inhuman treatment and tortures, courageously confronted the alien guns faced the bullets and died with a firm resolution to liberate their motherland from the shackles of the British rule. More they endured, more they grew firm, resolute to attain country’s freedom.

The realistic writer Premchand has shown how in those days of misrule, men and women remained half-fed and practically, unfed. They did not only starve, but had no proper clothes to hide their nakedness, their shame. Further, they were compelled to pay high rent and taxes for agricultural lands and production. They had also no freedom to do business or trade independently. Thus the people became increasingly conscious of the misrule of the British. They were tortured when they organised meetings and held processions for complete economic and political freedom. For this, they were also tortured brutally and mercilessly. As a consequence of this, the Indians so long accustomed to dwell in the midst of discriminations – illiteracy and social inequalities grew mentally prepared at last to oppose the British misrule.

This constitutes the theme of Premchand’s short story, ‘Jail’ where the same view of our writer has been reflected. We see how ‘Mridula’ the heroine of this story was arrested by the British for protesting against the misrule of the English administration and put to jail. Not only, was she imbided by this patriotic spirit, but also did her best to awaken others from sleep and made the consciousness about the need of organising themselves against the mis governments and misrule of the British. It was for this offence, she was thrown into the prison. After her release, she was again sent to jail for her anti-British activities. What the story mentioned above,
chiefly has contained is Mridula’s bold and sharp protest against the British anti people policies and misrule. “dehātī me ājkal saṅgīna ke nok se lagān wasul kīyā jā rāhā hei. ...... saṅkār ka ta apne kar se matlab hei. prājā mare yā jiye, isse kā prāyajan nāhī.”

The story further reveals how the cultivators and peasants were once pitilessly shot for their protesting against inhuman treatment and tortures of the British police. When the dwellers of the town led a procession comprising the peasants and citizens they were ruthlessly shoot. But the tyranny of the alien rulers could not suppress the people participating in the non co-operation movement. But it made the people, further bold and darings to fulfil their vows to liberate their motherland from the bondage of the British rule.

Mridula saw how her husband at last participating in the movement was killed. Her son, Bhanu was also hit with the bullet and killed. Lossing her near and dear ones, thus she became confused. But that was for the time being standing by the side of the burning pyre, she took a vow that she would retatiate it. Thus she emerged as a really bold and more courageous soldier. She sounded more boldly against the wrongs the British had been committing. She warned the British that they could not suppress the Indian people by oppressions of any form, how much cruel it might be. She was rightly chosen next as the leader of the movement considering her courageous assurance and her activities. But when she was organising a demonstration and massive rally against the British, he was arrested all of a sudden and carried by the British police to an unknown place. The countrymen heard her last word “maiddān mein jaltā huā alāw apnē uṣṇatā vāyu me kha detā hei. lekin injin mein bandh hakan sanchālan
We hear another such tale of heroism in the story ‘Samar yatra’. Here the protagonist is the ‘Old Nauhari’, who defy her old age at 75 courageously advanced and joined the historical Non co-operation movement. She warned the police and British administration that they were ruling simply in those days not by law, but their savage strength, rods and others. She told that the Indians of today are not telling anything, but enduring all savage tortures. But a day is ahead when they will be forced to quit this land and return to their own. The young men, youths and young women felt greatly encouraged and decide to join the Non co-operation movement. Nauhari now felt that she was not alone or isolated, she had others to strengthen her hands.

Premchand had confidence that as a writer he was successful to show that the interests of both the farmers and workers are almost similar, identical. Premchand had a tremendous faith in people works of common interest. He too had strong faith and confidence in the limitless strength of the middle class people. He sincerely believed that when people are fully aware of their strength, the liberty of their land is not far off. "jyōa hē swādhēnatā kā ātaṅk dil se nikal gayā, āpka swārāj mil gayā. kniuki bhai hē parādhēnatā hei, nizbhayatā hē swārāj hei."49

As we have seen, political consciousness grew in Bengal following Lord Curzon’s decision to divide the province like other intellectuals and sagacious persons of our country, Rabindranath Tagore too, vigorously protested against the decision of the British in favour of the partition of Bengal. He counselled his countrymen not to crave for mercy of the British rulers without sicking pity, they should make themselves determined,
resolute and firm with inner strength and the power of their spirit. Referring to it Dr. Dilip Mazumdar writes, “ব্রিটিশ রাজসত্তা বাঙ্গালিতে স্বপ্ন যায় কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ রুদ্রেশ অস্ত্রবাদ বলে মনে নিলেন। সত্রুত অগ্নিতে ব্যামান অক্রমান্দের সৃষ্টি গণের কিছু ছড়িয়ে, জাগ্রতচর্চা হয়ে জাতি অত্মসত্তাতে উপর অস্থায় কার্যে শিখতে।”

Thus, we find that Rabindranath was at the forefront of the massive movement organised to prevent Carzon and his government from unlawfully dissecting Bengal. Yet the proposal to divide Bengal was passed at least, and it happened despite nation’s protest. As a result many active members of Congress lost their faith in the generosity, sympathetic and law abiding nature of the British. As an active protest against the anti-people policy of the British, steps were taken by our countrymen to boycott foreign clothes and products and to establish and patronize native set ups. Next year in the conference held at Surat, creations of two different groups believing in different ideologies soft and extreme, had taken place. Their main aim was to organise movements and with this, to reject the foreign goods. The stupefied and perplexed rulers now came out of their mask and applied their old and conventional weapons that of arrest, tortures and oppressions to frustrate people’s spontaneous movements by application of Brutal force. This found special mention in many of the short stories of Rabindranath and Premchand. In Tagore’s ‘Na Manjur’, ‘Sanskar’, ‘Megho Roudra’ etc. and Premchand’s ‘Suhag ki Shari’, ‘Pati se Patni’ and others.

2.2.2. Protest against the abuses of rule and repression done by the British to the Indian people.

Repressions of the common people done by the government, their tyranny and oppressions in the name of administration are nothing but
sheer abuse of power and violation of law. Such violations are common feature in many countries where the law, police and court are no longer impartial or natural when the laws are ignored people are wronged also. Rabindranath and his leading characters in his short stories, novels etc. have always protested against such wrongs. It is available in Tagore's 'Megh O Roudra', 'Ulu Kharer Bipad' and other short stories. That the rich and rich persons in our country turn the law to their own advantage and that only the poor are tortured in a reality in our country. Rabindranath and Premehand actively protested against all these which occured in their contemporary society. They are referred to in his essays 'Apamaner Pratikar', 'Subicharer Adhikar' and other writings as well. Tagore's short story entitled 'Megh O Roudra' furnishes a realistic account of what had actually taken place. In 1311 (Bengali Year) the short story referred to here, presents a realistic picture of life lived by the peoples in Tagore's contemporary society. Tagore actively protested against the misrule of the British government, their pride and oppressive actions the hatred of the administrators. All these have been realistically depicted the short stories of Tagore. In this connection, it is necessary to refer to the critical views of Prabhat Kr. Mukhopadhyay, which are the following, "takhan pathe ghâte imprejen hâte des'zader apamân sâhebeder padâghâte plîhâ bidâran prabhriti gha'tanâ kâgaj patre mâyhe mâyhe prakâ'sita haita. rabźndranâth nij abhigyatâ haite dui-ekî utpâţaner gha'tanâ ei galper madhye sannibesita karîâ chilen"51

The complexities of life the servility of the zaminders to the British masters, the future helplessness of the weak and tortured class, their pathetic surrender to the owners and alien rulers have been distinately recorded by
Rabindranath in his work, such as ‘Apamaner Pratikar’, ‘Subicharer Adhikar’ and other noted pieces.

The last phase of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth, had a vital role in our national life. Our nationalism, nationalistic feeling had only began to grow in that period. Our displeasures and dissatisfactions were being fumigated. We already started to protest against it and preparing ourselves mentally to organize a movement. Yet we were not fully formed or prepared at that moment. Still some of us were continuing our flattery of the English rulers for our personal gain. This is why Nimai Chandra Paul observed that at this critical juncture of our national life appeared such a character as Sashi Bhusan of Tagore’s short story ‘Megh O Roudra’ and it was through him that our sincere urge for redress of the wrongs was focussed. Thus he may be considered as a true patriot and soldier. Sashi Bhusan did his level best to help his countrymen and save them from the hand of oppressions, wrongs and humiliations. But his countrymen without helping him in his endeavour to remedy the social wrongs rather betrayed him. They gave false evidence against him in the court while commenting in it Nimai Chandra Paul has observed that in that story viz., ‘Megh O Roudra’ Tagore rightly presented the subject of tortures and humiliations, done to the Indians in the British imperialistic rule. He said that, 

"aupanibesik sāsane mānuṣen pēlan o apamāner prasaṅga sathikbhāve upasthāpita hayeche."\(^{52}\)

The illusion of Sashi Bhusan about English was broken completely when he had seen the abuse of the law in the British administrative set up. For the sake of the prestige of his nation, he did not hesitate to attack physically the hostile officers of the British bureaucractic rule. He even
did not hesitate to have recourse to law when he felt that it would be beneficial for the people. The story under study, is a tale of oppressions of the public, the Indian people by the British imperialistic rule. Thus through this story, Rabindranath tried his best to make people, specially the middle class conscious of their rights.

Like Tagore, Premchand too, was vocal in his short stories against these administrative wrongs their abuses of power and abuses of law. His story entitled 'Lal Phita ya Megistrate ke Istipha' sufficiently illustrative of cruelty and inhumanity of the oppressive and apathetic English rulers. When the participation of the people in the country's freedom movement was spreading, at a very rapid rate, and the Indians were aspiring for country's freedom. In such a situation Haribilas, the son of a poor farmer, became a magistrate by his own genius talent. But for his honesty submissiveness and polite behaviour, he soon incurred the displeasure of several persons. In course of his discussion of what had happened to Haribilas, they famous critic Victor Balin remarked the following, "haribilāk dukh rehatā hei, nāhak sajā bhagtā hei, panantu aṅgrejē rājya kē saccāi aun bhalāz ke raste pan dṛidha viśwās kantā rehatā hei."

But when the freedom movement of the people rose to a great height the responsibility of preventing it now come directly on the shoulder of Haribilas. Haribilas also understood at the same time that to perform the official duties of a magistrate, now he was to alter his own judgement and decisions. He would have to give up his faith, his own confidence in many matters. Thus he took a decision to give up his job and return to his native village to engage himself in cultivation and live a peaceful life,
there free from all obligations of the service under the British. Even he discontinued the education of his two son’s who had been studying in a Government school. Premchand set before the readers what Haribilas had done as an ideal example, of the protest against the wrongs which the English rulers had done to him and our people. Haribilas had further understood that the English rulers had worked in our country only to serve their own interest; they had no sympathy for the poor Indians. In another short story ‘Istipha’ Premchand further has shown that the downfall of the British rulers was inevitable. In ‘Istipha’ he vehemently protested against and criticized the administrative ethics of the British Government. He has shown how Fatehchand, the principal character of this story, vigorously protested against the filthy conduct of his superiors. In doing so, he was encouraged by his wife who told her husband that he should take bold steps against the humiliating conduct of his superior officer to him. The offending officer was now frightened. He now apologised for the wrong he had committed and promised that he would never perform such an act for the second time. Fatehchand also took a firm decission that he would give up his job without any further loss of time. “fatehchand bāhar nikle aur imēnān se ghan cale. āj unhe sace vijay kē prākarnatā kē anubhav huā. unhe aise khusē kabhē nahē prāpt huē thē. yehē unke jēvan kē pahē jēt thē.”

This step of Fatehchand was not only to retaliate the insult done to him by his superior officer, but also to gain moral victory over himself. Fatechand had now a sense of relief thinking that the days of his servility are now over. This is an instance to show that through such trying circumstances, the Indians learnt how to value personal freedom and protect
huminitarian rights. Fatchchand was not only happy at this, but learnt the lesson that his future depended mainly how he behaved.

In the British period, the middle class people of our country were mainly the victims of the oppressions of the alien rulers. Tagore’s short story, ‘Durbuddhi’ is an example of it. In these days the police personal were not British but natives. They were the sons of Bengal. They did not work if they were not offered a bribe. Identical was the situation in Tagore’s own days. Constables and police sub-inspectors or assistant sub-inspectors of those days were as if the constables and sub-inspectors of our age. They were devoid of humanity and as a result the protest which the doctor had made against the inhuman police inspectors, he was compelled to go abandoning his homestead. He was practically ousted or ejected from that place.

The poor peasant brought her dead daughter to the police station for report, whom the previous night, a snake had bitten. The doctor’s house was adjacent to the police station. The poor farmer had covered the body of her unfortunate daughter with his own dress. But the police inspector had no time to see the dead body for the plain reason, that the poor father of the girl had nothing to give to the officer for this. It shows how the corrupt police officer of these days were devoid of humanity and thus the corrupt administrative had no other consideration beyond money. The inhuman rulers of these days were not willing to perform their duties without a bribe. “tabu ei amānābij prañāsan utkac chāra nyāja dāyitwājuk pālan kartē prastut nai. emani mānabatā barjita paśu sab.” The doctor had witnessed such a pathetic sight more than once. Yet he could not hear it any more. He protested against the cruelty and
inhumanity. He admitted that, "ai kanyā hānā, bākyahēn cāsān aparimeya dhūkha āmār buker pūjārgulake yena thēliā uṭhite lāgilā." The excited doctor entered directly into the police station. But to his surprise he noticed that the Inspector of Police Lalit Chakraborty, lay leisurely on the cane chair and smoking tobacco. The doctor grew offended and in a fit of anger threw the entire money he had earned throughout the day in front of the heartless police official, telling him to allow the peasant to go, in order that he must perform the last rite of his daughter. The story is a pointer to the misrule of the police. In this regard Kshetra Gupta has written as follows, "lekhaken samāj bāstantān tēkhnadh palē bānglān anek kathin dūrbhāgyey marmaabhede samantha haechila." 

Like Rabindranath, Premchand too, protested from time to time against the corrupt practices and misrule of the police. In his short story ‘Mata ka Hriday’ he has exposed wholly the misdeeds of the British police. He has shown how Atmananda, the son of a widow, Madhabi had been under the unfavourable look of the police for his patriotism and separate tastes and habits. The officers of the British were dissatisfied with him for his love towards his own country and his deep patriotism. As a result of this, once the police took Atmananda into custody on a false charge of theft and kept him behind the bar for long eight years. For this the police superintendent Mr. Bagchi was promoted by the British Government. The reason why Mr. Bagchi was promoted was that "wah, jise nīraparādh yuvakṣa ka bānāvatē sahādat se jail me thēus diyā gayā thā." 

Through the medium of this story Premchand has conveyed to the readers how the British police harassed the common people. The most humiliating conduct of the imperialistic rulers and the way they looked
down upon the Indians never allowed Premchand to rest in peace. While exposing thoroughly the hateful behaviours of the bureaucrats, he too indicated clearly the social causes responsible for it. He showed it that the Indians themselves are the enemies of their own countrymen. By their mean flattery of the British masters, they were doing in calculable harm to their own country. Premchand pointed it clearly that so long these people did not have any sense of self respect, self esteems, such characters as that of police inspectors Bagchi would continue to rule them and exploit them ruthlessly. They would be tortured and humiliated. In this way, Premchand throughout his life tried to make people conscious of the wrongs prevailing in the society. He tried his best to arouse in the minds of our people, social consciousness, without which it was not possible on the part of them to resist the wrongs done to them by the rulers. Tagore, too like Premchand did his best to create in the minds of his countrymen a real conscious of life, society and their duties towards their own people. As a result of this, we find such characters as Sashibhusan, Doctor Babu, Fateh Chand, Atmananda and others belonging to the middle class, revolting against the abuses of the administration, done by the English rulers.

2.2.3 Support towards progressive and moral educational system

The contemporary middle class was not satisfied at all with the education system in vogue in our country. They understood that any education acquired by cramming or knowledge confined to memory work, cannot help humanity in attaining self advancement or elevation of mind and soul. Both Rabindranath and Premchand knew that the middle class people were not satisfied at all with the existing educational pattern. Perhaps, for this Rabindranath and Premchand were never content with
the existing education system. For this, at Shantiniketan, he tried to introduce an entirely new system of education and did it successfully in the long run. In his twenty two essays or dissertations included in his book ‘Shiksha’ Tagore gave guidance as to: 1) How the teachers should address the pupils. 2) Reformation of education. 3) Problem of education. 4) National institutes for education. 5) Rules of imparting education and knowledge to the students. 6) Medium of education. 7) Assimilation of ideal subjects as a precondition of properly educating the students. 8) Spreading of education and knowledge etc. He spoke on how to make education an ideal whenever he found an opportunity.

Rabindranath could not take the type of education with which he was introduced in his childhood as ideal. He regarded it distasteful mechanical and irrelevant. "iskul halite aamarā yāhā bujhi se ekta shikshā dibān kal. māśtān ei kārkhānār ekta aṁśu. sāte daśīn samay ghanīā bājāiyā kārkhānā khale. kal calite ānambha hai, māśtāren o mukh calite thāke. cāntēr samay kārkhānā bandha hai, māśtān kal o takhan mukh bandha karen, chātrazā duī cān pātā kale chñātā bidyā laiyā bāti phere; tārpa parikshān samay ēi bidyān yācāi haiā tāhān upare mānkhā patīā yāi" 59 Rabindranath never appreciated or approved this stereo-type mechanical educational system. In the story ‘Tota kahini’ he employed an ‘allegory’ with humor, as a poetic form, where he held his pen and ridiculed the highly artificial and mechanized education pattern of our country in those days. By effectively using short and incise sentences dipped in slashing humour and ridicule, Tagore suggested fully the hollowing and irrelevance of the faulty education planning and defective system in those days. He realized that by such education the children are
being deprived of their plays, joys all sources of pleasures & funs. Thus he
did not attach any importance to this education system of his days. He did
not accept it as education at all, something other, which is no way, can
benefit the children.

Thus throughout his life, Rabindranath never preferred the bookish
education of schools and colleges. His frank opinion was that the type of
education imported in schools and colleges cannot do any good to the
pupil as well as the society in the long run. He regarded this education
system as ‘soul less’, highly mechanical and artificial, and so he did not
hesitate to point out the inadequacy of this system referring to it, Tapabrata
Ghosh observed “haita er sahge māikel syeḍlāner netītwe gāṭhita
tatkālēn kalkatā biśwa bidyālāyār sīkṣhā saīskār kamiṭi gūlir
āṭambāmpūrṇa nisphal prayāser yagasutra raechē”60

Like Rabindranath, Premchand was also not content with the
education system in vogue in those days. He could not accept it whole
heartedly. Displeased with the existing education system, he turned as
nothing more than conventional. He also revealed mentality of the middle
class through his speeches, books and short stories he wrote. While
discussing the problems of education he observed and said, “ab tak saīsār
ke sāmne sīkṣhā kā ja ādarś thā, wah paramparāgat saṁāj vyevasthā
kē hē pūrti kartā thā. saṁāj pār ab tak vyektivād kē pramukhītā rahē
hei aur hamānē sīkṣhā pranālē bhē vyekti kā hē samartan kartē
thē. bacpan me hē vyekti kā vikāś hane lagṭā hei aur univarsitzya me
jākara purā ha jātā hei. us dhūcēce me chalak yuvak ātmasebē, ghor
swārthē, mitratā me bhē swārth kē rakṣhē kune wālā, pakkā
upayagitāvādi aur ghamanḍē hakaṇ rah jātā hei.”61
Infact, Premchand realized that we were not being benefited by the pattern of education in those days without creation social consciousness in men, it rather makes men selfish, senseless and exploiters of other people. He thus repudiated the western education system, which instead of making us gererous and sacrificing, create in us jealously, hate; selfishness and cowardice even. Thus the writers justly thought that the moment had already arrived when it was necessary to clearly pointout to those who patronized this education system, that instead of creating any good to the sociaty, it simply rendered men as devoid of personally. This certainly is not conducive to social good, human good. This is bound to create separation and degradation in men. In his short story, entitled ‘Vinod’, ‘Amavashya ki Ratri’ and other pieces, he has clearly shown how this type of education doesnot do any good to the body and sprit of men. Rather, it makes them sensual, greedy, perverted and selfish. He presented his short story ‘Prerona’ as a clear proof to show how compulsory primary education is necessary for us, our children. But people having faith in western system of education, without preferring it, rather oppose it. In his short story, ‘Adarsha Virodh’ the writer has made it distinct how as a result of defective education system, the youths today have been detached from the lives lived by the comman people, due to which they have forgotten their motherland and the society as a whole. In premchand’s story ‘Ahuti’, its heroine Rupmani’s utterence appears to be the utterence of the author himself, "agar swarāj āne par bhē pathā likhā samāj ynuhē swārthāndh banā rahe, ta mei kahuṅā aise swarāj kā na ānā hē acchā.". Haribilas of another short story ‘Lai phita ya Megistrate ka Istipha’ has commented that the modern education system is entirely
responsible for all his sufferings. Haribilas said, "Is sikṣhā ne mujhe caupaṭ
diyā. vilās kā  dās banā diyā, anāvaṣyakatāynā kē veṭā peir me
dāl dē."

In this way we find that both Rabindranath and Premchand made the so called education system, introduced by the British entirely responsible for distress and calamities of man. This education system cannot promote any good to the middle class and the humanity as well.

2.3 The lower class: Neglected and victims of inhuman tortures and exploitations.

In their short stories both Rabindranath and Premchand have vividly depicted and realistically drawn the life lived by the lower class in our country. In Indian social system, this lower class the most deprived distressed and neglected class. In every walk of their lives, they have been exploited, tortured, rebuked and insulted. They were bound to live in severe economic strains. In addition to this various other kinds of hardships, stress and strains rendered their lives hard and miserable. The old and wornout conventions and prejudices have always prevented them from forming any near relation with them, a relation on equal turns. They have never been allowed easily to form their own organisations, or enter the holy temple or even to draw waters from the common well. Rabindranath and Premchand, by their compassionate attitudes to this sections of peoples and by drawing them with infinite sympathy on their pages, have own immortal names. Rabindranath’s principal concern as revealed his thought and writing, was to ensure that the poor get back their right.

What is further unique in Rabindranath is that in his short stories he presented the actual speeches of this lower class. He depicted the feelings
of these people. His stories contain the real words spoken by them. It clearly shows that these working people did not remain unobserved by Rabindranath and unknown to him. When he was away from home and visited the rural areas, he came near these people, observed them keenly and studied them deeply. He visited those spots where farmers plough their lands, the weaver weaves clothes and the fishermen catch fishes. Perhaps, he had ordinarily no access in to the household of these people, because his firmly status wouldnot permit him to do it. Yet observing them from distance and meditating on what he had seen, he was able to realise the complexities of life of these lower class people. Whatever he had studied and known and expressed concerning the social life and status of these people, their existence in terms of class or line, though small yet it is not insignificant, or less valuable. We may refer to what Kshetra Gupta observed in regard to this, "tādēr samājik jēban, śrenīgata abasthān eban byektigata swabhāv tini galpe yā dhanechen paśimāne kam hale o tā mūlyabān."

In his short story ‘Megh O Roudra’ he has spoken of the cultivators, farmers and daily labourers. He has written about the fishermen in the story ‘Haldar Gosthi’. Again in his ‘Pranraksha’, he wrote about the weavers, in the short entitled ‘Natun Putul’ he told us about the potters. In his story ‘Anadhikar Prabesh’ he has told us about those belongs to the Hindu caste, but perform the duties of burning the dead bodies and looking after the crematorium. In several of his short stories, Rabindranath has written about the exploitations of the poor people – the workers and the lower middle class. He has set several examples of the ruthless exploitations of ruling class as well as the oppressors and tyrants. In his short story
‘Megh O Roudra’ he has set another instance of the ruthless conduct of one British Administrator who, to satisfy his taney had destroyed and drawn the boat carrying the native passenger. His whim caused the death of the majority of the passengers excepting a few who were luckily saved. The dead body of the cook who had been preparing food in the kitchen of the boat after being drifted for long nine miles, atlast arrived at a strip of land rising out of the bed of the river. Nothing can be more cruel than this act of one of the British officers, done to the poor and helpless people of our country. In course of her critical discussion of this short story of Tagore, Swapna Kundu has remarked as follows, “rabindranath dekhechilen amader carpaser samaje nirsha harnathabi ke inrejna yeman uplan karche temni samajer sanbustare eke anyake aman karche. ye byekti arthik dik diye samanyatama o urdhe se arthahen byektider kach theke aparimita adhena laheh janya sachehta hacche.”

Tagore elsewhere has furnished the example of the heartless tortures and exploitations of the feudal lord done to Dukhiram and Chidam in his ‘kachari’. But the remuneration paid by the lord after their days toil was much less than what should have given to these poor fellows. Although Rabindranath by birth was a zaminder yet he did not hesitate to raise his voice of protest against such exploitations when any such cruel and inhuman act came to his notice. It is clear from this that he sided with these poor and suffering people, condemning those who had been mercilessly exploiting the poor, and the writer did it in a clear and straightforward language.

In his short story ‘Durbuddhi’ Tagore has depicted the terrible moments of sorrow of one childless farmer. He exposed in the same tale
heartlessness, greed and inhumanity of certain other characters. Such stories furnish instances how the exploiters senselessly exploited the poor labourer class. It is revealed in the discussion of Kshetra Gupta which the critic further has made “grāmer gāṇēb śramajēbider upare śāṣakder atyācārēn emni anek bicitra o bāṣtab namunā rabēndranāther galpei dhāra aāche.”

In 'pan raksha' Tagore has dwelt on the weavers and their problems. He has presented Banshi Badan and rashik as representatives of this class. He has further portrayed in this story the conditions of the Bengali community who had been deeply troubled even before the commencement of the freedom moment in 1905. Tagore has stated how specially the Bengalis had been greatly purfurbed at the thought of the distress, wretchedness and indignity of their countrymen. In 1905, this dissatisfaction was converted into a larger political movement in the country and the flame of it burnt the foreign clothes. People not only abandoned the foreign clothes but also burn them. Rabindranath released that by abandoning the foreign clothes, the country’s problem would not be solved. Thus what he did was that he revealed how the demon from across the ocean had adversely affected the economy of the community of the weavers. He also issued warning that if the distinct superiors of the weavers was abolished in this process it would damage the entire economy of the country, rendering our society extremely weak. In the story rabindranath depicted how the weaving industry in India been weakened by the diplomacy of the shrewd English businessmen and administrators.

In ‘sanskar’ Tagore has told us how the poor Indian people were being exploited by the upper class and the untouchables were oppressed
tortured by the same upper class. Both Rabindranath and Premchand in their stories have distinctly sketched the scenes of exploitations done by the privileged few to the poor people while depicting the human society, specially of the rural areas, Premchand distinctly divided the people into two classes; viz, the exploiters and the exploited. Though the middle class and the lower class people were the victims of such exploitation. Yet who were more ruthlessly exploited and humiliated were the landless peasants and the working class. This led Premchand to introduce the class concept in his short stories which he regarded as inevitable and unavoidable. We can refer to what Dr. Mahendra Bhatnagar has observed in this connection "premchand madhyavarg aur nimna vang ke lekhak the. unkā man jinā madhya aur nimnavarg kē samasyāyinā me ramā hei, utnā ucca vang kē samasyāyinā aur prāśna me nahi."

He was such a writer who realistically depicted the problems, advantages — disadvantages of lower class. Dr. Balraj Pandey rightly observed in this connection "nimnavarg ke laga ke dukh-dand ka, roj kē jindagē ka tathā roj kē taklif ka premchand ne bilkul najdēk se dekhā thā. ek or samājik aur dhārmik ruṭhiyā unke vikāś me bādhak thē, dusrē or sōsan bhē unkā amānavēya dhaṅg se hatā thā. premchand ne purāṇē ruṭhiyā se mukti dilāne ke liye tathā sāsakēa se mukti dilāne ke liye apnē lekhānē ke mādhya se vizadē karne ke liye sōṣit janatā kē ahvān kiyā "

Premchand has quite realistically depicted this poor and lowly people, with melancholia and sorrow, with a sense of humiliation throughout their lives. And in many of his tales Premchand has done it with profound sympathy and compassion for the poor. In his short story ‘Pus ki Raat’ he has exposed how acute hunger and poverty had completely
destroyed the humanity and all the sense of values in them. Hunger and poverty had totally destroyed their compassion for others and all their fellow feelings. ‘Gangi’ a character of ‘Thakur ka kuwna’ by admitting the dreadfulness of hunger its grim reality has admitted the justness, resembleness of the class struggle which is a Marxian concept. In his various short stories he depicted the picture of ruthlessly oppressed and deprived lower class. In one of his short stories, entitled ‘shudra’ Premchand has with profound honesty and morality sketched the sorrowful scene of the miserable, distressful life of the workers belonging to the lower class. He has shown how these poor workers are the worst victim of the heartless immoral owners, edicted to wine. And how this unchaste and immoral owners have made these poor people as an easy prey to their exploitations. Premchand’s sincere love and unbounded sympathy for these miserable people have been clearly revealed in several places of his short stories. The humanitarian author did not hesitate to revealed his extreme dissatisfaction and anger towards the exploiters who mercilessly exploit these poor and helpless common people. In his stories, entitled ‘Mritak Bhoj’, ‘Dudh ka Dam’, ‘Jurmana’, ‘Lanchan’, ‘Saubhagya ke Kode’, ‘Mandir’, ‘Pachtava’, ‘Muktidhan’, ‘Agnisamadhi’, ‘Neor’, ‘Beti ka Dhan’, ‘Balidan’, ‘Vidhwansha’, ‘Sawa ser Gehnu’, ‘Nasha’, ‘Motor ke Chnite’ in all these short stories, the writer has clearly indicated the inequal distribution of money, and the consequent dearth of it in the hands of the poor people, their pitiable, pathetic existence and their ruthless struggle for existence. Besides, all these, he has also indicated the inevitability of class struggle – a thinking which is progressive and of course Marxian.

Premchand’s sympathy was always directed towards the poor
peasants, who though oppressed cannot forget that they have also a moral right to live prestigiously as peasants. Premchand had a firm belief that these exploitations would never be ended by merely depending on faith or in the name of God, as is conventional the case for this the poor and miserable section of people would require to gain a class consciousness, a consciousness of their status and rights in human society, from liberal and socialistic and also from Marxist point of view, they were to gain a power to struggle against the unjust exploitations. Premchand ceaselessly told about these poor who are unfed and insufficiently clad. While doing it, he could not suppress his moral anger against the exploiters, the higher ups who have mercilessly exploited the poor and the miserable. Sometime, he ridiculed these exploiters, sometimes he directed his anger, but he always stood by the side of the poorest, low and the poverty striken people. By all such deeds, he is now at the forefront as a real well wisher of the poor people – the wretched, the miserable, the deprived class. In this content Dr. Dharmadwaj Tripathi rightly said, "premchand ne samaj ke us varg kē pēzdā aur vedānā ka swār pradān karne me sahāyata kē hei, ja sōsān utpētaṇ ke kāran maun ha gayē thē."

3. The picture of the social problems in the short stories of Rabindranath and Premchand.

3.1 Portraits of Feudalistic abuses and tortures.

Rabindranath and Premchand in their short stories have also dealt with the social abuses – the oppressions and wrongs done from time to time, by the feudal lords, and the rich and the privilidged class, to the poor people of our country. Moreover, he always protested vigorously against the feudalistic abuses, and these were recorded in the short stories which
Tagore wrote and incorporated in 'Galpaguchcha'. These stories were written by him during his visit in the vast areas adjacent to the Padma. What further Tagore emphasized in these stories is the questions of man's liberty and individuality and it has become the theme of these short stories. So we find that Banwarilal of 'Haldar Gosthi' did not only protest against the injustice of the feudal lords, but through it has been revealed the individuality and the love of personal liberty of Banwarilal. The reason why Banwarilal came forward in aid of the poor and fought for Madhu was that he revolted against the exploitation of the feudal system. Banawari thus a famous character of this story, for he did not tolerate the abuse of humanity. He did not want to live as a parasite but protested against the abuse of mankind. He thus belonged to that class of people who always protested against the wrongs, without considering his personal gain or loss. The view of famous critic Sri Kumar Banerjee is important in this regard, "banawārī lālēr brihat byektitwa tāḥāṁ pārībāṇik ganḍi chāṭīā atyanta axamgata nūpe bāṭīā uṭhiāche, sei janyā tāḥāṁ sahit tāḥāṁ parībāner samghanaśa abśyambhāvi." It's clearly indicates that the strong personality of Banwarilal is the cause of this clash between Banawarilal and his family.

In 'Samasyapuran' Rabindranath further dwelt on the clash between the zaminder and the tenants. Tagore has shown how Auchimuddi, the Muslim tenant, had been rendered penniless by the cunningness of the zaminder, his torture and greed. Selfishly he went on exploiting his tenants who had done a lot for him and fed him throughout long years. Tagore also depicted the middle class in his stories. But his dealings with this section of the people, viz, the middle class, did not refined to their existence.
inside the family, but gone beyond it. Rather the stark realities of life have often been reflected in the picture, Tagore sketched in his short stories. He did not simply observe leisurely the rural nature of Bengal, but what he has depicted has a close intimate touch of life of those who are the dwellers of rural Bengal.

The zaminder, Krishna Gopal of ‘samasyapuran’ is otherwise a good fellow who lives a very peaceful life and devoted to religion. But his son Bipin Behari never agree to excuse a tenant for his inability to pay the rent of the land, even an insignificant part or fraction get about which he had no relaxation. He would never agree to it which was the cause of Auchimuddis pathetic suffering.

Paran Mandal is the first oppressed character in Bengali literature though he is not a character of the short story. Before Tagore, Bankim Chandra had depicted the character of Paran Mandal in his essay ‘Banga Desher Krishak’ which was published in its several stages or parts in ‘Banga Darshan’ in the year 1872. In this story Bankimchandra has shown how throughout a long year, beginning from the festival ‘Nabanna’, paran was exploited mercilessly by the heartless zaminder, for no lapses on his part, but because he did not agree to sell or handover the land to the greedy landlord. He was put into the jail and compelled to quit the land by the malicious design of the zaminder. Thus paran the protagonist of the story symbolises all the oppressed and exploited peasant class of the rural Bengal.

Tagore’s tales are concrete evidences of manifold tortures and oppressions done to the poor tenants by the cruel zaminders. ‘Shasti’ ‘Ulukharer bipad’ are the burning examples of zaminders cruelty.

In the same way, Premchand in his short stories have also dealt with
the social abuses- the oppressions and wrongs done by the feudal lords
time to time. He has held responsible the feudal culture, the inhuminity
of it, for the suffering of the common people of our country. Thus he
regard the social system which existed during that time, as a sign of disgrace
and demoralization of all in our country. He considered this pattern of life
and living as old, wornout and untenable, in the context of the present day
life. He adequately reflected on these social problems in several of his
short stories. viz., 'Namak ka Daroga', 'Ishwari Nyay', 'Nasha',
'Vidhwansha', 'Beti Ka Dhan', 'Vair Ka Ant'. All the stories reflected the
clash between the zaminders and the tenants. He has shown clearly how
the zaminders and his employees live a life of degradation whose only
business to exploit the poor and the downtrodden. Thus he depicted a
society with all its degradation and decay in his famous short stories. He
furnished instances in his short stories how all these men belonging to the
society's upper state, lived a degradeful life, condemnable by all standards
of ethics and moral.

Bhungi the heroin of 'Vidhwansha' was an old woman belongs to
Ganda caste. To survive she has only one hut and a chulha with her. Her
whole life passed by frying grams. If the zamindar would not disturbed
her, she would have live happily. Whenever she goes in the zamindar
Udaybhanu's house for frying grams she gets no time for cooking. That's
why for the whole night she used to slept unfed. Because Zamindar
Udaybhanu, "begār sukhē lete the. unkē dhāranē thē ki jab khāne hē
ka diyā, ta begār kaisē?"1

As, Bhungi lives in the village of zamindar Udaybhanu. so, the
zamindar feel that he has all the right to force her to.do anything once in
chaitra sakranti, Bhungi was unable to complit the zamindars work and for that reason his employes broken her chulha. She has no other way to survive and thats way she again made the chulha. Seeing her making the culhaagain zaminder becomes very angry and out of anger he breaks the chulha and burnt her hut. Seeing this, Bhungi couldnot control over her imotions and jumped into the fire and died. The above mentioned story ‘Vidhwansha’ is a great example of feudal oppression. The cruelty of zaminder Udaybhanu depicted here very realistically. In the same manner Premchand very realistically pointed the characters of Ghisu & Madhab of ‘Kafan’ and of Halku’s in ‘Puski Raat’. Their humanity idleness reflected the repurcation against feudal system which they bear from long time so socially conscious Rabindranath & Premchand vehementally opposed against the feudal oppression through their depicted characters. All most all short stories of Tagore and Premchand are evidences of his love and compassion for the poor and oppression who had been the victim of the endless tyranny of the landlord. Their compassion for men of all ranks, specially those who are poor and deprived, as is evidences from his short stories, are a clear proof that they lived in an era, full of liberal thoughts flowing from all directions of the world. It must have provided further strength to their writing, which unique and unparallel in the world.

3.2 Super.stition and blind faith

Rabindranath and Premchand dealt with superistition and blind faith which is also a menace to social living. These superistition and blind faith, which fail to do good to the body and spirit of men, without insuring progress for the society, do incalculable harm to man’s life and the social structure. These erroneous motion of blind faith is clearly indicated in the
stories of Rabindranath namely ‘Sampatti Samarpan’, ‘Guptadhan’ etc. and in the stories of Premchand namely ‘Tnetar’, ‘Nagpuja’, ‘Suhag ki Sari’, ‘Mantra’ etc. Through these stories both the writers wanted to bring the awakening against the bad custom and superstition. Rabindranath knew very well that the superstition and bad customs had chained the Bengali society to such an extent that it was difficult for them to come out of it. ‘Anadhikar Prabesh’ and ‘Sampatti Samarpan’ of Rabindranath clearly indicates his views.

Jaikali Debi, the heroine of the story ‘Anadhikar Prabesh’ was an orthodox Hindu Brahmin widow. She loves her temple of ‘Radha Jiur’ very much and strictly maintained the sanctity of the temple. One day a young one of a pig entered her temple. In search of the same the drunken ‘dom’ also came there. But Jaykali Devi surprisingly denied the presence of the pig in the temple to save the life of the animal. In this way she breaks all the meaningless norms of the society which she keeps in her from early age and exhibited her love, mercy, pity, sympathy towards the lives of the animals. Her behaviour indicates, “samajen binuddhe ei tan emtanen udaratai prakasita hache.”

Like Rabindranath, in many stories of Premchand the characters are found breaking the orthodox norms of the society. For example, the heroine Gaurah of the story ‘Suhag ki Sari’ gives her sari for burning along with the other foreign good in the name of ‘Videshi Vashtra Daha’ movement. Although previously she had refused to give the sari for burning fearing that the action may bring unhappiness to her husband and entire family. So, she thinks, “suhag kē sātē suhag kā chinha hei, use āg ..... kitnē akun kē hāt hei.” But at last she did this to bring happiness in her
husband's mind without caring for the age old superstition. In this way through their stories Rabindranath and Premchand vehemently opposed against the blind faith & erroneous notion of the middle class.

3.3 Dowry System

Marriage is a very important matter in our social life. From the early age the tradition of marriage is prevalent in India. But in the course of time the system of dowry was mixed with marriage. Regarding this dowry system many discussions had taken part in the papers and magazines of 19th century. In this context we may quote from that, “cheleye pacirāne pāś dite ārāmbha kare sei pacirāne mūlyabāddhi hāte thāke..... ane samay aneke samōj saṅskār byepāre prabartita hāiachen, e bāsaye o temni sakal jātīr sakal lokeri ekī saṅskār kriyā ārāmbha karā kartabya. bhina bhina śrenē r lokerā parasar pariha haiā eitrup ek ekī niyam karun ye bibāha kāle kana barkartā kana kanyā kartār nikate kana prakār asāṅgata dābē karite pāribe nā.”

The atrocities of the dawry system are a disgrace not only for Bengal but also for the whole of India and because of this disgraceful convention many a helpless women has to shed her tears and many parents have been subjected to insults. Rabindranath in 1891, through the short story of ‘dena paona’ has depicted its atrocities very realistically.

The middle class has been affected very much by the cruelty of dowry system. Middle class parents always wants to marry their daughter to a suitable bridegroom. But for this, parents should have lots of money by which they can fulfil the bridegroom parents’ demand. If grooms’ party then their daughter will face so many problems in laws house. This is the life history of middle class woman.
Rabindranath observe this and very sympathetically depicted the painful side of the dowry system through ‘Dena paona’, ‘Aparichita’ and ‘Jagneswarer yajna’. All this story lets us know that Rabindranath has never been in favour of dowry system. Through these stories Rabindranath vehemently expressed his objection to dowry system. So, his Nirupama says, “bābā, tumī yadi ār ek paisā āmār śāsūr ke dāo, tāhale ār tamār meyeke dekhte pāhenā, ei tamār gā chhuye ballum.” Nirupama compells her father, Ram Sundar Mitra, to go back with the money. All these uttereness of Rabindranath lay leave his mind hostile to dowry system. We may say that Nirupama is the representative of Rabindranath. Through Nirupama Rabindranath expressed his voice against the barbaric dowry custom.

Like Rabindranath premchand too in his ‘Vidrohi’, ‘Uddhar’, ‘Ek anch ki kasar’, ‘Kusum’, and ‘Do bhai’ has presented before us very vividly the disgraceful traits of dowry system. Through premchand’s stories we came to know that the problem of dowry system became a very intricate one and even in the present age it is not on the wane even a little. That is why we can say that whatever premchand says through the speaker of the story ‘Kusum’ regarding dowry system is the version of the Premchand. “ādāmē itnā svārthē, itnā dambhē, itnā nēc hei, uske sāth meyā nizvāh na hagā, mei kahe detē hgu, wahē kahapye gaye ta mei jahar khā huṅgi.”

Premchand observed the cruelty of dowry system. The amount of dowry was increasing day by day in the age of Premchand and for this parents were also facing difficulties to marry their daughters. In this context Premchand says, “hindu samāj kē vaivāhik prāthā itnē dusit, itnē cintājanak, itnē bhayaākār ha gayē hei ki kuch samaj me nahē ātā
In this way Rabindranath & Premchand registered their protest against this contemptuous convention in the social life.

3.4 Untouchability

Rabindranath and Premchand were dead against the prevailing social evil of untouchability. The supreme centre of their art was harijan welfare and both were the strongest supporter of the social rights of this class.

‘Dudh ka dam’ a popular story published in Mansarover-II refers to a landlord. Babu Mahendranath who was blessed with a male child after the birth of three daughters. He sent for Mungi, a sweeper caste woman to give suck from her breast to the new born baby. It was in conformity with the social custom of the time. The episode has a bearing on Rabindranath’s own life because he was himself brought up by his dhatri ma. Dr. Nimai Bose coments thus, “abhijñata paribārere tattālēn prathē anuyāē śīṣerē māṭri styāner paribārē dhātē styāne pālita pūṣṭa hata. bhūmiṣṭhē ho āṁṭra māye kōl theke täder chāṭie niye ek ekī duḥdhadhāṁtī ēdī o ek ekī panyabēkshāṅkārinē pārīcāṅkīr dāitwe tule deśa hata, māyez saṅge täder kana samparkai thāktanē.”

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While breast feeding the landlord’s child, Mungi overlooks her own son Mangal who dwindles day by day and finally falls ill. At the same time her husband dies suddenly and she herself is killed by snake bites. The orphan Mangal lives on the left-out of the landlord’s family. Premchand says, “uskā koi apnā thā, ta gaoṣ kā kuttā, ja apne sahavargēya ke jum se dukhē hakar maṅgāl kē sarān ā paṭa thā. dana ek hē khānā khāte, ek hē khāṭ par xate, tavēyat bhē dana kē ek sē thē, aun dana ek dusre ke swabhāv ka jān gaye the.”

Mangal, the son of an untouchable sweeper, lives like an animal and suffers neglect and contempt of the inmates of the great house. It was unthinkable how a ‘mehter’s son could live a normal life in an upper class family, conventionally receiving breast feed from the same woman turns the suckers into real brother but the relationship between the landlord’s son and Mangal was that of sweet smelling sandle and foul smelling mud. It is an example of cruel exploitation of the dalit class (down-trodden) by the so called upper classes on the pretext of religion, morality and culture. It is a realistic pen-portrait of physicals and mental torture the down-trodden lower classes have subjected to during the pre-independence days.

The inhuman system of untouchability is again the subject matter of Premchand’s ‘Thakur ka Kuwna’, which presents before us a heart rendering scene of exploitation. The low-born Gangi can’t fetch a bucket of water from the well of the Thakur to give a drink to her thirsty husband who is seriously ill. It is night; the river is at a long distance and the well is guarded against the untouchables. Gangi does not understand why she cannot fetch water from Thakur’s well to quench the thirst of her dying husband Jokhu. She tries again and again but cannot reach the well. Jokhu
is compelled to drink dirty water. Victor Balin observes this episode and writes, "\textit{thākur kā kuwnā kahānī me lekhak ne ek chatā sē gaṭānā ke mādhyam se nēci jāti ke laga kā adhikār vihēn jēvan pradarśit kiyā hei.}\textsuperscript{80}

Through the medium of Gangi of ‘Thakur ka kuwna’, Premchand wishes that her wrath should take the shape of class struggle of Harijans against the exploiting higher classes. Untouchability results from this concept of class hatred Harijan problem and smarting untouchables from the central idea of ‘mandir’ as well. For the heroine ‘sukhiya’, only one option is left to protect the life of her son Jiyaban, she must place at the feet of God in the temple. He may survive provided God wishes so. Her husband appears in her dream at night to speak thus, "\textit{no mat sukhiyā! terā bālak acchā ha jāyegā, kal ṭhākurī kē pujā kar de, wahē tere sahāyak haṅge.}\textsuperscript{81}

Sukhiya sells all her possessions to buy different items of the worship and pay the fee of the priest of the temple but when she moves inward with her child, the priest stops her because Harijans are not allowed to enter the temple. She curses her fate and raises heart rendering cries but the stone in the heart of the pujari does not melt. Defeated and frustrated Sukhiya attempts to enter the temple taking the cover of the darkness of the night. The pujari wakes and raises a great hue and cry against the Harijan woman. It is shocking to know how a harijan woman should try to enter the holy shrine at night. People gathers into a crowd and abuse and assault her. In the harry and bustle she drops her child and he falls and dead. Sukhiya goes mad with rage. She raises the curtain to reveal the monstrosity of the gentle upper classes, "\textit{mere chu lene se ṭhākurī ka chut lag gayē? pāras ka chukar lahā sanā ha jātā hei, pāras lahā}
Similarly, in the stories of Rabindranath also we hear the echoes of harijan welfare and his partitiility for the rights of the neglected harijans. One of the famous stories of Rabindranath is ‘Anadhikar Prabesh’, whose central character is a pious widow of Brahmin caste, named Jaykali Devi. Her ‘Radhajiur mandir’ is dearer to her than her own life. But one day, all of a sudden, human sentiment are roused in her to such an extent that she wilfully rejects the age-old hindu sense of purity and holiness and protects the life of a pig from the chase of the dom hunters.

The concepts of untouchability of Rabindranath and Premchand meet at a point here with an obvious contrast. The brahmin pujari in mandir believes that the temple becomes unholy because of the entrance of sukhiya, the harijan woman, as a result, she has to lose her son’s life as punishment while Jaykali Devi of ‘Anadhikar prabesh’ gives shelter to the pig to save its life putting aside the show of Iswar puja and caste consciousness which look useless if confronted with compassion and charity.

In ‘sanskar’, another picture of the social evil of untouchability, has been painted by Rabindranath which is quite touching because of its inhuman implication. Girindra, while driving to a friend’s house with his wife notices an old scavanger being beaten by a mob and learns that, 

"raestan kaltalai snan sene sahp kapat pate Dane hate ek balti jal o bagale jhata niye raesta diye se jaccila ...... se bhite karna sanghe ba kichur sanghe tader ho kathuki hae thakbe. tare theke ei nirantar maner stiyti." Girindra cannot allow this injustice and wishes to pick the sweeper in his car. But his wife Kalika in spite of being a strong believer in Gandhian
idealogy, cannot permit her husband to accommodate the low caste sweeper in their car. Kalika says, "hāṭi dom hale o bujhtum kintu methan." It presents the ideology and real practice of the high born Indians. The satire of Rabindranath is quite pungent. Kalika’s language has acquired unusual intensity and force because of the wide sympathy of Rabindranath, more so because she is deeply religious in her love of non-violence typical of the God fearing people of Gandhian era. A ‘mehtar’ is untouchable by birth therefore is a natural victim of upper class repulsion tyranny, neglect and hatred. Gangi of ‘Thakur ka kuwna’ cannot get a pot of water from the well because she is a harijan woman and the old sweeper of ‘sanskar’ cannot walk on the road used by upper class people even though he has put on clean clothes after having a good bath. Rabindranath & Premchand want to change the inhuman social practice of untouchability therefore – their stories mentioned above, give a clarion call to awaken the people by highlighting the harijan problems. They seem to fight against injustice social, political and religious and expose hypocrasy at various levels. These stories prove that Rabindranath was as much affected by the dehumanized society, failure of law and order and oppressed low caste people as Premchand. They proved deep and found the root cause of evil in the superstitious beliefs of the time.
5th Chapter

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4. Premchand : Ek Vivechan. Dr. Indranath Madan. Page -151
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30. Premchand Yugin Bhartiya Samaj. Dr. Indra Mohan Kumar Sinha.
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32. Above Mentioned.


34. Notable: Rabindranather Galpaguchha: Bishleshan O Saundarya Bichar. Dr. Swasti Mandal. Quoted From Page-26


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