

**Contextualising Premchand and Anton Chekhov:
A Study of Select Short Stories**

A Thesis Submitted to the Central University of Haryana for Partial
Fulfilment of the
Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Department of English and Foreign Languages
School of Language, Linguistics, Culture, and Heritage



By

Yespal Singh, Roll No. 1103

Under the Supervision of

Dr. Sanjiv Kumar
Associate Professor
Department of English

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF HARYANA
2016**

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that I, **Yespal Singh**, have carried out the research entitled **“Contextualising Premchand and Anton Chekhov: A Study of Select Short Stories”** embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under Ph.D. ordinance of the University.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of research degree of any university.

(Yespal Singh)
Ph.D Research Scholar
Roll No. 1103

The present work as above has been carried out under my supervision and the declaration as above by the scholar is correct to best of my knowledge.

(Signature of Supervisor)

Forwarded by:

Head of the Department

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my hearty thanks and gratitude to Professor H.S. Chandalia (my supervisor from 2012 to 2014) and Dr. Sanjiv Kumar, Head, Department of English, Central University of Haryana and my present supervisor, for their valuable guidance, supervision and patience in the careful reading of this text. Their wise comments helped me immensely without which this study would not have been able to see light of the day. I am also thankful to the other teachers of the Department of English Dr. Bir Singh, Dr. Manoj, Dr. Sanehesta, Mr. Sudeep and Ms. Rinu for their encouragement and co-operation throughout the research work.

I would also like to thank Dr. Narender Kumar, Librarian and other staff members of the library of the Central University of Haryana for their sincere co-operation in providing the books and other kind of material required for this research. I extend my thanks to Librarians and staff of English and Foreign Languages University Hyderabad; Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi; Birla Institute of Science and Technology Pilani; NCERT, New Delhi; Central University of Himachal Pradesh; KU, Kurukshetra; MDU, Rohtak; and PU, Chandigarh for their kind co-operation in my research work.

How could I forget the contribution of my Principal, Dr. Vijay Kumar and my senior colleagues Sh. K. R. Yadav, Dr. Ravinder, Dr. Sukhvir and younger brother Dr. Gunpal for enthusing confidence in me? I offer my heart-felt thanks to them and all the other members of the teaching and non-teaching staff of Government College Loharu, whom I always found ready for whatever kind of help I required.

I am highly indebted to Dr. Pramod, Assistant Professor of English at G. C. Krishan Nagar (Mohindergarh) and Dr. Ajit Yadav, for their day- night hard work

in the proof reading and citation work without which this thesis would not have been in the present form. So I extend thanks and gratitude to both of them. I am also sincerely thankful to Daljeet, M.Phil Scholar who extended all support in typing and designing of the thesis.

It would be unfair if I do not mention the love, care, and support of my parents and other members of family. I appreciate the patience and sincerity of my lovely children Ahsas and Yashvi who just used to ask, “When are you coming Papa?” Their such innocent questions motivated me to complete my research work as early as possible. Last but not the least, I would like to remember the contribution of my better half Madhu, without whose encouragement and moral support I couldn’t have completed my research. She took all the social and familial responsibilities on her shoulders and set me free for the research work.

(Yespal Singh)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	Certificate	
	Acknowledgements	
Chapter-I	Introduction	1-54
Chapter-II	Ideological Positioning of Chekhov and Premchand's Short Stories	55-95
Chapter-III	Observing Chekhov through his Short Stories	96-144
Chapter-IV	Understanding Premchand through his Short Stories	145-185
Chapter-V	Contextual Relevance of Chekhov and Premchand	186-219
Chapter-VI	Conclusion	220-242
	Select Bibliography	243-255

INTRODUCTION

Literature always provides a medium of expression and depicts staunch realities and possibilities which otherwise in the life remain unexposed. Be it any genre in any literature it cannot be separated from its background or context. The meaning is lost if the context is not studied along with the text. The poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer is a reminder of how people lived in the fourteenth century English society. Drama as an enactment is to be staged and it does represent the contemporary problems and issues of its time. It is not a new thing in literature. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, Galsworthy, Henrik Ibsen, and G. B. Shaw had portrayed the society in which they lived. They are known to write variety of problem plays. Charles Dickens through his novels had showed all the possible social issues that the 19th century was going through. Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand, through their short stories outlined the issues prevailed in their respective societies. It is through this mediums writers record contexts and give new interpretations to it. Since literature is not taken very seriously in terms of interpreting context, this study takes a serious note on the magnanimous literature which provides the unrecorded context and helps to shape it from the subalterns' point of view.

This study intends to contextualize Premchand and Chekhov on the basis of textual analysis of selected short stories. The background against which this study attempts to situate the stories of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov is the targeted issue, that is, the context. It is concerned with establishing and integrating the contexts out of which these writers' short stories developed. It aims to assess the different ways in which these contexts supply the narratives

with their substance and rationale, and it will suggest that their short stories must be read from multiple perspectives.

To contextualize something means giving important perspective by citing similar examples or relevant background. Generally, to contextualize an idea, statement or event is to place it within its larger setting in which it acquires its true and complete meaning. Contextualizing aids variety and comprehension. Contextualizing is, thus, a process which incorporates the message of local issues (the “text”) with its local culture (the “context”). So it is obligatory on the part of the writer to blend text and context into that one genre, the proposed short story.

The culture is “a dynamic system of socially acquired and socially shared ideas, according to which an intersecting group of human beings is to adapt itself to its physical, social and ideational environment”(Louis 69). There are three levels of culture:

I. Forms - the “shape” of the particular cultural pattern - the *who, what, when, where, what kind* and *how*. Note that the *why* is absent here because it occurs in the following two levels.

II. Functions - society's answer to the immediate *why*. What are the reasons, presuppositions, prerequisites, needs, associations, repercussions, logical connections, of the particular form? The term *cultural grammar* has been applied to this whole network of meanings, usages, values, presuppositions, associations and purposes, i.e. the reader must be aware of the *cultural semantics* as well as the cultural grammar and the appropriate usages of the language as well.

III. Underlying Psychology - the society's psychology or mentality. It includes the underlying premises, emotionally charged attitudes, basic goals and drives, starting points in reasoning, reacting, and motivating. (*The Church and Cultures*, 69)

Culture then embraces the totality of a way of life. It is dynamic, ever changing, and the short story, properly integral to a culture, is essential in determining the evolving life of the society. The short story must be incarnated into all these levels of form, function and underlying psychology. It is to become an integral part of a life system. The short story is a living part of the living and whole way of life of the society. It is a message about society to the reader in the person of short story writer. In the beginning society created the scenario and then the ideology. Characters in any literature are created in the image of society to enjoy relationship with their creator the author and with one another. They are given stewardship over the created order: the short story, a cultural mandate.

Since this study deals with the short stories of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov, it becomes necessary to discuss the background of the short story in a nutshell. A Narrative work must have two characteristics, i.e. the story and the story teller while drama is a story without a story teller. In drama the characters act out directly on the stage before the audience while the acts and actions of the characters are described by the story teller in his own words on the basis of his observations and understanding. Every form or genre of literature has a tradition so as the narrative. Every artist learns the basics of his craft from his predecessors to a great extent. They add something to the tradition with their experiments and innovations, open new possibilities for their

successors but they start always with a tradition. Tradition of Narrative is as old as the man himself or perhaps older than the man, as no one knows how long man has had speech. Language was probably invented by some creature that had been the forefather of the man. Trying to find the order of evolution of narrative forms will result into a chaotic and endless debate. The debate is not restricted only to the development order as different cultural and geographical groups also try to establish their superiority and precedence over their counterparts. Robert Scholes, James Phelan and Robert Kellogg have put aside all this debate in their book *The Nature of Narrative* and compared the evolution of form of narrative to the biological evolution:

The evolution of forms within the narrative tradition is a process analogous in some way to biological evolution. Human beings, considering themselves the end of an evolutionary process, naturally see evolution as a struggle towards perfection. The dinosaur, could he speak, might have another opinion. Similarly, a contemporary novelist can see himself as the culmination of an ameliorative evolution; but Homer, could he speak, might disagree. Yet the epic poem is as dead as dinosaur. We can put together a synthetic epic with a superficial resemblance to the original, just as we can fabricate a museum dinosaur; but the conditions which produced the originals have passed. Nature will never recover that lost innocence which she displayed in the creation of those beautiful monsters, nor will narrative artist ever again be able to combine so innocently drawn from myth and history, from experience and imagination.

(10-11)

Of course, the biological process and literary evolution are two completely different fields and the analogy cannot go on for long. It is very difficult to order and present the complex process of evolution of narrative.

The purpose of this study is to reveal and clarify the principal relationships which do exist and have existed historically among the major forms of narrative literature. The written narrative throughout the world emerges from an oral tradition. It often takes the form of heroic poetic narrative which can be called as epic. The epic is a result of a long and gradual process of intermixing of variety of narrative forms such as sacred myth, quasi historical legend and fictional folk tales, which have coalesced into a traditional narrative which is an amalgam of myth, history and fiction. The most important aspect of early narrative is the tradition itself as the epic story teller tells a traditional story. The primary impulse which moves him is not a historical one; nor a creative one; it is re-creative and its primary allegiance is not to fact, not to entertainment but to *mythos*. The word *mythos* precisely meant in ancient Greece: a traditional story.

Literature is not possible without the written form if follow the strict etymological sense of the word. By definition it is an art of letters. Ancestors were well aware of the distinction between “written verbal art” and “oral verbal art” which is implied by the world literature. It should be kept in mind that oral narrative and written narrative are distinct, formally and profoundly, but not culturally. Milman Parry, an authority on orally composed heroic poetry writes: “Literature falls into two great parts not so much because there are two kinds of cultures, but because there are two kinds of form: one part of literature is oral, the other written.” (Scholes et al. 18)

Today, when the percentage of literacy is high and the illiterates are culturally and economically deprived, it would be a mistake to generalize solely from the modern experience that all unlettered persons in every age have been culturally deprived. Also, it has been not so that the scribe's inked shapes were idealized in the all ages ignoring the oral recitation and composition. Socrates in his work *Phaedrus* tells a story in which Egyptian God Thoth having invented writing goes to god Thamus, the ruler over all Egypt, with intension of sharing with people and claiming that it would increase both memory and wisdom of the Egyptians. Thamus replies:

O most ingenious Thoth, one man has ability to develop a new skill, but another to judge whether it will be a curse or blessing to its users. Now you, the father of letters, through your affection see in them the opposite of their true power. For this invention will cause those who use it to cause lose learning in their mind by neglecting their memories; since, through this reliance on the letters which are external and alien to mind, they will lose their ability to recall things within themselves. You have invented not a medicine to strengthen memory but an inferior substitute of it. You are providing your students with a way of seeming wise without true wisdom; for they will appear to have learned without instruction; they will seem to know a good deal while they are really ignorant of many things; and they will become public nuisances, these men who look wise but lack wisdom. (Scholes et al. 24)

The sanctity of the printed words in the people's eyes sometimes allows the worst of Socrates' fear to be realized that the words in their printed form become more real than either the sounds on the lips of the living men or the

concept they represent. Any lie or outrage after getting the dignity of the print becomes many times menacing.

Parry opines during his analysis of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, oral composition consists of two parts confirming the hypothesis that orally composed literature is distinguishable from the written literature on the basis of its form rather than its content. His investigation in Yugoslavia and from the reports of orally composed epics from the different other parts of the world, he conclude that the individual singers in a tradition of oral poetic narrative are as important as the individual poets in the tradition of written narrative, but the role of singer is widely different from that of the poet. Every part and partial including plot that he learns, the various episodes with which he elaborate them, and even the phrases out of which he makes his lines are traditional and having a formula in the broader sense. The conception that the poetic narrative could have been "corrupted" during the process of the oral transmission rests on a common misconception of the working of oral tradition. If, an orally composed poem is obscure, the difficulty may lie with either to an inferior performance or to corruption in the process of manuscript transmission. On the other hand an oral performance may be indifferent but it will not be obscure or 'textually corrupt'. A singer through continual practice can achieve perfection in his art and may surpass any performance he has ever heard. It can be said in this case that a poem has been 'perfected' in the process of oral transmission. The treasure of different cultures and civilizations has been preserved for ages and centuries without any adulteration by this very oral tradition, *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Simirties* etc. are the fine example of it. Lord Parry's experiments and experiences in Yugoslavia suggest that there may be number of way and

alternatives for the transcription of oral narrative into writing but all of them resulted in inferior representation of live oral performances.

Later oral performances were transcribed and in the process it lost the quality and originality during the process of transcription. Whether a singer dictates to a scribe or he himself try to write, his performance will slow down than the normal performance. Under such circumstances he may lose the beat and the chain of his thought. An attempt to write down an oral performance by its two 'authors', the performer and the scribe, led to a quasi-literary tradition affecting the genuine oral tradition. Hence a genuine oral tradition faces challenge from a spurious, pseudo 'oral tradition' emerging out of a newly established textual tradition. Today the term 'oral tradition' is misapplied by literary scholars for the oral recitation of a fixed literary text which has been composed in modern way with pen and paper. It is a method of composition not the mode of presentation which distinguishes the original oral tradition from the written. There is no difficulty in recognizing genuine oral composition from mere oral recitation of a written text because one is formulaic where other is not.

Here the main concern is to know and understand the tradition and journey of the short story from folk tales of the oral tradition to the modern art tale. Earliest recorded reference to the term short story as per *The Oxford English Dictionary* dates to 1877. Anthony Trollope first time used the phrase 'certain short stories' in his *Autobiography* (1883), but he makes it clear at another place that "It was a short story, about one volume in length" (qtd. in Scholes et al. 11). Here he was referring to prose fiction that are shorter than the usual narrative. William Collins called his short fiction as little novels, whereas

writers like Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling and Robert Louis Stevenson preferred to use the older designation i.e. 'tale'. Joseph Conrad made no distinction between longer and shorter fiction and called them 'stories'. Henry James rejected the distinction between novel and short story and liked to use equivalent term novelette. Even pioneering critic Brander Matthews was not certain about the name of the term. There was much debate and confusion about nature of the short story during the last years of the nineteenth century.

Many writers of the period used the terms 'tale' and 'story' interchangeably without any clear distinction. The editors of the periodicals of the late nineteenth century encouraged and paved the way for differentiation, demarcation and definition of the two terms. 'Short story' being a plotted narrative, written instead of recited, even though writer regarded it as equivalent of the 'folk tale'. H. G. Wells praised 'short story' as a form for its elasticity against its rigid forms and austere unities (Hunter 2-3). So it is important first to understand the artistic appeal of the short story before tracing the prehistory of the form and tradition in which short story writers felt during their working in the field.

The beginning of 'tale' it can be imagined back with invention of the speech and language in some early human civilization. This debate and discussion here which was that civilization will be fruitless, useless and mere wastage of time. Here is a consideration of the five sub-genre of the tale: parable and fable, the creation of the myth, novella, fairy tale and art tale for understanding the background and process of the progress of the short story.

Parable is a kind of fictional or real narrative, with an aim to instruct the reader or the listener for religious or moral purpose using analogy. Fable also

has some purpose but its major differences are the endowment of human quality and speech to animals and other natural things, with a generalized sense of setting or place and use of irony. In fables stock characters such as ass, lion, fox and dog in a non specific location. These characters are not merely types but signify some quality and specific characteristics such as lion stands for power and authority, fox for cleverness and dog for faithfulness etc. *Panchtantra* is a collection of ancient fables believed to have been composed in third century B. C. by Pandit Vishnu Sharama. The stories of *Panchantatra* are instructing Indian masses from generations, particularly the children about the moral and social values and shaping their mind into an ethical future. *Hitopadesha* is a collection of Sanskrit tales in prose and verse written with a purpose of exposing young princes to the statecraft in a simple, easy and digesting way. The earliest manuscript dates 1373. Aesop's fables are very popular in the western world serving the same purpose of entertaining and instructing the children generations after generations.

Myths not only describe the moral order of the world but also how the world came into being. Hindu mythology contains a large body of traditional narratives in Sanskrit including epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, *Puranas* and *Vedas* etc. The myth of Manu is a fine example of it. According to the myth Manu was the first Indian King and a king of kings. One day Manu was washing his hand in a bowl, he saw a tiny fish in it. The fish requested Manu to save his life. The fish was shifted to larger vessels one after another as its size went on increasing. Finally the fish was sent to sea. Then the fish advised Manu to build a great ship to save himself and other creations of God on the earth. The fish instructed Manu to carry with him a couple of each animal as well as seeds

of every kind of plants. When flood came Manu tied his ship to the large horn growing out of the fish. The fish brought the ship to Himalaya pulling it through the rough waters and Manu tied the ship to one of the mountains. After receding of the water Manu arranged a *yagha* and got a wife named Shirdha with whom he began to repopulate the earth. In this way myth deals with humanity's perennial concern with its origin; search of identity; and working as the cornerstone of human cosmology. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *King James' Bible* are also fine examples of creation of the myth.

Creation of the myths has taken place throughout the world, i.e. the myths of Ancient India, The Norse Saga, Native America, Ancient Egypt, Judo-Christianity and Greco- Roman culture. Myths are like parables but have religious sanctity and the events are considered fundamentally true.

Novella, in modern usage refers to a short novel but until the end of the fourteenth century it was a story that could be true or fictional, new or simply unusual, written or recited. The tale collections of *Panchantatra*, *Vikram-Betal*; Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1387) harness the contrasting definitions. In 'The Golden Ass' Boccaccio made a new experiment by mixing serious and comic modes, for example, such as court romance and fabliau. He also parodied pre-existing forms like legend and exemplum. Boccaccio brought a new kind of sensitivity in his certain kind of writings by using everyday speech, and was followed by Chaucer in his *The Canterbury Tales*.

Popularization of framed narrative influenced the collectors of the folk tales. *Singhsan Batisha*, *The Thousand and One Night*, *The Arabian Nights* etc. have the structure of framed narrative popularized by Boccaccio and Chaucer in

the Western world. In Straparola's *The Debauched Nights* thirteen ladies and gentleman who flee from political prosecution to an island, tell each other seventy five stories, out of which fourteen are wonder tales. Though most of tales are either European or Oriental origin but he rewrote them in Italian vernacular and framed them to catch the reader attention. The tales may reflect the moral observation but due to the addition of the riddle in the end, function as parables. Basile during his tenure of civil service in Italy and oversea, overheard and recorded folktales from working people of lower strata of the society and put them in the form of *Il Pentamerone* or *The Tale of Tales* (1634-36). Basile's comic, violent and sexually explicit fifty tales including frame stories that open and close the collection are narrated by a group of hags summoned by Prince Zola. Though the tales of both Basile and Straparola were written for the amusement of aristocratic readership but the stories remained linked to their folk roots. Charles Perrault in his *Stories and Tale of Time Pass* rationalized the structure of pre-existing fairy tales for aristocratic readers in order to make the narrative smoother, ordered and logical. He explains the magical elements more logically and makes the protagonist more sensitive to emerging notions of gender and sexual conduct. His heroine unlike Basile's Cinderella is passive, generous even to her step mother and sisters and serve as a role model of grace and beauty for the girls of aristocratic families. In this way the tales became a tool to teach the children how to become civilized and in the process the fairy tales were removed from its folk origin.

Oral narrative invariably employs an omnipresent, authoritative and reliable narrator gifted like great poets as Valmiki, Ved Vayas and Homer with the ability to observe an action from every side to tell the secrets of the human

heart. Readers have become habitual to identify this omniscient narrator with the author, and think that author is everywhere present to interpret and value the characters and events of the narrative for them. Readers consider this reliable, omniscient, omnipresent narrator as “objective” without any doubt.

A traditional narrative cannot be transmitted without transmission of the outlines of the events, i.e. plot. Thus the plot is the articulation of the skeleton of narrative. In this way a myth is a traditional plot which can be transmitted. Aristotle considers plot as soul of any literary work that was an intimation of an action. Sacred myth, a narrative form associated with religious ritual is one kind of mythic narrative; but legend and folktales are also mythic in the sense of tradition, as in the oral epic poem. The greatest movement in the history of development process of narrative has been the gradual movement away from narrative dominated by the mythic impulse to tell a story with a traditional plot. In Indian as well as in Western Literature this movement can be traced twice: once in classical languages and again in vernacular languages. To understand this development properly it must be taken into account both nature of separation between the two great branches of narrative and the interaction and recombination of the two.

The two antithetical types of narratives which emerged from the epic synthesis may be labeled as empirical and fictional. Both can be seen as the ways of avoiding the dominance and monotony of traditional in the story telling. Empirical narrative turns its allegiance from mythos to reality. One can divide the impulse towards the narrative into two main components: the *historical* and the *mimetic*. The historical component owes its allegiance particularly to the factual truth and to the actual past rather than the traditional version of the past.

It needs for its development means of accurate measurement in time and space, and concept of causality referable to human and natural rather than to supernatural agencies. In ancient world empirical narrative manifests itself first through its historical component as writers like Herodotus and Thucydides carefully distinguished their work from Homeric epic. The mimetic component seeks its allegiance to the truth of sensation and environment instead of truth of facts. It depends upon the observation of present instead of investigation of the past. Its development is based on sociological and psychological concepts of behavior and mental process, such as those which inform the characterization of Alexanderian Mime. Mimetic narrative is antithesis of mythic in the sense that it tends towards plotlessness. Its ultimate form is 'a slice of life'. Biography and autobiography are both empirical form of narrative; historical impulse dominated in biography and mimetic in autobiography.

The fictional branch of narrative shifts its stress from the traditional to the ideal. The impulse of fictional narrative can be subdivided into two main components: the *romantic* and the *didactic*. The fictional writer is free from the bond of tradition and bond of empiricism as well. His main target is not the external world but the audience, which he wants to delight or instruct keeping in view the needs of the audience. Empirical narrative aims at one or another kind of truth, fictional narrative aims either beauty or goodness. The world of romance is ideal world, in which poetic justice prevails and all art and adornments of language are used to embellish the narrative. Where mimetic narrative aims at psychological reproduction of mental process, romantic narrative presents thought in the form of rhetoric. In the movement from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* topics of Kalidasa and *Odyssey* to *Argonautica*

one can see epics becoming more literary and fictional and moving towards pure romance as the *Aethiopica* and *Abhigianskuntalam*.

The Didactic version of fiction may be called as *fable*, a form which is ruled by the intellectual and moral impulse as romance is ruled by aesthetic one. *Fables* display the sharpness of human intellectual with brevity and inclined to lean heavily on romance for narrative articulation if the narrative artist has anything like a sustained flight in the mind. The tales of *Panchtantra*, *Hitopadesha* and *Aesop* are typical examples of the form, but its usual combination with romance Xenophone's *Cryopaedia* and narrative allegories of Middle Ages and Renaissance are the major examples.

Till now this study has been dealing the breakdown of epic synthesis into two antithetical components. It is of prime importance to consider the new synthesis in narrative which has been the main development in the post-Renaissance narrative literature. This was gradual process but it is most obviously discernible in Europe during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. The new synthesis can be seen clearly in a writer like Cervantes whose great work is an attempt to reconcile the powerful empirical and fictional impulses. From the synthesis he effected out the emergence of novel as a literary form. The novel is not the opposite of romance as is usually maintained, but a product of reunion of empirical and fictional elements in narrative literature.

Novel is dominating literary scene and narrative for last four centuries experimenting and intermixing empirical and fictional impulses in different proportion. Industrialization, Globalization and endless race for securing means of maximum physical comforts left no time for reading and enjoying a genre

like novel. Keeping in the mind the need of readers and demand of the time, some writers tried their hands on one aspect of life of a character or some specific trait which could be delineated and enjoyed in one sitting. It is called short story not just because it is short but it has its own parameters which make it the short story like any other narrative form. Short story has become the life line of many newspapers and magazines. There are still rich and vast avenues for development and experiment in this form of narrative in today's complex and typical life.

Generally short story is defined as a piece of prose fiction complete in itself with a moderate magnitude. It is easy to recognize but difficult to define. It can also be defined as work of fiction whose word count is less than 7500 words. It is often brief in description and dense in concentration. It does not have any fixed length. There is no official demarcation between an Anecdote, Novel, Novella, Novellette and short story in terms of word count. It consists of very few characters which dwell on self-contained incident, with the purpose of creating or evoking a single effect. It consists of five basic elements viz. character, setting, plot, conflict and theme. M.H. Abrams defines short story as "a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analyzing the component elements the types and the narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well." (Abrams 202)

Edgar Allan Poe defines short story as narrative requiring from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal and during the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences resulting from weariness or interruption. The question that strikes one's mind while dealing with the short story is how to define a short story. Most of the

people are of the opinion that the best way to recognize a short story is by its briefness, economy of words and short length. But being short in length is not the only criteria of identification of a short story. It requires a particular kind of literary composition. Although Edgar Allen Poe says that it should be finished in single sitting in order to preserve its unity of impression. Poe in his review of *Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales* defines a good short story as:

A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence ends not to the out bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no words written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished because undisturbed: and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

It is very difficult to fix the length of the short story. Different writers have different opinions in this connection. Some writers fix the word count of short stories inbetween 1000 to 9000 words. But in present context, the word count of a short story is no longer than 20000 words and no shorter than 1000 words. And those stories whose word count is less than 1000 words are short stories or flash fiction. The stories longer than short story must have a plot

which involves sequence of various events linked to each other by casual links. It should lead to crisis through the series of events and happenings followed by a solution or resolution. It must be loaded with message and theme. A novella is able to stand on its own as books. The word count of novella ranges from 30000 to 60000 words. It has fewer conflicts than a novel but more complex than a short story.

According to SFWA (The science fiction and fantasy writers of America) short stories have word count of less than 7500 words, novelette has 7500 to 17500 words, novellas have 17500 to 40000 words. The status of middle length between the tautness of the short story and the expansiveness of the novel is sometimes indicated by the name novelette or novella. (Abrams, 283)

Short story may or may not have exposition which means introduction of setting, situation and main characters. They mostly start in the middle of action and do not give explanation of each and everything due to the lack of space. But they do have climax, crisis etc. Some short stories have abrupt and open endings. The Short story focuses on a single incident with single plot, theme and setting. Short stories engage a very few number of characters.

The short story writer introduces a limited number of characters, cannot afford the space for a leisurely- analysis and sustained development of characters and cannot develop as dense and detailed a social milieu as does the novelist. The author begins the story close to or even on the verge of the climax, minimizes both prior exposition and details of the setting, keeps the complications down and clears up denouement quickly- sometimes in a few sentences (Abrams, 273). The term short story was used only in the second half of 19th century. Short story is short by length but in meaning and scope it runs

parallel to novel. It can be seen and recognized easily rather than defined. Generally it is concentrated, non- extended piece of fiction written in prose neither too short not too long but of moderate length. The art of short story writing demands more knowledge and creativity, as it packs and loads words with many meanings. Whatever novel expresses and exposes in many pages, short story does so in few sentences and makes use of mega-words connecting many things, at the same place and places it is at par with other dominant genres. There is no question of superiority or inferiority in being a story writer or a novelist. A short story writer squeezes books into pages, pages into sentences and finally sentences into words in the same way as lemon squeezer does with a lemon.

Short story believes in brevity and minimization, deliberately avoids extensive and expansive description of characters and incidents. It usually centers on single episode because it cannot afford space for panorama of characters. In short story events are not of paramount importance rather they are meant to highlight characters and situations. They use short route to reach to the destination. It never delineates characters and situations in detail but gives them only a touch of explanation or exposition and proceeds forward. Short story is very near to poetry than a novel as far as its structure is concerned. Poetry too uses loaded and mega words for expression as is being done by short story writers. Both use limited space for accommodation of their ideas and characters. It resembles to novel in terms of narrative aspect. The length of a story that covers less than five hundred words is considered as the flash fiction and in the words of M.H. Abrams “a slightly elaborated anecdote of perhaps five hundred word”(283). A short story being written in prose excludes all stories written in

verse. Therefore, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* written towards the end of fourteenth century can be taken as collection of stories but being written in verse. They cannot be taken as examples of short story. Apart from this, a short story is different from tale or fable because it is not only a story but a well developed and complex literary form origin of which can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. A tale is basically an oral form the tradition of which still exists in the villages of India where people sitting around the fire still listen to stories of fairies.

A fable is a short tale which often conveys a moral. It has generally animals as the characters behaving like human beings the famous collection of fables is *Panchatantra*. Short stories are also very different from parables. Short story always ignites the imagination of writer and a parable is a story that presents moral. Though a short story has a meaning, a point to be made, it is not a parable because the meaning in itself is not important. Moreover a short story is also different from anecdote. An anecdote relates an interesting happening or a series of happening or events and a short story may also present these events but the point of difference lies in the fact that in short story the happenings and events are not manifestation of the true nature and significance of a character or situation. A short story may have infinite number of themes like other genres. It may be about a moral issue, an interesting experience of an aspect of life, a series of connected incidents, a particular scene etc.

In nutshell, a short story can be written about any topic. The modern short story is definitely fictional and may not even have a story. It illuminates some aspects of life or characters. It conveys the impression of completeness. In most of the short stories there is no clear cut ending or resolution of the crisis but the

effect is one of organic unity. It is not only the unity of a beginning, middle and an end. The unity lies in the way the writer has given shape to the hugeness of details. The short story writer uses selected details to complete organic whole of a story. The organic whole of a story means that all events are related and connected to each other in such a way that if single event is removed, it will disturb the whole story as the organic body of organism is mutilated if one of its organs is cut. A short story defies an exact definition but it must arouse and hold the reader's interest and should necessarily convey a sense of completeness in a style that suits the content which results in the final effect of the story.

Short story and novel both belong to the genre of fiction. There are many similarities and differences between them. Both short story and novel are written in the form of prose and both are fictional and make use of varieties of prose such as narrative and descriptive. But they differ as far as their scope is concerned. A novel is wide ranging and long the short story is brief and deals with a limited subject. A short story is not a novel in a condensed form. The summarized novel cannot be called a short story. The interest is spread over a large area in the novel and in the short story one will find narrower focus and greater concentration of interest for instance, there are many characters in novel whereas one will have glimpse of only few characters even only one sometimes.

The short story writer introduces a limited number of persons, cannot afford the space for a leisurely analysis and sustained development of character and cannot develop as dense and detailed a social milieu as there is sufficient time and space for a novelist to present his characters and develop them in a gradual manner while a short story writer has to create and expose the characters in a few connotative sentences. The editor of American magazine

Life commented that “a short story must contain at least two characters for otherwise there would be no contrast or struggle” (Pattee 372). In the novel one will come across main plot and sub-plots but in the short story there is single plot with single theme. Each word helps in extending the motive of story. A novel may extend over several years but short story limits itself to a short span of time. The short story differs from the novel in the dimension that Aristotle called magnitude and this limitation of length imposes differences of the effects that the story can achieve.

The short story differs from anecdote-the unelaborated narration of a simple incident, like the novel, it organizes the action, thought and the dialogue of its characters into artful pattern of plot directed towards particular effects on an audience (Abrams 282). In novel the narrator may engage in meditative remarks, digressions and detailed descriptions but short story writer makes his point with brevity. A short story may dispense with the narrator and achieve its effects by presenting happenings as they happen. He takes help of suggestions and connotations instead of explanation. Art of short story writing requires a great mastery of technique in order to achieve effect of brevity, unity, concentration and intensity.

E.M. Forster in his book of *Aspects of the Novel* says the novel is a literary form so wide in its range that generalizations about it are almost impossible. It is much more difficult to pin down the novel to its job in comparison to the play or the lyric poem or even the short story....The short story that has the same medium as the novel but it is short and so it must calculate beforehand what effect it wants to produce and produce it or fail. (170)

It is felt and seen that interest in the stories is as old as human history. Even before the art of writing was known, primitive man must have shown interest in tales of the days and this interest was probably transferred and transmitted from one to the next generation and finally to the present age. In Europe, according to Somerset Maugham, the art of short story began when the hunter narrated to his fellows near the fire, after they had eaten and drunk. There some fascinating incident he had seen during the day. The oldest known tales are believed to be of the shipwrecked sailor written about Egypt around 400b.c or the book of *Jonah* from the oldest testament around 350-750 B.C.

The oldest written stories are said to be the thousand and one nights or the *Arabian Nights* entertainments. These were written in Arabic but were made known in Europe in the early 18th century by Antoine Gallands who translated then from Arabic to French and Edward William Lane's translated it into English. Al Masudi (944) an Arab traveler and historian in a book called *Hazarabsane* attributed it to the art Axerxes (465-424 B.C). These tales were collected in Egypt near about 14-16th centuries.

The Decameron is a collection of tales written by Boccaccio between 1348 and 1358. In this collection, there are about a hundred tales. The setting of these tales is Florence which caught severe plague in 1348. It is due to the plague seven young men left the city for safer the places telling stories to each other. These tales are mainly oral in nature focusing on a moral point. The difference in these prose tales and the more recent nineteenth century short story appeared on the surface in the 19th century that the short story acquired a currency and character it had not had before.

Some critics have said that America was involved in the invention of short story. According to Peter S. Prescott,

“...the thing itself is ours, invented by us a century and half ago and dominated by American ever since. Short story is really an exacting complex literary form cultivated in the United States. But one thing must be kept in mind that short story may be written in both prose and poetry though prose form is popular.” (34)

H. E. Bates commenting on the wide range of the short story said that it can be anything from a prose poem without poem or character to an analysis of most complex human emotions, and that it can deal with any subject, from the death of a horse, loss of a cloak, to a girl's first love affair. The theme or subject matter may be 'anything' but it must be presented in such a manner that it gives the impression of being 'unified' and 'whole' in a limited sense (Bates 53). Famous American short story writer Edgar Allen Poe puts stress on “a certain unique or single effect” and R. L. Stevenson insists for the importance of 'initial impulse.’ The short story writer must visualize the end in the beginning only then he will be able to produce an 'impression' or 'idea' which is his main concern. Even language in a short story is reduced to bare minimum in order to contribute to the intended effect. The major constituents of the fiction proper like plot, character and setting are definitely present in the short story but in the highly condensed and curtailed form for the purpose of a single and memorable 'effect' or 'impression'. H. G. Wells rightly says that a short story has to be read with in twenty minutes.

Certainly it is a very difficult task to define a genre of literature and same is the case of the short story. Different writers and critics have tried to define

short story in their own way. But a definition must pay serious attention to the genre, like a recent definer of literary terms:

A relatively short narrative (under 10000 words) which is designed to produce a single dominant effect and which contain the elements of the drama. A short story concentrates on a single character in a single situation at a single moment. Even if these condition are not met, a short story still exhibits unity as its guiding principle...Dramatic conflict- the collision of opposing forces- is at the heart of the story. (Litz 4)

No doubt it is a comprehensive definition of the short story and fairly acceptable with a slight modification to expand its scope and texture to accommodate the truncation of ideas and presentation of psycho-analysis of a tension ridden age enveloped in discontinuities and disillusionment.

The Indian short story is comparatively shorter in existence leaving aside the fables of *Hitopadesh*, *Budhistic Jataka Tales* and tales of *Panchtantra*. "Dubai Vali" (1907) is said to be the first Hindi short story but other critics thinks "Rani Ketaki Ki Kahani" (1800-1810)to be the first Hindi story. The stride of the form of Hindi short story has made its impact in almost all the Indian languages is remarkable and it has become the major form for litterateurs. The increasing complexity of social changes and fast track life seems to have made the short story a suitable vehicle for exploring the hidden zones of human spirit. It has found special favour with readers too in recent times, due to the inability to cope with voluminous works. The fast and frenetic pace of modern life exhausted everyone, mentally, physically and emotionally. This has resulted in the growth of multiple number of readers and writers of short story collections in recent years.

The Indian short story in English began under the influence of colonizers of Britain. Therefore the Indian short story in English is an inheritor of the British legacy bequeathed to him by O’Henry, Rudyard Kipling and Somerset Maugham who in turn were influenced by Maupassant. The Indian short stories possess qualities like preservation of curiosity, uninterrupted narration and the resulting clear picture of life.

The history of Indian short story in English began near the end of 19th century with the publication of “Stories from Indian Christian life” in 1898 written by Kamala Sathianadan. This collection of short stories was followed by K.S Venkataramani’s “Paper Boats” (1921) and “Jatadharan and Other Stories” (1937), K Nagrajan’s “Cold Rice”(1945) and A. Madhavia and Kushika’s “Short Stories”(1924). Some writers such as S.K Chetlur and G.K Chettur wrote short stories such as “Sense in Sex and other Stories”(1929). These stories deal with miseries of sex and marriage faced by Indian women.

However, the first and foremost artistic work in Indian short stories was written by Mulk Raj Anand in the form of the “Lost Child and Other Stories”(1934) in which he dealt with predicaments of the lost ones and sufferers in the society. The other contemporaries of M.K.Anand who deserve to be mentioned are R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Khushwant Singh and Ruth Praver Jhabvala. Besides these other eminent Indian short story were K.A, Abbas, G.D. Khosla, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Bunny, Reuben, K.N Daruwalla, Ruskin Bond, Anita Desai, Usha Johsi, Shashi Despande etc.

The origin of Indian short story can be traced back to the religious scriptures such as *Upnishads*, the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, *Panchtantra*, *Hitopadesh* and *Jatak Kathas*. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* the two great Indian epics

contain a good number of tales inspiring other writer for writing. M. Rama Rao while looking for the origin of short stories says:

We have had in India stories which lie embedded in hymns of the *Rigveda* or scattered in the *Upanishads* and the epics, the stories which constitute the *Panchtantra*, the *Hitopadesha*, the *Suka Saptati*, the *Dasakumaracharita* and the *Vetalpanchvimsati* in Sanskrit, the *Buddist Jatak Katha* in Pali and a host of similar stories in modern Indian languages. (216)

Moreover, short stories multiplied and popularized due to the rise of reading public. In the 19th century it was accelerated due to the more and more people started reading the fiction. This process of reading short stories was accelerated due to the increase in the number of periodicals which could publish fiction and widespread literature which was accessible to everyone. Further the pace and hurry of modern life also contributed to the rise of the short story. These factors were also responsible for the rise of novel except pace and hurry.

The genre of short story developed in the hands of many writers who were masters of this art. These great writers include Nathaniel Hawthorne(1804-1864), Edgar Allan Poe(1809-1849), Guy de Maupassant(1850-1893), Anton Chekov(1860-1904), R.L.Stevenson (1850-1894), Thomas Hardy(1840-1928), Henry James(1843-1946), Joseph Conrad(1857-1924), Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, K.A Abass, Washington Irving, O’Henry (1862-1910), J.D Salinger etc.

American writers named O’Henry (William Sydney Porter) is known for flash fiction. “The Gift of Magi” is one such story by him. J.D. Salinger, both a novelist and a short story writer is famous for the stories of intellectual and

emotional struggle of adolescents alienated from the materialistic world of their parents. Anton Chekov, Russian short story writer, probes the tragic element of the trivial things in the life. He has adopted the technique of sting in the tail in his stories. One such story is “The Kiss”.

R.L. Stevenson, great English short story writer has depicted evil action and moral corruption in his stories. Thomas Hardy, the writer of Wessex Tales, some critics say portrayed sharper, clearer experience than to be found in his novels. Guy de Maupassant a French short story writer wrote about private joys and sorrows of individuals instead of momentous events. Like a true realist he portrayed the world as he saw it. His stories close with a sting in the tail which means an ironic twist that takes the reader by surprise. “The Necklace” is one such story.

Mulk Raj Anand an Indian short story writer, wrote short stories with a view to depict the predicament of the underdogs of the society and exposes their miserable condition due to social injustice and the strong prejudices of the privileged communities towards them. He attacks and lashes on the hypocrisy of the people and mocks at the irrational behavior and inhuman customs of the feudal society. He criticizes the evils of patriarchy, untouchability, insanitation and cruelty in the education field and others. It is interesting to see how these short stories shed light and deal with the mixed fortunes of women at various stages of their lives in the countryside. For example *The Tamarind Tree* deals with the wait before motherhood especially yearnings of an expectant mother and the tough battles she has to wage with herself to control. *Lajwanti* confronts the reader with a cruel society that heaps indignities on its women and subjugates them without showing any concern for their welfare and happiness.

“The Silver Bangles” is a narrative that tells the reader the tale of the humiliations heaped on a sweeper girl (Mehta 47). R.K. Narayan presents in his short stories the realities and reveals life comically without allowing cynicism or mockery to enter in the world of his creation. He exposes the ironies of life magnificently.

Raja Rao, a great Indian short story writer depicts the reality with special focus on political and social aspects of it. He is symbolic and philosophical writer who makes the maximum use of folktales, myths and legends. He has deep vision of life and profoundly rooted in Indians'. His stories are rooted in the religion of Hinduism. In story “Janvi” reflects the suffering of the rural woman, a loyal domestic servant who accepts her humble situation in life and serves her employers with devotion and love without any complaint. This is undoubtedly the scenario of 1930s feudal culture and its hierarchical society. The poverty of low caste Janvi arouses much compassion.

While analyzing the genre of short story, it is found to have three significant characteristic elements which include recognition of the familiar, empathy and readability. Recognition of the familiar means clear lucid and vivid details to create the illusion of reality and actuality suggesting undercurrents of the meaning. The writer has to do away with any kind of banality, formula or cliché. After all a short story in a real sense is not transcription of life but a dramatization of it. The second characteristic empathy means to identify ourselves so sympathetically and closely with characters and the situation they are, an organic part of this actuality. In this way the well constructed theme gets vivified by being individualized. The third characteristic readability means pleasure of the tale in which the reader gets absorbed by the

magnetic pull of it. The readers are unable to put it aside until they have found out what happened. Besides this, beyond the yarn lies a whole range of meaning to be explored and researched.

In the past the notions that were associated with the short story such as continuity, change effect, design are probably doubted by today's critics and practitioners of this form who do not deem that readability is an essential ingredient of the short story. They do have a point to make a story is possible without a storyline and can be proven exciting and evocative without the formal parameters. It has been observed that the modern short story has explored new grounds both in content and form due to the new frictions and new fissures, new expectations and new equations at every level, personal, family, national and international. Therefore, a short story is a journey of self discovery and self realization for the reader more than the character.

The short story writer attempts to give a form to the inchoate world. Thus it is necessary that a story should have a formal plot called structure and the talent and artistic touch of the author lies in fabricating that it may appear natural, spontaneous, and life like instead of artificial and contrived. The artist attempts to invent such incidents, episodes or situations which will appear natural, real but not planted. A good artist always searches and researches a well thought out plot which means a series of events connected by causal links forming an organic whole without having any unrelated event in between to distress the connectivity. It is because of this a short story should have beginning and must convey a constant sense of movement. Hence the ideal plot or structure will make the story exciting and more interesting. Such an ideal story will be true to life and create an atmosphere of suspense and will make the

readers curious and inquisitive to know what happens next. They must show curiosity in how the situation gets resolved at the end. It must give meaning to the narrative. A good story has to struggle for a unity of effect called the single effect which means a story should be compressed and economical in the same way the poem is and is free from digressions and irrelevancies and is marked by intensity of poem. It should be complete in itself and must have organic unity and wholeness. It must be meant to be read in just one sitting. Therefore it is essential for a story that its effect must be sudden, powerful and revealing. The short story also carry and convey psychological reality which means whatever happens in the modern story occurs in character's mind in the interior world. Therefore many modern writers in order to reveal the drama of human consciousness have stopped stressing the orderly progression of plots even they have played down external action and have left aside photographic realism in the favour of a more complex psychological realism. The short stories demand focused attention. The reader may skip here and there over in case of novel but in a short story no such skipping is possible without losing some of its meaning.

In the novel and the short story there is a difference between events and episodes. There is a strong element of episode in the novels of Thackeray and Dickens. This means that each part of the novel has to be complete in itself and also prepare the ground for what was to follow. On the other hand in the short story there is nothing to follow, nothing to look forward to. The end of the short story is really an end which is marked by the sense of finality or definiteness of compactness and tautness from start to end. It is self sufficient, self contained and its compression arouses a feeling of expansion into life and an awareness of life into the readers' consciousness resulting in the increase of our

consciousness. In this way, a short story helps in imparting the feeling and sense of a discovery. There are various elements which go into the making of a short story viz. plot, characters, setting, conflict and point of view. Those all elements mix together to constitute the structure of a story. These all are explained one by one as under: Plot of a story is a significant element. Every story almost has a plot. It has a sequence of events or incidents which are inter-related in such a way that each event must grow logically out of the previous one. So the plots must have a unity. A well thought out plot must have a conflict either between individuals, groups, the individuals and forces such as nature, society etc. It should also have the exciting elements of surprise and mystery. Aristotle has termed the plot as myths. In a plot, there is no chance of addition, deletion or withdrawal. M. H. Abrams has rightly observed in his "A Handbook of Literary Terms":

A plot is commonly said to have unity of action or to be an artistic whole if it is apprehended by the reader or auditor as a complete and ordered structure of actions directed toward the intended effect in which none of the prominent components or incidents is non-functional; as Aristotle put this concept all the parts are so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole Aristotle claimed that it does not constitute a unified plot to present a series of episodes which are strung together simply because they happen to a single character. (228)

A plot is not a simple account of a narrative. It is constructed and composed. The author has in his mind a simple account of narrative but he really does things with it. He often rearranges the incidents in time, he may tell the end first and then relate how events led up to it, he may withhold some

information to arouse and sustain our curiosity and interest, he may be prejudiced and partial in favour of or against some of the characters and overplay or underplay certain facts to reinforce his stand. A plot is what an author does to the narrative account to make out a story to give it meaning, purpose. But a simple narrative account which is sequential open and truthful account or depiction of external events as they have happened cannot be a plot. There is vast difference between story and plot. E.M. Forster has made clear distinction between story and plot in aspects of novel as:

We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis following on causality. The king died and then the queen died is a story. The king died and the queen died of grief is a plot. The time sequence is preserved but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again: the queen died no one new way until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king. This is a plot with a mystery in it, a form capable of high development. It suspends time sequence, it moves as fast away from the story as its limitations will allow. Consider the death of a queen. If it is in a story we say: And then? If it is in plot we ask: why? That is the fundamental difference between these two aspects of a novel. A plot cannot be told a gaping audience of cave-men or to a tyrannical Sultan or to their modern dint the movie-public. They can only supply curiosity. But a plot demands intelligence and memory as well. (75)

Plot simply means the idea of unity i.e. various individual events stick together. A matter of cause and effect due to which one can expect to find a logic, reasonable connection between the parts. This logic is not a mechanical thing. The various stages of plot are exposition, complication, climax,

denouement etc. Many human reactions and responses and non-human things sometimes enter into the logic of a story and in the end the central logic we are dealing with is the logic of human motivation. This leads us to know how human needs and sentiments work themselves out. Then plot is character in action. M. H. Abrams has made a clear cut distinction between plot and story as:

Notice also that a plot is distinguishable from the story that is a bare synopsis of the temporal order what happens when we summarize the story in a literary work we say that first this happens, then that then that... It is only when we specify how this is related to that by causes and motivations and in what ways all these matters are rendered, ordered and organized so as to achieve their particular effects that a synopsis begins to be adequate to the plot. (227)

Supriya M.Ray also makes a good distinction between plot and story in, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* as:

Plot is distinguished from story which refers to a narrative of events ordered chronologically, not selectively and with an emphasis on establishing causality. Story is the raw material from which plot is constructed. Crafting a plot requires choosing not only which elements of a story to include and what order to tell them in but also relating the events of a story to one another so that causality may be established convincingly.... Russian formalists made a similar distinction between plot and story, which they referred to as *syuzhet* and *fabula*, respectively. Unlike Forster, however they did not emphasize causality. Rather the devices such as rhythm pattern, syntax and imagery used by an author convert a story into a plot. More recent critics who have sought to explain this transformation from story line into a plot by analyzing the rules that generate plot are called narratologists. (386)

A plot has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning starts the course of action and does not take backward movement for its cause. It should be rather independent and should be like a linking pin. The middle of plot should be rather independent and origin of itself the middle of plot should directly come out of beginning and must be in position to give birth to end. It connects the events between beginning and end. The end should emerge out of middle and must not lead to some further action. M.H. Abrams has rightly commented on beginning, middle and end of plot in his *Handbook of Literary Terms*:

The order of any identified plot, Aristotle pointed out is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end the beginning, middle and end. The beginning initiates the main action in a way which makes us look forward to something more. The middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more, we feel satisfied that the plot is complete. (Abrams, 229)

M.A.R. Habib has also explained the concept of plot. He has quoted Aristotle in his book, *A History of Literary Criticism*, and has said "A beginning, for Aristotle is that which is not necessary caused by anything else but itself causes something else. A middle part both follows from something else and results in something else. An end is what is necessarily follows from something else but does not produce a further result." (A.R. Habib, 56)

Exposition is the beginning of the story giving information about the characters and events which is necessary for the reader to understand the developing action. Exposition is followed by rising action which has been called as complication by Aristotle. In this Aristotle has divided plot in two parts: Complication and denouement. Complication includes all the events and

incidents until the change in fortune and denouement includes unraveling which starts from the change in fortune till the end of play. It finally leads to climax, the greatest point of interest, tension etc. in the plot. It also means turning point in the course of action as the protagonist's fate changes either towards positive change or negative change. It follows rising action and precedes the falling action or denouement. M. Ray has beautifully quoted Gustav Freytag *The Bedford Glossary of critical and Literary Terms* and said many critics and writers conceive plot in terms used by German writer Gustav Freytag in *Die Technik des Dramas (The Technique of Drama)* 1836 to describe the structure of a typical five act play, especially a tragedy. Freytag's *Pyramid*, his enumerated sequence of events includes the introduction, rising action, climax falling action and catastrophe. Alternative and additional terms such as crisis, resolution and denouement have come into vogue but Freytag's terms and sequence are still often used to describe and analyse elements of plot. (M. Ray 387)

Aristotle has called plot soul of tragedy. It makes story to exist. He has gone to the extent of saying that story or tragedy is possible without character but not without plot. He has divided plots into two types, simple plot and complex plot. In a simple plot the action moves smoothly. There plot is no chance of reversal of fortune and recognition of reality while as in complex plot the action is marked by a movement through reversal of fortune called peripetia and recognition of reality called anagnorisis. Aristotle prefers complex plot because it helps in evoking the emotions of pity and fear called catharsis which is the fortune of tragedy.

Character- generally, a character is a figure in a literary work that need not be human beings. A character can be an animal, human or even non-living

entity when the author attributes them human. It also connotes personality of a person and morality. Almost all stories have characters which includes both good and bad ones. The main character of a plot who is centered and focused on is called as protagonist or alternatively heroine or hero and the character who is posted against the protagonist is called as antagonist. For example Hamlet is protagonist and King Claudius the antagonist in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. However, the antagonist who is evil or capable of cruel and criminal actions is called villain. The character in a work who contrasts with the main character to stress and highlight the distinctive temperament of the protagonist is called foil. Thus Fortinbras is a foil to hamlet in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*.

However when the phrase the character is discussed, it refers to a literary genre that developed in 17th and 18th century England and France. It was started by Greek writer Theophrastus who wrote a book entitled *Characters*. The modern versions of character are called character sketches. In this genre character type instead truly individual character is described in prose or verse, briefly a character may or may not change in the course of action. Some of the characters remain stable and static. They remain unchanged till the end in terms of temperament and perspective or view point. For example, Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Such characters called as flat or type or two dimensional character. Sometimes character changes his outlook, temperament or his ideology through a gradual process of development such as Pip in Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Such characters are called as round ones. These round characters are dynamic in nature. They never stick to stability. M.H. Abrams has quoted E.M Forster introduced new terms for an old distinction by discriminating between flat and round characters. A flat character, Forster says,

is built around a single idea or quality and is presented without much individualizing detail and therefore can be described adequately in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity. Such a character therefore is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life and like real persons as capable of surprising the readers. (45)

The various ways and means by which an author describes the character in a literary work is known as characterization. It is of two types, direct characterization and indirect characterization. In direct characterization the author directly comments on the characters while as in indirect characterization the author describes the characters through representation of their actions statements, thoughts and feelings. All the characters are not treated equally; some are being more focused than others. In this sense characters may categorized into minor and major characters. Major characters include those who constantly and continuously show their participation in activities to proceed the story forward. Such characters may include protagonist, antagonist, villain etc. Minor characters work in action for a short duration and they do not continue their course parallel to major characters.

There are mainly two ways for a writer to present his characters to the readers viz telling and showing when the writer tells readers directly about the character his method of characterization is expository. Here the author interferes with a view to describe and evaluate the desires, motives and qualities of the characters. But this method of characterization is not preferred because it is not objective and impersonal in character portrayal. It is regarded as violation of artistry because writer does not efface himself completely to depict things. But

on the other hand when the writer allows his character to reveal himself indirectly through his thoughts dialogue and action, it is called as indirect characterization or dramatic method. In it the writer depicts or presents characters talking and acting assigns the reader the task of deducing the motives and dispositions lying behind their saying and doing. The author makes use of stream of consciousness technique. He shows both inner and outer thoughts, responsiveness and actions of a character.

At this point of discussion the reference of setting is also important. Setting may be defined as the combination of particular place, time and social milieu in which action takes place and forms background for the characters and the plot of a literary work. M.H. Abrams is of the following opinion regarding setting of a story, play etc. He says that the overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general, locale, historical time and social circumstances in which its action occurs. The setting of a single episode or scene within the work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. The overall setting of *Macbeth* for example is medieval Scotland, and the setting for the particular scene in which Macbeth comes upon witches is a blasted heath. (281)

Every story starts at a particular place. The author can change chronological sequence of a story. He can tell it in order of happening or can start at the end. He may take help of flashbacks and flashforths in the time. Place is equally important in setting of a story. The point that is noteworthy here is how the author attempts to use setting in order to heighten the effect of a story. For example the setting is usually dark or ruined place or castle or a bleak graveyard in case of horror stories. Thus setting contributes to the atmosphere of

mood of the story but it is not important in all stories wherein character or situation is more important.

In drama setting refers the scenery and sometimes even the props. In other words setting refers physical backdrop of a play. There is a Greek word *opsis* meaning scene or spectacle is hardly used for picturesque setting. M.H.Abrams has rightly observed that when applied to a theatrical production, 'setting' is synonymous with decor which is a French term denoting both the scenery and the properties or moveable pieces of furniture on the stage. The French *mise en scene* (placing on stage) is sometimes used in English as another synonym for setting; it is more useful, however to apply the term more broadly as the French do to signify a director's overall conception staging and directing of a theatrical performance. (281)

Setting is very important because it creates atmosphere of lifelikeness. It motivates the reader to accept the world created by writer. The psychological and physical effects along with the mood which are essential to the theme of the story are created by setting. The author ensures reality and authenticity by presenting a suitable locale with a local colour. A short story writer has no space to describe in detail locale, time and background. He has to be every economical in his language and word pictures. Moreover, the setting of a short story, play or novel can be emotional setting or physical setting emotional setting or physical setting. Emotional setting means mood or atmosphere and physical setting includes time, place.

Now comes the point of theme. Theme is one of the important elements of a short story. Generally the theme of a text refers to the main idea or message conveyed by the words of a story. It may be moral or a lesson. The main idea

that a text seems to be making about its subject can be termed as theme. For example the theme in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is that power can corrupt anyone completely.

Theme is also related to motif. But the two are altogether different. Motif means conspicuous unifying element in a work such as image, type of event, device etc. That occurs frequently, informs and casts a revealing light on the theme in works of literature. It also refers to the repetition of an important verbal or musical phrase frequently made in a work. For example, the loathly lady that develops into a beautiful princess is a motif in folklore. M.H. Abrams while making a distinction between the two has clearly said:

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with motif but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine whether implicit or asserted which in an imaginative work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader. John Milton states as the explicit theme of *Paradise Lost* to assert external providence and justify the ways of god to men. Some critics have claimed that all non-trivial works of literature including lyric poems, involve an implicit theme which is embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery as in Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn*. And archetypal critics trace such recurrent themes as that of the scapegoat or the journey underground through myths and social rituals as well as literature... a motif is a conspicuous element such as type of events device reference or formula which occurs frequently in works of literature. The man fatally bewitched by fairy lady is a motif adopted from folklore in Keats "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." (178-179)

Theme may also be defined as a central topic that a text deals and treats with. It may be categorized as thematic concepts which means what the readers

think the work is about and thematic statement which means what the work says about the subject. It refers the concept or idea that is centered and focused on, in a story. It can be summed up in a single word like death, conflict, love etc. It permeates the whole story and repeats throughout the narrative. The whole story revolves round the theme. The writer of short story may use symbol, metaphor, simile, irony to emphasize his theme.

Since this study interrogates contexts of the short stories of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand, a discussion on comparative literature becomes necessary as it would prove helpful in contextualizing the material of these two writers incorporated to this brilliant genre. Before starting the comparison between the short stories of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov it is necessary to know what actually 'comparative literature' is and how it came into being. The simplest answer is that comparative literature involves the study of texts across the cultures and it is inter disciplinary concerned with patterns of connection between the literatures. Some time the readers do not start with comparative literature but end with it in one way or other and at other times reader may be impelled to follow. There seems a general agreement among the scholars that comparative literature acquired its name from a series of French anthologies used for teaching of literature, entitled *Course de Literature Comparee* published in 1816. The title according Rene Wellek, was 'unused and unexplained' and only shows how the term crept into use through 1920s and 1930s. It could be argued that anyone who has interest in books may be lead to the road of comparative literature. When one reads a British writer he will come across or acquainted with many Latin and

Greek writers. For example, one can trace Shakespeare's source material through Latin, French, Spanish and Italian etc.

There is no limit to the list of examples one can devise. When one starts reading, he crosses the frontiers, making association and connections, no longer reading single literature but within a wide open space of whole literature with capital L, what Goethe termed *Weltliterature*. At this point one could assume that comparative literature is nothing more than commonsense, an inevitable stage in reading, made increasingly easier by international marketing of books and by the availability of translations as suggested by Susan Bassnet in her book *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*: "Comparative literature involves the study of texts across cultures, that is interdisciplinary and that is concerned with patterns of connections in literatures across both time and space." (11)

At this stage one can assume that comparative literature is nothing more than common sense, an inevitable stage in reading which is made popular by international marketing of books and availability of translations. But if one shifts the attitude a little, he will find a history of violent debate that goes back to the earliest usage of the term at the beginning of Nineteenth Century. There is a general agreement among the scholars that comparative literature owes its name from a series of French anthologies used for teaching of literature published in 1816 and entitled *Course de Literature Comparee*. German version of term 'Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte' first appeared in book by Moriz Carriere in 1854 while earliest English usage is attributed to Mathew Arnold who referred to 'comparative literatures' in the plurals in a letter of 1848. Regardless who coined or used the term first time and when, the term seems to

be derived from a methodical process applicable to sciences as a mean of confirming a hypothesis.

The idea of cultural heritage and establishment of its superiority was based on the concept of the nation that swept the whole of the Europe in the age of revolutions. Each nation tried to discover or rediscover their cultural heritage, whether it was real or fake, in order to enthuse the people to compete in the race of superiority. Gayatri Spivak in her famous work *Can the Subalterns Speak?* criticize scholars for their dependence on western intellectuals to speak for the subaltern and their condition rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Spivak are use that by speaking out a collective cultural identity, subaltern will invite there subordinate position in the society (Swami 153). But in other parts of the world the comparative literary study stresses the politicization of literature and rejects the formalist approach completely. While analyzing the east-west literary relations, Swapan Majumdar argues that Indian Literature like African and Latin American counterparts form a community of sub- national literatures and no way inferior to the European or Western Literature. (Majumdar, 26)

It is evident that two writer under this study hail from two different cultural backgrounds and it being a comparative study, not only the writers under study and their works come under the scanner but also the environments- social, political and other cultural are taken care of. So it is necessary here to understand the dynamics of the comparative literature.

In history there had been a continuous debate which is still going on i.e. the debate of cultural or social supremacy, the misconception of cultural supremacy has led to the destruction of uncountable number of lives and

resources. If people would have understood the reality, all the destruction could have been avoided, and the civilization would have been in a far-far better position.

Culture is often region specific because it is product of people's activities and concerns. People are part and partial of it, each and every region has its own ethos, fables, stories, poetry, aesthetics and living styles and food habits. Kayyappa Panikar in his Sahitya Academy Saravatsar Lectures- Nineteen try to define the culture:

In a primary anthropological sense, culture implies the style of living of community, which makes it off from other communities. One may say that country's culture is the mirror which reflects its inner intellectual and emotional setup. The reaction of people to any external stimulus may be predicted on the basis of predominant of features of its culture. (Panikar, 9)

In one part of the world one may see many common features which become the base of the identification in the cultural map. But there can be great divergences within a very small part having common regional features. For example the epic of *Ramayana* is interpreted in different manner in different countries like Colombia, Thailand, Indonesia etc. but even within India one can see this difference in the versions of Krithibas, Tulsidas, Kamban and Ezhuthacchan. The claims of regionalism can't be ignored at the cost of internationalization. Local, regional, personal and particular may be different but not necessarily opposed to the universal. Culture therefore has two faces like a coin which may be different but not necessarily opposed to the universal. No culture can claim to be pure and without mixing of the elements of other cultures, and no race has absolutely pure blood. United Nation has already

confirmed that no man has absolutely pure blood, all the races are interconnected. The claim of purity of race, tribe, family etc. is unscientific and without any valid evidence. Hence no culture is superior or inferior to the others and no race can claim purity or superiority of the blood. No culture is superior or inferior but all are equal and partake of each other. In the similar manner all humans and families are equally ancient.

There had been one sided attempt to study history of mankind and civilization by the people of ruling and dominant cultures and races so far. It is not possible when two culture or person or people come into contact, only one of them feels the effect or influence. The studies of colonialism by historian like Arnold Toynbee and other were incomplete and they did not give proper space to the culture of colonized people. Some recent studies proves that some subjected nations have greater civilizations and stronger culture identities' than their so called conquerors. In the similar fashion K.M. Panikar in his "Asia and Western Dominance" do not give due importance to the after effects of colonialism in Europe. In Today's post imperial world impact of colonizer cultures on colonized cultures and vice-versa should be done in an objective manner. This will be a corrective manner.

Unbiased account of cultural interactions during past makes it quite clear that give and take have been taken place even among the unwilling and unequal partners. The impact and traces of conquest of Alexander of Macedonia can be seen even today on the cultures of areas his route. Their military and business expeditions over world have left their imprints on the respective cultures. The spread of knowledge of Indian astronomy and narratology to West and Middle East are significant in this regard. Earlier these contact were few and far

between but scene is quite different today in the age of internet and super speed means of transportation, when each and every person in every part of the world is within reach of every one round the clock, the process of universalization is quick and global. But it does not mean local or regional aspect has lost its relevance. It is still there and contributing into the process universalization. The concept of isolated cultures is almost impossible and people are enjoying and experiencing the benefits of other and feeling more wise and experienced than their forefathers.

The diversity in food habits, living style, language and rituals in different cultures are governed by the geographical and environmental factors. People of the area have acquired the knowledge through the practical experiences from beginning to the present and adopted this knowledge into their behavior because it was necessary for their survival. This knowledge had continuously been transferred from generations to generations. With the passage of time it has become part and partial of the behavior.

The tension, conflict and interaction between different cultures and within the culture prevent the cultures from becoming rigid, aggressive, opinionated, fossilized. Basic nature of the culture is fluid and this fluidity saves it from fixity and obstinacy. In a culture, like the atom, the proton and electron of similar and dissimilar force maintain the balance and keep it active and vibrant. This activeness helps it to maintain its identity in negotiation with other cultures. When one culture comes in contact with another culture, it put into action the principal of mutual symbioses. Dissimilarities are the sources of attraction and absorption in comparison to similarities. A culture can't borrow from another which is already available in the structure and texture of it. People

migrated from one cultural environment absorb and assimilate the traits and habits of the cultural environment in which they are living. After two or three generation they do not feel nostalgic about their parent cultures but still maintaining some bases traits.

Thus, the comparative literary analysis of the writers excelled in the same literary genres focuses on their contextual aspects. The contextualising of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand through their selected short stories, includes the national mindset in pre-revolutionary Russia and pre-independent India. This background is integral to not only the development of the characters, but also to the text which supports the characters. Much of what is contained in the texts is from scenario, anecdotes, and written material from and about their respective societies. This materials will be used as interpretive tool in the development of the character, and includes clues to physical appearance and personality. The characters analysis contained herein is, in part, a reflection of these historical, social and economical concerns. In addition, external and internal portrayal and the means used to achieve them are thought provoking.

Contextualising is a key issue to understand and implement the relevant and effective literary practice. The literature comes dressed in culture and it must be depict the culture. The writer gives life in its setting. The significance of context regarding the life issues, which the text must address and dwell upon, cannot be underestimated. There are constructive approaches to contextualisation which facilitate an analysis of both literature and culture, and their dynamic ongoing relationship. The short stories available are varied and each brings out particular aspects of a context, and each runs the particular risks of misappropriation. The application of these approaches by Anton Chekhov

and Munshi Premchand is significant here for their relevance in the present context not only in Russia and India but throughout the world.

The *First Chapter* begins with an introduction to the intellectual atmosphere of Chekhov and Premchand's perfect employment of the genre, the short story. It describes in short the background of the genre short story and gives a brief sketch of the genre chronologically. The concept of contextualising is touched upon. It also brings into focus how these two great story writers struggled to contextualise their materials.

Chapter Two entitled "Positioning of Ideals and Values in Chekhov and Premchand's Short Stories" analyses the contextual indications of the ideals and values which Chekhov and Premchand valued like compassion, freedom, humour, beauty, truth, goodness, humility, honesty, justice, and tolerance. Particular stories are seen and positioned in the wide range of these ideals and values to focus on the contexts of their short stories.

Chapter Three, which has the title "Traits of Wisdom Displayed in the Short Stories of Anton Chekhov", is a brief survey of the manner by which Chekhov wisely builds up the contexts of his short stories. His wisdom reflects in different ways of setting, characters and their opinions. There is no one who possesses complete wisdom. This is also argued that individuals who are considered wise have no guarantee generally to display it equally in all aspects and almost all phases of their lives. Central to his wisdom are values of compassion, freedom, humour, beauty, truth, goodness, humility, honesty, justice, and tolerance which time and again one can find while reading his short stories.

Chapter Four, bearing the title “Sharp and Sensitive Observation Displayed in the Short Stories of Premchand”, elucidates that Premchand was a sharp and sensitive observer; he had a wide range of experiences of rural life from his childhood and saw closely the city life during his student life and as a government servant. His description of rural as well of urban life of India is so vivid, live and so vibrant that a reader feels that he is actually roaming in the environment of his description. He not only describes the atmosphere but the inner feeling, emotions and characteristics of the society reflecting their way of thinking, living and dealing with the different situations. In this chapter there is an attempt to analyze Premchand’s treatment of different problems and resource of Indian society about which his sharp and sensitive observation speaks.

Chapter Five, headed “Contextual Relevance of Chekhov and Premchand’s Short Stories” establishes the thesis that Premchand and Chkehov are more relevant today and it appears that they will remain forever because they touched the basic human nature in their short stories and basic human nature never changes.

The *Concluding Chapter Six*, in addition to being a summing up, attempts to focus on the new possibilities in comparative literature and highlights the situations of the subalterns in both the Russian and Indian societies. With the passage of time they are portrayed with the process of emerging from their earlier marginalizing status. What is new is the essential awareness that they have long been exploited and the feeling that it is time for each of them to become human beings. Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand's protagonists in their short stories are identically presented as the victims of the privileged groups. Contextualising Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand through their

selected short stories is thus an attempt to break the myths of marginalization and subordination which means that there is no truth behind the of superiority or inferiority, dominance or submission theories, that all the individuals are free to determine their own lives as equals.

While the protagonist of the first novel breaks the myth of subordination breaking the constraints of marriage, the protagonist of the second novel survives a duplicitous appearance that she has to put up in order to face the world. Atwood broadens the scope of feminine subordination to a political atmosphere in her third novel and the next novel actualizes it. The last novel portrays a successful woman. So, a progressive pattern is seen in all her five novels.

The object of this study is to highlight the main aspects of contextualizing Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand in their selected stories and to establish the thesis that they are unique in the way they use the contexts to enrich the genre short story. The study also attempts an interpretation of the strategies of these writers to contextualize the short story. Within the limited canvas available for establishing the targeted issue, this thematic study confines itself to the one volume of short stories of both writer i.e. Anton Chekhov's Short stories selected and edited by Ralph E. Matlaw published by W.W.Norton & company, New York and Premchand: Deliverance and Other Stories translated by David Rubin and published by Penguin Books, New Delhi .

The basic methodology of this study will rely on the process of examining the short stories that achieve the proposed end. These short stories will be located within the larger cultural and historical context of the ideological

construction of the Russian and Indian identity. Chapters excluding Introduction and Summing up would follow the same pattern.

Works Cited:

- Abrams, M.H. *The Glossary of Literary Terms*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc., 2014. Print.
- Bassnet, Susan. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993. Print.
- Bates, H.E. *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1941. Print.
- Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.
- Habib, M.R. *A History of Literary Criticism from Plato to Present*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Print.
- Hunter, Adrian. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English*. Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Print.
- Litz, A. W. *Major American Short Stories*. Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1975. Print.
- Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. New York: Orbis Books, 1988. Print.
- Mehta, P.P. *The Indian Short Story in English: A Survey*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1976. Print.
- Pattee, F.L. *The Development of the American Short Story: A Historical Survey*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1923. Print.
- Prescott, P.S. *Never in Doubt: Critical Essays on American Books*. Gettysburg: Arbor House Publishing, 1986. Print.

Rao, M. R. "The Short Story in Modern Indian Literature." *Fiction and the Reading Public in India*. Mysore: Mysore University Press, 1967. Print.

Ray M. S. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Bedford: St. Martin's, 2008. Print.

Scholes, Robert et al. *The Nature of Narrative*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968. Print.

Swami, Indu. "The Relevance of Mainstream Indian Feminism to North- East India." *Journal of Rajasthan Association for Studies in English..* Vol. 8. Year 2012. 151- 157. Print.

Internet Sources:

Poe, E.A. <http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/nhpoe1.html>. Web. 11 Sept. 2015.

CHAPTER-II

IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING OF CHEKHOV AND PREMCHAND'S SHORT STORIES

Chekhov and Premchand are the bearers of the greatest banner that has been raised in the thousand years of Russian and Indian histories—the banner of a true and humane democracy, of freedom, of the dignity of the man. Central to the examining issue of contextualising are the ideals and values which are now going to be discussed in this chapter. In this chapter, contextual indications of the ideals and values which Chekhov and Premchand valued like compassion, freedom, humor, beauty, truth, goodness, humility, honesty, justice, and tolerance are ready to be examined.

Anton Chekhov's ideals and values are impressive in its breadth and its depth. Basically a writer of stories and plays, Chekhov had important words of ideals and values to say about how best to approach such genres. His dealings with a wide range of timeless issues such as love, sex, family life, aging, and death is like the works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. He is less judgmental in comparison with the two novelists. The ideals and values one can gain from the readings of Chekhov lies so much in all the answers his characters provide. In addition to dealing with certain ideals and values of Chekhov, his characters deal with important social, political, and economical concerns of his time, and to examine his approach to them is still very important.

Since this chapter will concentrate on various ways that Chekhov and Premchand displayed their ideals and values, it should be admitted here that there were several ways in which they did prove it in their short stories.

Anton Chekhov lived during a fascinating era of Russian history, and his stories and plays reveal much about this period. More than 8,000 characters appeared in the works of Chekhov, a Soviet scholar once calculated. Tsar Alexander II declared the emancipation of the Russian serfs, a year after his birth in the small Azov Sea town of Taganrog. They were about two-fifths of the Russian population and most of them were illiterate. Chekhov's paternal grandfather had once been a serf, but was one of a very small percentage of fortunate serfs who had bought their freedom. The emancipation of serfs was part of a larger program of economic reforms and modernization undertaken by Tsar Alexander II after Russian defeat in the Crimean War (1853-1856).

Alexander and the tsars that followed him were not ready to give up their autocratic powers although being convinced that the Russian Empire had to modernize itself if it wished to remain a major power. Emancipation and other reforms awakened expectations but then disappointed people who expected something more in continuation. In 1881, when Alexander II was assassinated, Chekhov was studying medicine at Moscow University. The reactionary rule of his son Alexander III and his grandson Nicholas II lasted for the rest of Chekhov's life. The defeat of Russia in Russo-Japanese War in 1905 led to widespread disturbances which forced in 1905 Alexander II Nicholas II to make reluctant concessions, which eased some of the earlier reactionary measures.

Because of the tsars' wish for military strength and industrialization in Europe, Chekhov saw during his life the period of increased economic modernization. Modernization indicators like population growth, urbanization, literacy, industrial output, and the size of the middle class all increased at a more rapid pace in comparison to the earlier half of the century. If one compares

with Western Europe or the United States, in 1904 Russia was still an economically and socially backward country. Four-fifths part of its population was still of peasants and most of them were still poor and illiterate. Chekhov's short story "The Peasants" presents a wonderful portrait of their life at the end of the nineteenth century. Although factory and handicraft production in Russia increased at least tenfold from 1860 to 1913, still factory workers made up less than two percent of the empire's population by the time of Chekhov's death in 1904, a percentage equal to that of the Russian nobility. In Russia at the end of the 1890s, more than one-fourth of the infants of European Russian population used to die before their first birthday. Even after a decade the European Russian death rate for infants was about twice as high as those born in England and France.

The wish of the tsars to maintain their autocratic powers and political stability side by side with the modernization of military and other establishments led to all sorts of contrasts and tensions. Such kind of incongruities of the social -order, provided ample material for a writer like Chekhov despite some censorship. Despite being were emancipated, most of the serfs remained attached to peasant communes. Though they allowed their peasants to live and work in cities, the communes continued to exercise some control over them. A patriarchal and bureaucratic Russian society, still backward in many ways, produced writers and composers of world-class caliber like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Tchaikovsky, Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov etc. who were part of an older generation still working during the life time of Chekhov. At the time of his birth The Russian Empire was a vast territory despite selling of Alaska to the United States in 1867 and it continued

to expand further up until his death. By then it was more than twice in size to the United States. At the end of the 1890s, ethnic Russians were less than half of the population of the empire that contained people of more than a hundred nationalities. Some port cities like St. Petersburg and Chekhov's hometown, Taganrog, also had a population of significant numbers of foreigners.

Chekhov believed that many of the problems of Russia linked to ignorance. He was sure that education is the only mean of improvement for the lot of common people. He stressed for improvement in education system and worked for it throughout his life. Because of his this belief in education, Chekhov strongly supported the role of rural teachers in Russia because he believed that education was so vital to future Russian development and progress. He once observed to Gorki that the Russian village needs a good, wise, educated teacher. He was convinced that the Russian state would eventually collapse unless it dedicates itself to the immediate development of wide range public schools staffed by well-educated, highly motivated teachers who would be able to win the respect of the Russian peasants. He lamented for the horrible condition of the teachers who were poor in spirit and training and poorly paid and were often harassed by school inspectors interested in regulations rather than education. Such a system produced teachers who led cold, isolated and ignorant lives who danced on the tune of leadership and fostered only the desire to escape the drabness of country life. Chekhov was so much concerned about the teachers that he once told Gorki that he would like to build a sanatorium for aging village school teachers. He conceived of a beautiful building with a library where lectures were delivered daily a teacher must know everything. Ernest Simmons, Chekhov's biographer, believed that in Chekhov

there was an instinct of an inspired teacher. He had an almost naïve and complete faith in the power of education to mold and guide the moral nature of men and women. For his zeal and dedicated contribution for national education, the government awarded him the Order of Saint Stanislaw. Chekhov's belief in education led him to stand squarely behind the tradition of the Zemstvo liberals and in the time-honored tradition of humanism. He saw education as the most important and most efficient way for salvation of Russia and worked for that salvation. Oscar Wilde rightly says in his *The Delay of Lying Intentions*: “The only beautiful things... that do not concern us. As long as a thing useful or necessary to us, or affects us in anyway, either for pain or pleasure...it is outside the sphere of art.” (16-17)

Chekhov as a writer as well as a citizen was a person having progressive mind set who believed that if humanity wish to make progress in education or in anything else, it needs goals, otherwise, life is meaningless. These goals must be at times lofty and remote. He rejected the idea that such kinds of goals cause problems because without the lofty goals, the man is just like the beasts doing nothing more than eating, drinking and sleeping. Humanity and higher goals justify the existence of the man. Chekhov believed in justice, freedom, the search for truth and also progress as his humble peasant background and family condition demanded it. Chekhov believed in remote and lofty goals but rejected just sitting around talking about abstract idealistic words or ideologies because he considered it the mere wastage of time and energy. He had a firm belief that without the direct action by individuals nothing is going to change. Chekhov's experience with the Zemstvo confirmed his belief in personal action which led him to support the Zemstvo schools and hospitals. Chekhov's personal

experience with Zemstvo and its staff gave him confidence and satisfaction that they were intelligent, efficient, and knowledgeable. He also saw the effect of Zemstvo work on people. Once he said that he did not have to convince the peasants that the doctors did not bring disease because they had seen Zemstvo doctors before. It was an indication that the health care system was beginning to deliver services well in the countryside. If the Zemstvo doctors would not have done the excellent work, Chekhov the physician, might have been physically attacked by the ignorant peasants as others had been in the past. In fact, when asked by a friend about building a hospital, Chekhov recommended that it should be constructed and run in supervision of Zemstvo. The Zemstvo would provide the blueprints, a doctor, and one will end up spending considerably less if the Zemstvo take a hand in the project. Chekhov stood squarely behind the Zemstvo and supported both Zemstvo schools and hospitals. He thought of writing a book on Zemstvo schools, similar in intent and scope to his work on Sakhalin, but due to paucity of time and ill health he could not materialize it. Chekhov depicts in his several stories that a man can save his grace by doing active good.

Chekhov's whole life was a full of humanistic acts and tried to solve the problems through his individual initiative involving his twin beloved science and literature. He tried his best to ease famine, fought epidemics, built schools, developed library collections, gave free medical care to thousands of peasants, aided many young writers and contributed his time and money to many humanistic causes. Even the trip to Sakhalin Chekhov undertook to feel the pangs of suffering of Russian people may be viewed as a humanistic act.

Chekhov was so much concerned about the sufferings of the Russian people that he said in a society where “happiness” is founded on sufferings and operations of million, one has no right to think of personal happiness (Yermilov 311). Chekhov’s humanism to some extent was in the line of Zemstvo liberalism. But scholars differ widely on the issue of his liberalism. As Soviet Scholar like Yermilov refuses even to admit Chekhov as a liberal. In *Culture with all its Great Values*, N. Berdjajev observed that his middle of the road attitude is not a Russian trait. Chekhov repeatedly rejected to be set in Russian mould instead rejected his middle of the road culture. Liberal position is necessary for the life of the ordinary man in day to day activities. If any political label could be put on Chekhov he seems consistent with middle of the road position. Chekhov as a liberal seems close to the liberalism postulated by J. S. Mill. The political party which followed the principals of Chekhov after Chekhov's death, was Constitutional Democratic Party.

In gauging Chekhov's politics one can say Chekhov was a rather traditional liberal in that he accepted points which traditionally are used to characterize a liberal. He believed in the individual and individual freedom. Chekhov believed in the critical and saving role of popular education. He even stressed the government's right and duty to protect people but resisted government intervention deep into society to the point that it hampered the individual's freedom. The progress in society would come from individual initiative and the solution to societies’ problems would come from individual action and individually run charities. The organizations Chekhov supported most were those that delivered primary services to the people. These were generally Zemstvo hospitals and schools as well as public libraries. He would

also aid individuals who were trying to get ahead, especially in the field of his greatest influence, writing. Chekhov was also humanistic in his belief in people for their own sake. He tied his belief in humanity and individual initiative to science and stressed the resulting progress.

His political beliefs reflect his liberal view and are consistent with his humanism. Anton Chekhov at various times expressed the desire for Freedom, Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Thought and Freedom of Assembly. He advocated justice and trial by jury and supported the concept of constitutional representative government. But Chekhov would not accept the kind of terrorism personified by Narodnaia Volia for achieving these ends. The end could not justify this type of means. Though Anton Chekhov was more close to the tradition of Maklakov, the Zemstvo liberal, than he was to Miliukov, yet he combines elements of both in his stories. In the final analysis, Chekhov, who hated labels, could not be clearly labeled, he was a liberal but a unique sort, close to, but not completely, a Zemstvo liberal. Chekhov did not depict his political ideals and ideas in his stories. The facts and situations were presented objectively in his fiction. He wrote subjectively about topics which he, as a liberal thinker, humanist, physician and writer, felt should be brought objectively to public review.

These issues were portrayed objectively, but the exactness of the description permitted the reader to observe the intrinsic problems that affected Russia. Chekhov hoped that the readers would attempt on their own initiative for resolution of the problems, put bare in his stories depicting his ideals and values.

Now comes the turn of Munshi Premchand. “There is a very intimate relationship between a writer’s private life and his writing. These experiences of his personal life constitute the very seed of his creation and serve as sustenance and support for his growth as a writer.” (Ray 94)

Premchand’s character was noble and immaculate except one episode of moral lapse which he confided with his wife during his last illness that he had relation with another woman before his marriage and also for some time after. There could be two justification of it, first his first marriage was a tragedy in itself and second he was also a human being. He was a man having a high sense of duty, impeachable integrity and honesty. His unassuming modesty, stark simplicity and unpretentious forced Hindi novelist, writer and one of his close friend and admirer Jainendera has to say: “One needs to be a little artificial in the world too; this is not the place where one can afford to be entirely open and warmhearted” (qtd. in Sharma 24). He had to pay the price for this uncommon simplicity and honesty that he could not get the recognition and respect which he deserved as a writer.

Premchand was born in *Kayastha* family. *Kayasthas* (scribes or writers) used to do white collar jobs like clerks, petition writers, secretaries, etc. and more successful ones became lawyers, teachers, professors and administrators. They have developed some peculiar habits and traits like astuteness and cleverness, a passion for success and an eye for the main chance. But Premchand being reared up in a small village and in the agrarian background these traits were completely absent in him. He always placed higher value on service and adherence to the principles. He expressed his cordial contempt for the worldly success in a letter to Banarsidas Chaturvedi: “I have no great

ambition regarding my sons. I simply wish that they be honest, truthful and steadfast. I hate children who are pleasure loving, rich and sychophantic.” (qtd. in Sharma 25)

Premchand was a simple man and used to wear simple attire like common Indian folk. Beside the simplicity of heart and choice of cloths, the ordinariness of the dress and deportment was a gesture of protest against exploitation and arrogance of extremely hierarchal Indian society. It was also an expression of solidarity with common people like the simple grab of Mahatma Gandhi but it came to Premchand naturally. Jainendera has rightly appreciated the simplicity:

The most outstanding feature of Premchand’s personality was that he was ordinary in every way. Thus he was the representative of the people and of the common man. Everyone wants to be uncommon; no one wants to be like the common people by being one of them. But this, as it were, was Premchand’s sole endeavour, for which a man like me can never be too grateful to him. (qtd. in Shrama 25)

Premchand was a man of strong convictions and firm adherence to the principles. But he never tried to impose his personality and thoughts on the others. He was completely and intensely human who always loved the society as well as the individual. He had a rich sense of humor which led him to be nick named Bambuk (a man who laugh loudly and a great deal). He was emotional and generous to the extent to be swindled by the designing knaves.

Premchand was born and brought up in the composite culture of Uttar Pradesh, the land of sacred rivers of Hindus- the Ganges, the Jamuna and Saraswati. The avatars of Hindu God Vishnu- Ram and Krishana- whose glories

are celebrated in the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, were born in Uttar Pradesh. This fertile land of Uttar Pradesh has produced most of the greatest poets of Hindi and Sanskrit like Bhavbhuti, Bhartrihari, Tulsidas, Ban Bhatt, Surdas, Keshavdas, Kabir and in more recent times, Maithili Sharan Gupta, Mahadevi Verma, Jai Shankar Prasad, Nirala etc. and religious teachers and law givers like Manu, Yagavalkya and Kapil. Premchand himself was born near the holy city of Banaras where it is lucky even to die confirm the ticket for heaven.

But Uttar Pradesh has also been the center of Muslim culture and the capital city of Great Mughals' Agra, the impressive works of architecture-Tai Mahal, the Agra Forte, Fatehpur Sikri are also located in Uttar Pradesh. Lucknow was the capital of another famous ruling dynasty whose rulers were the great patrons of art, poetry, painting, music, along with other arts of civilized and luxurious living flourished at the court of pleasure loving rulers like Nabab Wajid Ali Shah.

Premchand received his early education in Persian and Urdu and he started writing his early creations in Urdu. He was in habit to prepare his literature first in Urdu and used to prepare Hindi version later. He was well read in classics of Persian literature and kept his deep love alive throughout his life. Though he later acquired mastery of Hindi language, his direct study and acquaintance with the tradition of Sanskrit and Hindi classic literature was minimal. He confessed before Banarsi Das Chaturvadi who was pressing him to visit Calcutta to preside over the function of honoring the contribution of great Hindi poet Tulsidas that he had not read the entire *Ramcharitmanas*. Premchand himself admitted: "This confession is shameful but true". (*Chitti- Patri*, 11, 90)

Though the elementary education of Premchand took place at many places in the hands of Maulvis and Pandits but the English medium schools and colleges provided the base of his knowledge and understanding of subjects like history, geography, mathematics and English language and literature in particular. Like many other thoughtful Indians Premchand was a keen student of history and was engaged in intense self examination to find out why his great country had become a victim of foreign rule and domination. Instead of taking shelter in sentimental glorification of the past he tried to look at the past in a critical way. He took past not as an ideal but as a starting point to discover the roots and history not something to be idealized but to be learnt from. He not only learnt from history but also from day to day life and from poor and common people also.

Premchand's attitude and stance was critical towards every issue he took up and same was the case with the west. Though he was deeply influenced by western scientific and rational spirit but disapproved its self-regarding individualism and its political and economic philosophy based on personal and national aggrandizement. He was in the favour of what was good and rational for betterment and relieving the suffering of poor and common people. He advocated for removal, for what was useless and defunct and putting obstacles in the progress and development of individuals, society and the nation. The elements of hypocrisy and superstition were dominating the Hindu religion because it sanctions ages old social structure based on exploitation and injustice and a complete disregard of the individual's rights as a human being. He was a kind and sensitive man with highly sensitive social conscience and for him value of an institution- religious, political, or social- depended on its

contribution to improve the lot of common man. He said, “ The greatness and distinction of any religion consists in these: to what extent does it make a man more sympathetic to another man; how exalted is the ideal of humanity which it projects; and to what extent is this ideal actually translated into action” (qtd. in Sharma 32). His anger against Hinduism was due to the vicious and corrupt social system it supported.

The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875, and the movement stressed the social and moral reforms attracted the attention of Premchand. Critics are sharply divided on the actual level of influence on the Premchand and his writings. It is, however, undeniable that he kept some form of association with the Samaj by paying his subscription regularly. He was impressed with its social work, particularly its efforts to alleviate the lot of the Hindu woman. He was never enthusiastic about the strictly religious aspects of the movement with its emphasis on *Vedas* as the words of the God like the Protestant theory of plenary, inspiration of the *Bible* and its strict formalism and ritualism.

Besides Arya Samaj there may have been other source of inspiration and enthusiasm about Hinduism, and particularly, his awareness about Vivekananda's ideas on religion and his success at the Parliament of Religions in September 1893 had created a stir throughout the country. Premchand's commitment to Hindu ideals according to some critics was more because of the influence of the ideas of Vivekananda than the Arya Samaj. As Arya Samaj had condemned idol worship while Ramkrishna and Vivekananda had defended it. Premchand's own attitude to idol worship is not hostile in his writings. According to Vivekananda the essence of religion is the service of the poor and

downtrodden which appealed Premchand the most and is also the undercover message of his most of the novels and short stories. Vivekananda's teaching was also free from intolerance of other faiths and religion that can be traced in Arya Smaj. He and his master accepted all religion as true like the different paths of reaching the same destination.

There were various elements in his thought and philosophy which could knit him with Mahatma Gandhi into a harmonious combination. Premchand was well impressed with Gandhiji's austere simplicity, closeness to common man and zeal to work for upliftment of downtrodden and outcaste people. Like Gandhiji, he supported Indian religious and moral traditions instead of following blindly the principles of Western political theories. Like Gandhiji Premchand realized that India was essentially a rural society, and a philosophy based on social and economic basic facts could be helpful in the reconstruction and resurrection of the Indian society.

The concept of 'Swadeshi' became popular during 'Freedom Struggle' of India and was discovered by Gandhiji. Etymologically the term 'swadeshi' means 'of one's own country'. However 'the country' component is not its connotation but its sub-characteristics. In fact, 'swadeshi' encompasses all the indigenous things – both abstract and concrete i.e. language, wisdom, culture, dress and all other products. Gandhiji himself defined 'swadeshi': "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of remote" (Gandhi 117). The core of the concept is 'self reliance' and 'self governance'. Metaphysically, 'swadeshi' is love for soul: in social context, it is love for own cultural and self control; biologically it means to live in and with one's own nature and environment. From moral point of view it is

duty to one's neighbour; politically for self government and from economic point of view, it is strong belief in self reliance, balance growth for larger and deeper life not for the profit and market.

Historically 'Swadeshi' was a movement specially led by Tilak and Gandhi which spread very quickly throughout the country during the freedom struggle. In this way, it was a non-violent technique of conflict resolution. It was an effective means to remove all kind of exploitation and foreign domination. The movement grew rapidly after the bifurcation of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905. The people discarded foreign goods as a protest against British exploitation of India and 'Swadeshi' became their culture during those days. Sh.Surendra Nath Banerjee writes:

Swadeshism during the days of its potency coloured the entire texture of our domestic life. Marriage gifts that included foreign goods, the like of which could be manufactured at home, were returned. Priests would often decline to officiate at ceremonies where foreign articles were offered as obligations to the gods. Guests would refuse to participate in festivities where foreign salt or foreign sugars were used. (Singh 147)

All classes of people started weaving in their domestic industry. Even the rich people wore Khadi and boycotted British clothes. It was result of this Swadeshi movement that their own economy developed so rapidly that all countries of Europe lagged behind. Thus Swadeshi became a very effective instrument of ending foreign exploitation and paved a way for the freedom.

Swadeshi was basically an economic concept starting from boycott of foreign goods in beginning but in the age of Gandhiji it became positive for the

emphasis shifted from refusal of foreign goods to production of indigenous goods. Khadi and village-industries became the main focus of the movement. Gandhian concept of swadeshi was not the blind refusal of foreign items or assistance in growth of economy but people were advised not to use only those foreign items which were manufactured or could be manufactured in the native country. If one uses them, it can cause unemployment to his people and loss of their livelihood, and loss of control over means of production. Gandhiji believed that there is no harm in importing those items which could not produce and were essential for growth and development of economy as well as of human capital of nation. Swadeshi meant to him self-reliance at various levels.

In fact, swadeshi is a precondition of independence. If indigenous industries are not protected from competition, the native skills will be ruined. Villages, the larger part of country and basic units of the native economy needed to be strengthened where production is made for consumption not for exchange, commerce, market and profiteering. The Basic principle of swadeshi is to produce for fulfillment of basic needs. If economy is restricted to small units, it can influence the people morally and make them self-dependent. That is why Gandhiji was not only against the foreign multinationals but also against the native multinational industries which swallow the small scale industries and make a large section of people unemployed. It is also not true that Gandhiji was totally against industries and technology. In fact, he wanted a balanced growth of villages and cities, small scale and big industries. He wanted to make society exploitation free through his concept of swadeshi. His concept of swadeshi is not against internationalisation and universal brotherhood rather it is a means to achieve it step by step instead of jumping from the very first step. The old

scriptures support it: “Sacrifice yourself for your family, family for villages, villages for locality and earth for preservation of the soul” (Singh, 149). A self-dependent unit can really support the whole but a weak unit can neither sustain itself nor help others. Thus, Gandhian concept of swadeshi from economic point of view is a belief in self-reliant economy.

Munshi Premchand, the great voice in Hindi and Urdu literature was greatly influenced by Gandhian concept ‘swadeshi’ which clearly and amply gets reflected in his works, particularly in his short stories i.e. “Saree of Wedlock” (Suhag ki Saree), “Wife to Husband” (Patni se Pati) , “Salt Inspector” (Namak ka Daroga), “Gift of Holi” (Holi ka Uphar), “Sayayagharya”, “Maiku” etc.

The exact nature of the influence of the Communist thoughts cannot be measured because Premchand was not an abstract thinker who could be expected an expert in philosophical thinking of Carl Marx's Communism. As an ideal it had sound appeal for Premchand who believed in equal rights of all and brotherhood of mankind. His wife Shivrani Devi mentions that Premchand spoke eloquently about happenings in Russia where the rich had been deprived of their wealth and privileges and the poor were happy. She certifies that he was a firm believer in equal opportunities for all without discrimination.

The use of traditional concepts in the works of Premchand emphasizes his essential Indianness. Though he claimed to be a free thinker and atheist, the healthy influence of the religion as a moral force, can be traced in his imaginative writings in the form of Hindu religious idioms to convey his thoughts and feelings. It appears from his writings that he believed in the doctrine of *karma*. One can argue that the use of this concept was the result of

his strong belief in man's responsibility for his actions as a rational creature and his conviction of a moral order in the universe. He had a firm belief that evil cannot prosper for long and truth and goodness triumph in the end. In his short stories and novels most of the evildoers come to a sad end, while the good people may not succeed in the world but enjoy peace and tranquility of the mind. There are some other concepts of Hindu thought which begged the admiration of Premchand. He felt enchanted with Lord Krishna's doctrine of desireless action on his reading of *Bhagwatgita*. He wrote:

This glory belongs to Lord Krishna alone that he made synthesis of involvement and non- involvement. He gave birth to the ideal of the involved non involvement and noninvolved involvement. Act, but do not get entangled in it. Action is not bondage; it is desire of fruit from action which constitutes bondage; it is source of peace and joy. (Sharma, 35)

Being an acute and sharp observer of life, Premchand was highly appreciative of the role of religion in the life of the common people. He was the master of an independent and critical mind but his temper was traditional and conservative. He advocated for new ideas and questioning spirit of Western rationalism and free thought, but till the end he remained truly Indian in his outlook. He approved Western man's initiative and enterprise, his commitment to work and determination to shape his own destiny and even his attitude of enjoying life. He was critical of Western man's obsessive and aggressive individualism which instilled in him selfishness and acquisitive traits. He felt proud of his material possessions, his empires and dominations and it was an indication that there was something radically wrong the philosophy of life which showed scant regard for the lives, liberty and happiness of other people.

The Indian culture, on the contrary, puts stress on selflessness and on the spirit of service and sacrifice. But it does not mean that Premchand believed that every Indian is honest, selfless and committed to serve the humanity. Indian society was sunk in darkness, poverty, ignorance and superstition and many of Indians were no less selfish and greedy than their Western counterparts but still the Indian heart was in the right place.

Premchand like most of educated Indian who studied in English medium schools felt the impact of Western liberal thought without caring the different political and social theories based on individual right to life, liberty and happiness. Premchand mentions the name of Macaulay, John Bright, Charles Bradlaugh, Sir Stafford Northcote and among the British Governor Generals Lord William Bentick and Lord Ripon with some respect in his essay on Gokhale. Premchand had no doubt in his mind when he wrote this essay that it was useless and mere wastage of the time to expect from British people that they will provide independence to India if they will make them aware of the condition of Indian people and society. Premchand says in the essay, “Indians now know after a long experience that it is futile to narrate to the people of England the stories of our miseries; if ever our deliverance does come, it will be by our own courage and manliness” (Sharma, 31). However, despite his strong belief Premchand pays a handsome tribute to the contribution of Gokhale and other modernists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Dada Bhai Naoroji and Phiroze Shah Metha etc. Premchand’s disillusionment with the Western liberalism grew stronger and stronger with the passage of the time when he was convinced of hypocrisy and insincerity of the Western Liberal tradition.

Munshi Premchand both as a writer as well as an Indian took each and every problem of Indian society seriously, whether these were the problems of women, untouchables, downtrodden, caste system or communalism. Premchand was the only Indian writer and thinker who had a deep knowledge, understanding and practical experience of Indian society, its customs and rituals. What he said while considering these social evils and problems have been and still proving to be correct. He took a critical stance against society and the government and suggested the measures of the resolution of these problems. Relevance of the Premchand's literature has increased more today's vicious atmosphere when the problems are demanding quick and proper treatment. Premchand was a unique writer as well as a human being. One does not find any difference between sayings and doings, this rare quality was the part and partial of his life and his literary works. He took the stand for what he described and expressed without caring for the price he had to pay for it.

Premchand wrote without any interruption between 1900 to 1936, the time when India was under the British rule. Women in Indian society were facing two level of slavery. Women were the most severely affected victims of colonialism and feudalism. It is evident from history that the women of the nation or the community under the foreign rule had to bear the most of the burden. To impose the superiority on the opponent, abduction of the ladies was the most popular and easy tool. In the history of human civilization it will be too hard to find a cast or community which had been liberal to another race under their rule. Great Hindi poet Tulsi Das who known for his severe comments on women has written very acute and sensitive lines:

Kat Vidhi Srijni nari Jag Mahin

Paradhin Sapnehu Sukh nhain. (Sharma, 35)

These lines depict the condition and the pain of the women throughout the world and Premchand was very well aware of the pain of the women. He knew it that it was not possible to liberate the Indian society, leaving the half of the population un-liberated. He suggested that as the Indians are concerned about their freedom and happiness, they will also have to think about the women in the similar manner and will have to enable them to take care of themselves. He used to put maximum stress on the girl education. Once talking about the dowry he says:

The only one solution of the problem in my view is that the girls should be provided the best education and let free to make their own path in the world, as we do with the boys. We should give up the wish to see them the girls married and should show the faith in them as we do in the case of boys ignoring the fear of their straying away from the path. (Sharma, 38)

Here two things become clear, one is Premchand's wish for complete eradication of dowry and second men's desire to continue the ages old male-dominance in Indian society. Man uses the physical weakness of woman as a tool to keep woman within the four walls of the house hold. Men fear that if women come out of the household they may win the kingdom, so it is the best way to stop their exit on the very threshold of the house. A girl was used to be tied like an animal and had no right to utter a single word of her wish. Premchand knew it very well that the difference between man and woman is more cultural than natural while the man enjoys both and the woman lives the life of a prisoner.

Premchand advocates the efforts of bringing women out of this prison and let them roam freely because it is the need and demand of the time. Education and freedom to take the decisions can improve the condition of women in India. Premchand in his article “Ideal of Girl Education” writes:

This is the problem that men have tortured woman too much that they do not want to become mothers and house wives but adamant for their economic freedom. When men do not know how to cook food and bear children then why should women learn these things after getting the education men earn livelihood and treat with women as slaves, women also wants to learn the same art. Why should not they become lawyers and teachers instead of cooking at home? Our ladies should decide what shot of education their girl should get and should not accept the decision of the selfish men. (Sharma 37)

It reflects the broad and sensitive attitude of the Premchand towards the life. He clearly believed that girls should get all the right of life of human beings. He was against the mismatch marriage of girls without knowing their wishes or for dowry. Such kind of marriages either meets the fate of *Nirmala* or reaches in the condition of the *Rupa*. In his short story “Widow having Sons” the brothers marry their young sister to an aged man in order to save the dowry money. Dowry system is the result of the capitalism though it was also prevalent during period of feudalism but capitalism flared and aggrieved it. In his article ‘Kayasth Conference’ he writes:

Now the only solution to this problem is that girls should decide their fate themselves and should not marry till they do not get such grooms, who surrender before them out of love. The caste can rise only when the self respect is aroused among the girls. (Sharma 41)

In India Premchand was the first progressive and aware writer who freely and frankly raised the women issues in highly conservative society without caring for the consequences. In February, 1931 in his article “Rights of the Woman”, he takes women-issues fervently and suggests some radical solutions:

1. The rule of single marriage should be applicable to both on men and women. No one should be allowed to marry again in his life time till his first wife is alive.

2. Wife should have right on the property of the man.

3. Girls should have right in the property of the father.

4. Divorce law should be made with equality for both men and women.

5. A woman should get half of the property of husband at the time of the divorce and also get the share if some moveable property is there. (Scholar’s own translation from Srivastava 16)

One can imagine how much revolutionary and important these ideas could have been in 1931, and what reaction and response men dominated society might have given after reading and listening Premchand. One does not find such a clarity of thought and ideas in no other writer of the time except Premchand.

The Influence of feminist movements can easily be traced in the fictional and non- fictional writings of Premchand. He was of firm view that the woman is the central pillar of Indian society on which the whole structure of Indian society is standing. If this very central pillar itself become weak what will happen with Indian social structure a layman can also imagine it. Freedom of physical relations is also one of important questions raised by Premchand in his novels as well as short stories. No Indian woman wants to indulge in the profession of prostitution but the economic constrains and the lust of the man

forces her to do so. The heroine of *Sevasadan* leaves it after reaching at a certain situation because without love and desire how long one can exploit the body. Premchand makes it clear through the words Jhunika of the *Godan*, who says in the very beginning of her love affair:

If the man will go after second woman then the woman will also run after men. Deceit in love hurts the woman as it hurts the man. Learn it. I have made it clear to my man if he tried to go after some other woman then she will do whatever she would like to do. (qtd. in Srivastava 17)

Premchand felt that there is a lot of difference between the rights of men and the women. A man cannot run his life without the help the woman even than he never forgets to show his power over her. But he was against the free sexual relations because such kind of relation can never give rise to a healthy family. In any progressive society love of a man or woman should be respected but limitless freedom in the name of love, neither of man nor of woman can be justified. In his articles on the one side he supports love and love marriages on the other side he justify the traditional methods of the marriage. He considers the desire to live a free life by women is the blind following of the western civilization. If a woman acquires the characteristics of man she may loss the natural powers of love and care. Whether it is Malti of the of the story “Malti”, Padma in “Miss Padma” new bride of “Manovirti”. In his stories Premchand shows the woman characters suffering and heart- broken who decide to live their life in epicurean style.

Critics criticized him for the inner conflict in him saying that on one side he advocates for love and women education on the other side he does not like the women like Malti who takes bold decisions and wants to live life on their

own conditions. It becomes clear from this inner conflict that Premchand wants the solution of the woman problems within established structure of Indian society. Critics termed it the limitation of a writer as well his characters.

But the condition of Indian society today itself speaking loudly that Premchand was right when pressed for the maintenance of basic womanly qualities by women. One finds newspapers full with news of heinous crimes in which the women of so called open and modern society are found involved. Deviation in the behavior has led to the disintegration of families, increase in the number of suicide cases, increase in cases of psychological diseases and rise in case of general crimes. But it does not mean that Premchand wished to keep women subservient to men, he demands nowhere less than the equality in his fiction and never justifies the misdeed of men. Rather his women characters are more balanced emotionally and tough psychologically. They guide their male counterparts whenever they feel helpless and dejected. So Premchand was very well aware of the woman's role as the binding force of family as well as of society. He tried to make the people understand that if the woman gives up her duty, no one can save the family and society from disintegration. In "Daughter – in-law from a Noble Family" Anandi saves the family from the breakup by her acumen and timely intervention. Men instead of being indebted to women, treat them as second grade citizens.

Women in each and every household face the discrimination but there some categories of women whose life is too much miserable to be described, particularly of the widows. During Premchand's time people used to show sympathy with widows but they did not treat them sympathetically. The sensitive heart of Premchand was very hurt on miserable condition of the

woman. In 1933 he wrote a comment on a child widow, in which she says: “I am a child widow. I am tired of life. I do not want to live in this world. Why are you hurting me, let me die” (*Mansarovar-III*, 14). In another comment “Act on the Livelihood of Widows” he says: “If main reason for fall of Hindu society is caste discrimination then the miserable condition of the women is also an important factor in it” (Sharama, 41). In his short story, “The Widow having Sons” Premchand's description of the condition of Fulmati after death of her husband is heart rendering. Her son says: “This is the law that after death of father the property goes to sons. Mother can only get only food and clothes” (*Mansarovar-IV*, 33). In the story “Dhikkar” protagonist Mani who is a child widow who out of love and desire to see her cousin sister in the attire of the bride reaches in her room. Her aunt becomes furious as soon as she sees her and cries: “Who invited you here? Get out” (*Mansarovar- 7*,103). It puts a deep impact on her mind. In the story “Partigha” the protagonist widow Purna anyhow saves herself from the clutches of Kamlaparsad the son of her patron Badariparsad. For a young widow the beauty and body are nothing less than a bane. The society neither allows the widow to remarry nor let her live with peace. In the story “Nagpuja” Tilotama’s father Jagdishchander favours her remarriage her despite the hard opposition from society. Premchand writes: “It was not the remarriage of Tilotama but an active example of the social reform” (*Mansarovar-V*, 214). Premchand understand his society very well that is why the way in which he could expose the misdeeds of the society is rare in the literature. He chooses the widow of the Hindu society because he was very well aware of their condition in the society and wished to reform it through his hard hitting words.

The miserable condition of women in Indian society was the one of the main reasons for the acts of prostitution in Indian society. In male dominated society the woman was considered as a thing of luxury and enjoyment. Prostitutes are result of such kind of thinking of men. Prostitutes either came in the form of city- bride or the temple dancers and later in the form of the women to whom society leaves no other option to earn their livelihood. Premchand ponders seriously over this utterly miserable condition of the women. In one of his article he considers that the reason for this problem is more economic than social. He writes that the main reason of this kind of problems is economic. Unemployment is increasing day by day. Labourers are not getting work, farmers are getting ruined, educated people are not able to get their two ends meal and businessmen are suffering losses. In such kind of conditions what will happen if this kind of incidents do not take place.

In the story "Prostitute" Premchand holds men responsible for this problem and thinks that men might have started this profession. It is a sufficient reason for fall of any society if the women become prostitutes for satisfying the lust of the men. The Protagonist Madhuri in this story says: "A woman can never surrender herself for the money. If she is doing so it means that she has no other way out" (*Mansarovar-III*, 87). In another story "Curse of Life" the protagonist Gulsan expresses her opinion about the men in the society: "All earn the money with the help of the illegal means and live unnatural life." (*Mansarovar- II*, 21). She further says, "Man is too shameless that he satisfies his lust even in his worst condition of the woman and too unkind that he declares her bad character to see her die suffering helplessly." (*Mansarovar-II*, 21)

It becomes clear that Premchand in his stories desired for such a society in which women are treated equal to men and have equal rights in each and every field. The ideal of the empowered woman in Premchand's view is that woman should equally contribute in the progress of the nation without being treated inferior, weak, soft or dependent. Rather both should work as the complementary force to increase the efficiency and commitment towards their work and duties. It may be that Premchand might have some limitations during his time but none other among his contemporaries had ideas and courage to show progressive attitude in women related matters. He was the first writer in Hindi literature who opposed the tyrannical treatment to women and kept his struggle on for the status of human being for her.

The evil of untouchability and caste system has been damaging the vitals of Indian social system for centuries. No writer till the twentieth century could dare to raise the issue of the untouchables, the inhuman treatment to a large chunk of population of Hindu society. In the Beginning of the twentieth century Premchand showed courage and dared to touch the issues of the untouchables. He not only touched the issue but treated it with too much intensity and sensitivity that people realized the heinous crime being done against the humanity. As a sensitive human being and a patriotic citizen, Premchand knew the pain and suffering of the foreign rule; he realized that it is not the cast and religion but the man is important for the man and communalism in any form is dangerous for the society and the nation. Premchand was very much hurt with the system of Hindu society where a person is not judged by his merits or demerits but by his caste. This discrimination on the basis of the caste was the main reason that India remained under foreign rule and suppression because the

talent could not be used properly. A person born in a particular caste used to do his family business irrespective of talent and aptitude of the person. There was no doubt in Premchand's mind that this sacrilegious system is dangerous not only for Hindu society but also for the Indian society. He wrote in his article "Our Duty" on September, 1932: "Our duty will be complete only when we will remove this untouchability completely" (Shristava, 33). He does not want here a little change but wants the system to be revoked completely. It shows how much revolutionary and prophetic thinking and ideas Premchand had, living in the conservative Hindu society of first half of the 20th century. He further writes in this article:

Whether can any Varnasharma say from the core of its heart that untouchability is justifiable from religious point of view? No, no one can say so. Vested interest is the only cause of it. It must be kept in mind that this vested interest may satisfy you for one or two years but in the future time it will throw away even the old and strong base. In reality, the toy of vested interest with which they are playing like children is dynamite which will destroy their seven generations. It should be thrown away, otherwise it will not give the time to repent. (Shristava 33)

During the time Premchand was writing on this burning question in his fictional and non-fictional works Gandhiji was fighting the evil on political and social field on the ground. He said:

If untouchability lies in Hindu religion, then I will have to say that it is full of evil, not of the sacredness. But I believe strongly that Hindu religion has nothing like this. Till every Hindu do not consider his *chamar* and *bhangi*

brethren Hindu like their real brothers, I will not consider them Hindu at all. The man cannot live with both kindness and hate. (Shristava 34)

In these words of Gandhiji one finds that ‘religion’ being important but it is not important than the tolerance. No country or society can progress when there is intolerance in it. Both Gandhiji and Premchand were fully aware of this hard reality.

Entry of untouchables in temples was the burning issue during the third and the fourth decade of the 20th century. This was the issue which British Government wanted to capitalize and divide the Indian society. Being a sensitive and aware writer Premchand analyzed it at large. While pondering over the question of untouchable he put maximum stress on the entry of dalits in the temples. For the entry of dalits in temples was more important from tolerance point of view instead of religious point of view. This was Premchand’s tolerant view that he wrote using hard words: “Is the Hindu caste is made of the *pujaris* and *mahants* ? Whether without the worshipers the helper in performance of worship will be successful in keeping the temples intact.” (Shristava 36) In this article he further writes: “If your God is too weak to get polluted as soon as someone touches him, then it is false to call him God. God is that, a cruel man becomes pure hearted as soon as he comes before him” (Shristava 36). There is no need to say that to express such kind of thoughts in Premchand’s time might have needed a brave heart. He bore the consequences for his serious and thought provoking writings. It becomes clear that he never wrote for cheap popularity. He was restless from the inside. Progressive thinking gets reflected in analytical writings and short stories of Premchand.

Premchand was too hurt from inside about this maltreatment to a large section of the society that he called 18th December a historic day saying: "... This '*Harizen Divas*' will be the festival of the whole Hindu society." (Shristava 38) In this article he further writes: "We will have to remove this feeling from our heart that we are superior than them. We have only captured their rights with the naked force. We can be powerful but never superior. Power is not the parameter of the moral superiority" (Shristava 39). Premchand expressed a great idea and showed mirror to those who considered power, the indicator of the superiority. He was very much impressed from the social and political ideas of the Mahatma Gandhi. During those days Gandhiji said: "Mind cannot accept untouchability because it is against the truth and non-violence, hence it is not the religion. We are superior and others are inferior, this very idea is inferior in itself" (Shrivastava, 41). Premchand believed that the truth of those things one can judge with his mind and which are against the humanity, justice, non-violence and the truth, one does not want to bring them in his behavior. He has a clear view that Hindu community will not do any favour to let the untouchables enter into the temples but will remove its stigma.

Premchand was very well aware of the fact that there is no scarcity of such people in the upper castes who try to put hurdles in the way of the progress of the untouchables by bringing the issues of their illiteracy and their way of living. Such people think if the untouchables will get education and progress than who will do their odd jobs without any payment! Who will be their yes men! By whose exploitation they will satisfy their hunger of the superiority! Premchand knew such people very well. It is said that the untouchables have bad habits such as they do not take bath daily and do prohibited works etc.

Whether the *brahmins* of Kashmir and Almora take bath daily? I knew such *brahmins* in Kansi who use to take bath once in a month during the winter season. Even then they are pure. Whether *brahmins* do not take liquor. In Kansi there are thousands of *brahmins*, that too who use to put vermilion on their forehead use to drink even then they are *brahmins*. *Brahmins* are living with *chamarins*, even then there appear no hurdle in their purity but a untouchable whether he use to take bath daily, how much pure his character may be, he cannot enter into the temple. Whether Hindu religion can stay intact on such kind of policy? (Shrivastava, 44)

B R Ambedkar commenting upon the cruel clutches of casteism on the Indian society writes: “The Problem about the caste is endogamy which prevents endosmosis. Unless we are bonded by blood relationship all other means to eradicate caste remain ineffective” (Ambedkar vii). Premchand's this very question is standing as such in other contexts. He considers the deceptive behaviour of the people in power equally responsible for the woes and sufferings of the untouchables. Filled with such thoughts, Premchand wanted to open the temple of heart for equal status to all. Premchand was imagining an India free of all kinds of bondages in which there will be no discrimination on the basis of gender, caste and religion. He was a prophetic writer and knew it very well that without removal of the hurdles of the caste and religion India cannot progress. That is why he wrote on January 8, 1931:

Only a few days of the dominance of the priests are left. Benefit of the society and nation lies in it that this caste based discrimination, one sided dominance and blood sucking habit should be removed as I have said it earlier also the first condition of the nationality is that this *varanasystem*, the

discrimination of high and low and religious superstitions must be dug out from their base. (Shristava 49)

Premchand was a prophet who realized before Independence that reservation in educational institutions and in jobs could be an effective tool for improving the social and economic condition of the dalits. In his article “The Pious Date” on December 26, 1932 he wrote:

The real problem is the economic problem. If we want to raise our *Harijan* brethren then we will have to create such resources which can help them to rise up. In schools they should be given scholarships and in the jobs they should be given a little concession. (qtd. in Sharma, 141)

Premchand desired for spread of education among the dalits by which they would remove the darkness in their own life as well as in the society and realize the relevance of their life in this light of the knowledge. But Premchand was not in the favour of separate schools and hostels for the dalit students (Shristava 50-51). So, one can say that Premchand struggled and tried to eradicate the social evils prevalent in Indian society from its very roots. The spirit of such nationalism is rare in the contemporary literature. It will be unjust to call his writings as the literature of sympathy.

The problem of Hindu- Muslim disharmony has been one of the major socio-political problems of Indian society. Premchand pondered over the problem when India was under the foreign rule and British Government was trying to add fuel to the fire in order to continue their rule of suppression and exploitation. Premchand understood the design of British people very well and he was also well aware of the fact that freedom would not be achieved without

the collective and combined struggles of Hindus and Muslims. That is why he advocated strongly for the Hindu- Muslim unity and harmony. Though today also this problem is a serious one but the most painful aspect of it is that people are not able to live harmoniously together even after getting a collective hard fought freedom. People are ready to go any extent to establish their dominance over each- other as different Hindu-Muslim riots after independence show the picture of the society. Both the communities have their different cultures, festivals and rituals, and Premchand believed that they will appear like different and colorful flowers in a vase if Hindus and Muslims live together harmoniously. But the leaders from the both sides the people for becoming popular in the eyes of their own community and forget the national interests and even interests of their respective people in the real sense. Premchand wrote without any hesitation human life is more important than any religion:

Unfortunately today religion has become the tool of political vested interest instead of being the collections of sanctities of beliefs. Its situation has become that of the madness, which has only one rule that everything for me and nothing for others, the day on which religion will give up the race to surpass the others after that day nobody will bother about the religious conversions. (Shrivastava 54)

It is clear if the tool of fulfilling the vested interests gets destroyed then it will not get the extra importance. Premchand knew it very well that one can be politically strong by effacing the communal jealousy. The proverb union is strength is applicable to any age without any discrimination.

The problem perplexed Premchand that people disturb their simple day to day life flowing with religious feelings evoked by cunning persons having

vested interests. In such situations the religion may not get benefitted but human beings certainly receive great losses. Explaining the concept once he said:

When we accept that the God is one and there is only difference of ways of worship then why should wait for, if Muslims will respect our religion only then we will respect their religion. If respecting a religion is good, it is good in every situation and there is no need of any condition for it. Everyone praises if someone does a good work. (Shrivastava 54-55)

Such kind of thoughts in the field of religion and God show the progressive attitude of Premchand because progressivism remains always contemporary to the nation and the age.

The issue of Cow and Pig is one of the major issues of the contention among Hindus and Muslims. Premchand wrote with reasons in *Vividh Parsang* that Hindus have taken a unreasonable stance in the matter of the killing of the cow. People have right to consider any animal pious but to hope that the follower of the other religions will also do the same is just like fighting with a peddler going his way. Cow meat is eaten throughout the world, than Hindus will take the whole population worthy of being chopped off. It cannot be a matter of dignity for neither any furious religion nor for Hindu religion which has the basic principal "*Ahinsa Parmo Dharama*" to teach lesion of enmity with the whole world. He further says that cow is not less than a boon in a country like India where agriculture is the main profession, but there is no other importance of it than the economic importance. Premchand writes boldly and clearly that there is no use of intensifying the fight. He has tried to awaken the conscience of Hindus by showing them the philosophical aspect of their

religion. People should keep in mind that Premchand was the only writer who dared to make harsh comments on his own religion.

Premchand understand the sociology of the riots very well. While commenting on the riots, he wrote in 1931 that why eyes of the people are not able to see the loss of the nation due to these genocides. It is very important for strengthening the bond of nationalism that people should forget all the enmity. Premchand wrote in 1932:

.... Outwardly how much we may try to show ourselves as nationalist but inwardly all of us are communal and see everything from communal point of view. Is it not true whenever a communal riot takes place, we become eager to know how many Muslims and how many Hindus killed? If the number of Hindus is more how much enraged we feel. On the contrary if the number of the Muslims is more we take a sigh of relief. This kind of bent of mind is murderous for the feeling of nationalism. (Shristava 57)

Premchand is considered a great champion and describer of farmer life and their problems. The minute details and realistic picture of rural life find in his writings, is rare in literature. The seriousness and depth one can see about the problems of the farmers in his works was due to his concern for the nation. He knew it very well that without uplifting downtrodden, women and farmers the progress of the nation is not possible. There is no need to describe the worst condition of the farmer during the reign of the British Government and feudal system. The whole income of the innocent and illiterate farmer was used to be snatched away and the producer of the food remained hungry. In his article "The Unfortunate Farmers" he wrote:

The profession of eighty percent of Indian population is agriculture. Many percent like carpenters, barbers and ironsmiths are dependent on it for their livelihood. Whatsoever income the nation has is due to the hard work of these labors and farmers. Our schools and educational institutions, our police force and army, our courts and legal institutions, all survive on the income of these workers. But the producers of food and the cloth strive for filling their bellies, shiver in the cold and die like flies. (Shristava 73)

Bhishm Sahni too commenting upon the condition of the Dalits and farmers writes at one place: “It is said that Premchand was propagating in fiction what Gandhiji was doing in politics. This is true only to the extent that he was deeply impressed by Gandhiji’s teachings and his programme of action.” (Kalia 129)

Feudal lords were dominating the social scene before independence in India. Most of the feudal lords were the yesmen of the English officers and used to do atrocities on the poor tenants. British Government was using these lords as tools for strengthening their rule. For their physical comforts and enjoyments they used to impose tax on the farmers. They were not only torturing the innocent farmers but also weakening the national freedom movement. Premchand says at one place, it is irony that feudal lords considers themselves the owner of the land. Before British rule their position was like brokers who were kept to collect the revenue and were fired out if fail to deposit it timely. Their social status improved during the British reign because government needed a group to maintain its grip on the public. Premchand puts the question mark on the relevance of the very existence of the feudal lords. He writes:

You are not only the owner of the land we may consider you God but what do you do for the public. You take fifty percentage of the tax taken from the public but what kind of behavior you do with them. If you give them the seed, you take one and half times in return; if you give them the wood and bamboo, you force them to work four times of its value like bonded labors. Today your existence has become so much irrelevant that you are worried that your existence may come to an end in the future. (Shrivastava 74)

Premchand criticizes the efforts of the British Government to save the properties of the lords as many of these feudal lords lived their life is in all kind of comfort in the cities. Public for them was like a simple, voiceless and milking cow and their only function was to milk the cow. They were not concerned whether the cow gets its food or not. Many of them even did not visit their area once. Agents gave them money and they do not bother about the sorrows and sufferings of the farmers. Government will give rise to the easy living tendency of such feudal lords. Premchand understood it very well that without progress of farmers and labors India cannot progress. He stood in their support with the same ideology. He felt very sad that a few percent lazy and easy living people suck the blood of eighty percent people hard working people. In 1932 in one of his article he wrote:

Who do not know that Indian farmers are under the pressure of the heavy loan. Often their every work is done with the help of the loan. Seeds they take on interest or from the Pathans. They use to purchase their bullocks from the wandering cattle businessmen. They have to take loan on the occasion of the marriage, pilgrimage and other religious occasions. (Rubin 16)

What more Premchand could have said about the condition of the loan ridden farmer as he says in his article “Jaberdasti” (force): “The miserable condition of Indian farmers of today cannot be described in the words. If someone can feel there this miserable condition, it is the God or they themselves” (Shristava 76). This is the situation expressed in almost all of the short stories where the ideals and values typical of Munshi Premchand got perfect expression.

Works Cited

- Ambedkar, B.R. *Annihilation of Caste with Reply to Mahatama Gandhi*.
Mumbai: Higher & Technical Education Dept. Govt. of Maharashtra,
2013. Print.
- Gandhi, Mahatama. "The Gospel of Swadeshi." *India of My Dreams*. Delhi:
Rajpal, 2008. Print.
- Kalia, Mamta. Ed. "Premchand as a Short Story Writer." *Hindi: Language
Discourse Writing*. Vol. 4 July-September 2009. Print.
- Naravane, V. S. (1980). *Premchand - His Life & Works*. Delhi: Vikas
Publishing House. Print.
- Premchand, M. (2002). *Kuchh Vichaar*. New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Books.
Print.
- . *The World of Premchand: Selected Stories of Premchand*. Trans. David
Rubin. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969. Print.
- Rai, A. *Premchand – His Life and Times (Translated by Harish Trivedi)*. New
Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.
- Ray, M.K. ed. *Studies in Comparative Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic
Publishers, 2002. Print.
- Sharma, G.N. *Prem Chand: Novelist and Thinker*. Delhi: Pragati Publications,
1999.
- Singh, Dashrath. "The Concept of Swadeshi: Gandhian Perspective".
Perspectives in Gandhian Thought. Delhi: Commonwealth Pub., 1995.
Print.
- Srivastava, Jitendra. *Bhartiya Samaj ki Samasyaien aur Premchand*.(Hindi)
Delhi: Shabdshristi, 2009. Print.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Delay of Lying intentions*. London: OUP, 1913. Print.

Yermilov, Vladimir. *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: 1860-1904*. Trans. Ivy

Litvinov. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d. Print.

CHAPTER-III

OBSERVING CHEKHOV THROUGH HIS SHORT STORIES

The wisdom has been defined in many different ways. There is no one who possesses complete wisdom. This is also argued that individuals who are considered wise have no guarantee generally to display it equally in all aspects and almost all phases of their lives. In the above discussion one has already seen enough about Chekhov's life to think why Gorky and his other contemporaries thought of him as a man of wisdom. Central to his wisdom are values of compassion, freedom, humor, beauty, truth, goodness, humility, honesty, justice, and tolerance which time and again one can find while reading his succeeding short stories.

Contextualising is a key issue both to understand and implement for relevant and effective literary practice. The literature comes dressed in culture and it must be lived out in cultures. The writer gives life to it through his wisdom. The significance of context to the life issues, which the text must address and indwell, cannot be underestimated because it has an impression of the writer's wisdom. There are constructive approaches to contextualisation which facilitate an analysis of both literature and culture, and their dynamic ongoing relationship. The available short stories of Anton Chekhov are varied and each brings out particular aspects of his wisdom signifying through a context, which runs particular risks of misappropriation. The application of these approaches by Anton Chekhov is urgent, lest its 'Russian' cultures fail to die to self and enable a truly Russian expression of the literature to flourish.

Chekhov once while talking to Maxim Gorky remarked: “Does it bore you to listen to my dreams?” (Chekhov CW 7). Chekhov was a man of dreams and true it is that to be a writer one needs to be a dreamer as a salesman ought to be as was said by Arthur Miller about Willy Loman: “A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory” (Miller, Web). Similarly, dreaming comes within the territory of a literary artist. It is this quality of being a wonderful dreamer that makes Chekhov a great creator of short stories. According to a Soviet scholar who once calculated tells that in all Chekhov’s works more than 8,000 characters appeared (Lantz, 71). This shows the colourfulness of his imaginative and fertile mind. His short stories also gain more value owing to the fact that Chekhov was permitted to move amongst the mankind only for 44 years. He was fortunate enough to put on paper what he dreamed for mankind and did not have the feeling of fear as Keats who in one of his sonnets says:

“When I have fears that I may cease to be

Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain” (Keats Web)

Chekhov successfully poured his emotions in his stories and has left a legacy for the future generations to be blessed with. A filmmaker Woody Allen once said, “I’m crazy about Chekhov. I never knew anybody that wasn’t” (Woody 156). To Allen, Chekhov’s humour was no doubt part of his appeal, but perhaps his wisdom, sometime displayed through his humour, was also part of the attraction.

Chekhov has been a much admired writer in the world literature. He was blessed with a highly sensitive soul who continuously thought of the welfare of mankind, commenting on his social and humanitarian activities, one scholar wrote that “his life was one continuous round of alleviating famine, fighting

epidemics, building schools and public roads, endowing libraries, helping organize marine biology libraries, giving thousands of needy peasants free medical treatment, planting gardens, helping fledgling writers get published, raising funds for worthwhile causes, and hundreds of other pursuits designed to help his fellow man and improve the general quality of life around him.” (Karlinsky, 26) Further an editor while going through his letters, once wrote, “he was the least doctrinaire, the least dogmatic of men,” and that “his honesty was equal to his humanity.” (Chekhov, Letters, viii)

Fate was cruel enough to Chekhov and he suffered with tuberculosis for fifteen years without ever making his readers realize the agony through which he underwent. It is not an exaggeration to mention that the manliness with which he bore his sufferings and met his death was admirable. As one of his chief biographers writes, “Never in the nineteen years that were left to him could he ever have forgotten that his days were numbered” (Rayfield, 24). He was a humble and open-minded person seeking the truth as indicated at the end of his long story “The Duel”. The main characters speak that “nobody knows the real truth,” and one of them thinks the following: “So it is in life. . . . In the search for truth man makes two steps forward and one step back. Suffering, mistakes, and weariness of life thrust them back, but the thirst for truth and stubborn will drive them on and on. And who knows? Perhaps they will reach the real truth at last.” (Chekhov Web)

He was an ardent lover of reading and wished that all the teachers who are entrusted the task of teaching the youngsters need to be well informed themselves. The teacher in *The Teacher of Literature* holds the same opinion as if he mouths the words of his creator, says he: “It really is awkward. I am a

teacher of literature, and to this day I've not read Lessing. I must read him" (Chekhov, *Short Stories* 114). Chekhov, however, was much concerned at the pitiable condition of teachers in the remote and rural areas of Russia. His views are quoted at some length by Gorky in his memoirs. Chekhov not only wanted the teachers to be well informed but he had a strong love and sympathy for them. He behaved not like a school inspector to the teachers who would come to visit him but with a human heart. Gorky writes about a teacher who came to see Chekhov in his presence. After the early tension on the face of the teacher he gradually cooled and final at the time of departure had to say this to Chekhov:

I came to see you as if I was going to see a superior, shaking my shoes. I swelled like a turkey-cock determined to show you that I was worth something too and I go away as if I were leaving a good close friend, who understands everything. What a great thing it is — to understand everything! Thank you! I'm going. I take away with me a good, precious thought: great people are simpler, they understand more, they are closer to us poor mortals than the small fry we live amidst. Good-bye, I shall never forget you. (Chekhov *Collected Works*, 11)

This is enough to show that a very beautiful heart beat in the body of Anton Chekhov and this is the beauty that one can find in his literature in general and short stories in particular. Some of his short stories will now be discussed and critically analyzed to bring out all the aspects of the personality of Chekhov as a writer, his views on mankind, his Russia, the society by which he was surrounded with and the influence as well as the impact of his contemporary world. Numerous collections of his short stories have appeared

in print from his time to the present day. The book that forms the base of this study is the one which has his representative short stories from 1884 onwards to 1903, a year before his death. These stories are concerned more with the contemporary problems and ideas.

The collection has at its outset the story entitled *Chameleon* that was published in 1884. Though the story Chekhov draws attention to the cruel approach of the police towards the public on the one side and hypocrisy on the other. Police is the same over the globe and while reading the story it is felt that it does not matter it relates to Russia or our own India. The police which supposed to be the protector of masses in fact is their biggest torturer. Chekhov has beautifully captured the mindset of policemen in this story. The story has Police Inspector Ochumelov crossing the market place when he suddenly hears the words “So, you’d bite, would you, you cur! Don’t let it go, lads! Biting is not allowed nowadays. Hold it! Ow!” (Chekhov Short Stories 1) As soon as he hears the words the Inspector inside him comes to the fore and suddenly takes charge of his personality. “Looks like a public disturbance, Your Honor!” (Chekhov Short Stories 1), speaks the aide of the Inspector which is enough to awake the silent policeman inside Ochumelov. When he moves closer to the group he sees Khryukin, the goldsmith. Thinking that he would be doing a favour to Khryukin and be benefitted some day in some way he shouts to his constable to find out whose dog it was and that the dog must be exterminated without delay. Soon somebody shouts from the crowd that it belongs to General Zhigalov and that is the end of Ochumelov’s anger. It immediately cooled down as water has been put on burning cinders.

The dual attitude of the police is finely captured by the author. He immediately turns to the goldsmith and retorts: “One thing I don’t understand — how did it happen to bite you? How could it have got at your finger? Such a little dog, and you such a strapping fellow! . . . I know you fellows! A set of devils!” (Chekhov Short Stories 2). Khryukin finding the Inspector turning against him speaks in honey dipped words to him: “May the justice of peace try me if I’m lying! It says in the law . . . all men are equal now” (Chekhov Short Stories 2). But the Inspector has more of fear of General Zhigalov and says, “Don’t argue!” Now this is how police behaves not only with the common man but also the special one when the other one is superior in hierarchy. He was about to speak more when the constable sounded: “No, that isn’t the General’s dog” (Chekhov Short Stories). At this juncture the tone of the Inspector suddenly changes and addresses the goldsmith: “You are a victim, Khryukin, and mind you don’t leave it at that. He must be taught a lesson!” (Chekhov Short Stories 2)

The readers enjoy this sudden change of attitude of the Inspector and the author brings home the message that might is right. At the same very moment the information is corrected and declared that it is not the General’s. The inspector this time does not show any sign of quick response being defeated twice and this time suggests that the dog should be taken to the General saying that it was found by him and if it is let loose in the street it may get spoilt, and at the same time advises the goldsmith to take care of his own self as “It’s your own fault...” (Chekhov Short Stories 2). However, it so happens that the General’s chef appears on the scene and when inquired he tells that the dog does not belong to his master. The Inspector immediately declares: “You’ve

been told it's a stray, so a stray it is. Destroy it and have done with the matter" (Chekhov Short Stories 2). They are all about to leave the place when once again the chef makes it clear that though it does not belong to his master but it belongs to the brother of his master and this again makes the Inspector take a U turn. "So it's *his* dog? Very glad! . . . What a pup!" (Chekhov Short Stories 2). The dog is sent with the chef and turning towards Khryukin says Ochumelov: "I'll have you yet" (Chekhov Short Stories 2)! and with a threatening attitude continues his way across the market place. The story throws light on the point of view as held by Chekhov regarding the police of Russia but he being a writer had a futuristic vision and perhaps believed that same is going to remain the situation of the executors of law and thus he tried to give a voice to it through his literature. This statement of Lenin supports Chekhov's depiction of condition of Russian public that the liberal are contributing to political degradation of the population by the Tsarist Government, enfeebling "the consciousness, already feeble enough, of the average Russian's sense of responsibility as a citizen, for *everything* the Government does." (Yermilov 225)

Chekhov like many other Russian writers writes much upon the miserable situation of the masses from all the walks of life. His favourite theme like Premchand was to bring out the miseries suffered by his countrymen. Writers tend to speak for the dumb, listen for the deaf and see for the blind. Chekhov found himself more at ease while dealing with the problems of a common man because though he had established himself well as a medical practitioner and a writer he always had a longing to meet and mingle with the masses as he found himself closer to them. As Gorky comments: "All

his life Anton Pavlovich lived the life of the soul, was always himself, inwardly free, and took no notice of what some expected, and others — less delicate — demanded of him.” (Chekhov *Collected Works* 12)

One of his stories entitled *Misery* deals with the theme of despair, seclusion and sorrow in a genuinely unique manner. Whereas the humans are unable or uninterested in the sufferings of their fellow travellers in this vast world and wide, the speechless animals at times become the true companions. They silently communicate and provide the much needed relief that is denied by those who call themselves humans but are so only in form and have lost the true meaning of being human. The story is short yet sweet in the sense as Shelley says: “Our sweetest thoughts are those that tell of the saddest thought.” (Shelley Web)

The story is about one Iona Potapov who is utterly miserable and is feeling isolated from the human world as nobody has time or intention to pay attention to his suffering soul. The story is supplied with a sub title “To whom shall I tell my grief?” The sub title amply brings out the intention of the author that he wishes to tell the story of such a person in whom no one is interested. But in God’s world man finds refuge amongst the animals when his own ones turn faces. The protagonist Iona Potapov is a sleigh-driver in the city of St. Petersburg, one of the busiest in Russia. The story is set in the background of the death of the son of protagonist. The author carefully matches the mood of the nature with the sufferer. It is twilight and the climate is heavy with the snowfall. A thin soft layer of ice has capped all that is visible. In this situation of dull and gloomy environment Iona Potapov is sitting double bent on the box of the sleigh. His mare is matching to his personality and through her the

writer draws the attention towards its master, “Her stillness, the angularity of her lines, and the stick-like straightness of her legs make her look like a halfpenny gingerbread horse. She is probably lost in thought” (Chekhov, *Short Stories* 12). The writer through the condition of the mare symbolically tells the reader that both the rider and the one rode are sailing in the same boat. Both are passing through utter trouble and turmoil. Iona is not only troubled in the heart but is also tensed for being without a single fare after coming out of the yard. The town as well as the life of Iona, both are being covered by the shades of evening, and the pale light of the street lamps are not sufficient to give glow to either of them. However, after a long waiting finally Iona hears somebody calling for the cab. An officer comes and occupies the seat and Iona gives a tug at the reins. Iona is unable to keep control over the cab as he has lost control over his life and soul. The officer who has occupied his cab angrily shouts at him to drive safely and carefully. But Iona is lost in his own thoughts: “Iona fidgets on the box as though he were sitting on thorns, jerks his elbows, and turns his eyes about like one possessed, as though he does not know where he is or why he is there” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 13). But soon a sigh of relief comes from him as the officer says words consoling him. And it is as if the gates of grief are let open for which Iona had been waiting for so long and hoping that the officer will share his grief utters with great difficulty: “My son . . . er . . . my son died this week, sir” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 14). Hoping to hear some more consoling words he gets a mere formal response from the listener, “H’m! What did he die of?” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 14). To explain his pain he turns his whole body round to his passenger but immediately hears somewhere from the darkness: “Have you gone off your

head, you old dog? Look where are you going!” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 14). Through such words of insult and pain he finally reaches his destination and the officer paying him the fare marches away without sharing his grief. Again Iona feels lonely and sits huddled.

Chekhov brings out the inner feelings of his characters and without commenting upon them places the characters in such positions that the readers can very well understand their conditions either of pity or of pleasure. Again Iona is lost in his own self and waits for another fare and hour upon hour pass and the waiting gets more and more tiresome and troubling. The outer actions help to forget the inner suffering but to Iona even this is not granted. However, when after a long wait new passengers arrive. They are a real mess and make the matter more worsen for Iona, “Are you going to drive like this all the way? Eh? Shall I give you one in the neck?” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 15). But the continuous talk of the passengers even though it is an abuse to him makes him less forlorn and the feeling of loneliness begins little by little to be less heavy on his heart. After some time when the passengers stop talking Iona turns and looks round at them and says: “This week . . . er . . . my . . . er . . . son died!” Hoping to receive soft words from them, he is utterly despaired when one of the three passengers says, “Well, you give him a little encouragement . . . one in the neck! . . . Do you hear, you old plague? I’ll make you smart.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 15)

Listening to this Iona feels a slap on his back. The merciless world is displayed in a passenger who comically asks Iona: “Cabman, are you married?” and Iona very painfully responds: “The only wife for me is the damp earth . . . The grave that is! . . . Here my son’s dead and I am alive . . .

It's a strange thing, death has come in at the wrong door . . . Instead of coming for me it went for my son. . . ." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 16). The words echo the same strain as the one that is to be found in the famous play *Riders to the Sea* where Maurya the mother of six young sons moans pathetically:

In the big world the old people do be
Leaving things after them for their sons and children,
But in this place it is the young men do be
Leaving things behind them for them that do be old. (Synge Web)

The image of Iona created by Chekhov, and that of Maurya created by Synge, point out the singular fact that misery is the master, which rules everywhere without any check and control.

As soon as the passengers get off the cab and Iona is left alone he again gets tuned to the suffering and Chekhov says:

The misery which has been for a brief space eased comes back again and tears his heart more cruelly than ever. With a look of anxiety and suffering Iona's eyes stray restlessly among the crowds moving to and fro on both sides of the street: can he not find among those thousands someone who will listen to him? (Chekhov *Short Stories* 16)

Chekhov here comes very close to Dostoevsky who presents such painful picture of a father who loses his young son in his famous novel *Poor People*. Iona tries to share his grief with so many people but none responds properly and he feels so alone as if the world has gone empty of people. He feels the same pain as is felt by the ancient mariner in Coleridge's poem and

strives to express it fully but in vain. Finally he finds refuge in the animal world when he addresses his mare:

That's how it is old girl. . . . Kuzma Ionich is gone. . . . He said good-by to me. . . . He went and died for no reason. . . . Now, suppose you had a little colt, and you were own mother to that little colt. . . . And all at once the same little colt went and died. . . . You'd be sorry, wouldn't you? . . . (Chekhov *Short Stories* 16)

This is how he is ultimately relieved of his suffering. He shares it with the dumb animal who may not be having human voice but certainly has the heart and that too perhaps better than humans. "Misery" thus brings out the humanitarian approach of Chekhov in his fiction.

Chekhov like Premchand in India and Dostoevsky in Russia writes much on the theme of social injustice. Many short stories of Chekhov deal with the theme of quest for fulfilment as well as social injustice. Among the many, one can be discussed from the selection taken up for this study. This story is "Gooseberries". It was written in the year 1898 and may be put in the category of his last stories. The story discusses much like Premchand the life of the landowners. More important than this in the story is how a man works hard and arranges his life to make his dreams fulfilled. However, Chekhov carefully delineates the futility of personal achievement. A man is a social animal and if he lives only for himself than it is no life at all. The life should be a balanced one, and neither excessiveness of strain nor too much of liberalism should dominate one's life.

The story has three persons who interact with each other and talk of the fourth who is brother to one of these three. Chekhov himself had closely

watched the country life and thus we find faithfulness in his narratives. Two friends namely Ivan Ivanich who is professionally a veterinary surgeon and Burkin who is engaged as a high-school teacher happen to go on a walk in the countryside when they are suddenly arrested by a strong rain shower and forced to walk to an acquaintance nearby named Alekhin who was a landowner. As they reach his farm house they are welcomed by Alekhin who is busy winnowing. He welcomes the guests and directs them to his living room upstairs. On the way they meet the gorgeous Pelagea who is maidservant to Alekhin. As Alekhin joins them they decide to go for a bath as all are stained with mud.

They enjoy the tea on return and Chekhov narrates the air of superiority of Alekhin who enjoys his lavish living, says the author: "Alekhin, washed and combed, paced the room in his new frock-coat, enjoying the warmth, the cleanliness, his dry clothes and comfortable slippers" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 188). This description of Alekhin makes the reader aware of the miserable lifestyle of others who are less fortunate and as Ivan Ivanich tells about his brother who was a clerk in a government office, says Ivan: "He lived thriftily, never ate or drank his fill, dressed anyhow, like a beggar, he became terribly stingy" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 188). However, he leads such a life not for the want of resources, which he had perhaps enough to live decently but his obsession to possess an estate in country made him live thus. Even when Ivan would send him some money, that too he would put in the bank. Ivan says: "Once a man gets an idea into his head, there's no doing anything with him" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 189). His brother had a dream to live in country in an estate possessed privately as he would often say: "Country life has its

conveniences, you sit on the verandah, drinking tea, with your own ducks floating on the pond, and everything smells so nice, and . . . and the gooseberries ripen on the bushes” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 188). A person in order to fulfil his quest may go to any extent and he married an ugly elderly widow, for whom he had not the slightest affection, just because she had some money. The human mind is a strange thing, and may even grow devilish to attain the desired aim. He goes on living the same life of thrift and it is a heavy blow to the widow who within the three years of marriage goes to kiss mother earth in her grave.

Chekhov through Ivan tries in the story to answer in his own way the famous question raised by Leo Tolstoy when he asks: “How much land does a man need?” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 189). Ivan loves his brother but is not able to understand the obsessive disorder of having an estate of one’s own. In fact Chekhov wishes to show the influence of being a landowner in his times in the Russian society. Says Ivan:

To escape from the town, from the struggle, from the noise of life, to escape and hide one’s head in a country-estate, is not life, but egoism, idleness, it is a sort of renunciation, but renunciation without faith. It is not six feet of earth, not a country-estate, that a man needs, but the whole globe, the whole of nature, room to display his qualities and the individual characteristics of his free soul. (Chekhov *Short Stories* 188)

Chekhov asserts that man is in search of his identity and no piece of land could do for it but his own mind. It has been beautifully put by Milton in his most significant contribution to mankind *The Paradise Lost* where he says:

“The mind is its own place,

And in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.” (Milton Web)

Man is unable to see what lies behind the beautiful estates, he is blind to the evils that creep in with wealth and prosperity, he does not realize that when he is “no longer the poor, timid clerk, but a true proprietor, a gentleman”, he not only has become a person who is rich but along with this riches comes from the backdoor without his knowledge the ‘ego’ which was in fact the force behind all this desire to be a landowner. Ivan’s brother who kept glued to his office-desk during the days of his clerkship now “took offense if the peasants failed to call him ‘Your Honour.’” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 189)

Chekhov uses gooseberries as a symbol of fulfilment of one’s long cherished desires. When Ivan goes to meet his landlord brother they meet with great warmth and then after tea is served the cook brings a plate full of gooseberries, they were not from the market but from the orchard of the owner of the estate. The scene is highly emotional and Chekhov tries to capture the moment in a precise manner: “Nililai Ivanich broke into a laugh and gazed at the gooseberries in tearful silence for at least five minutes. Speechless with emotion, he popped a single gooseberry into his mouth, darted at me the triumphant glance of a child who has at last gained possession of a long-for toy” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 191). Chekhov suggests that most of the worldly possessions are nothing more than toys the only difference being that they are fought for with more seriousness rather foolishness even though everyone knows that all their material achievements come to nothing.

The story gives Chekhov the platform to discuss several serious issues pertaining to human life. He shows the real life of man that lurks beneath his

humbleness when he is not in power. Chekhov is a master artist and even while describing the pangs of life does not do so in dark manner. He does not allow the frustrations to peep in the text. The story creates the impression of people and places both real and not fictional which are difficult for the reader to believe. This faithfulness of his portrayal of scenes, sights and citizens makes him one of the greatest writers of all ages and climes.

Chekhov has rarely for his protagonist a woman but the story entitled “The Darling” has a very nice and original woman Olga Semyonovna nicknamed as Olenka who displays all the beautiful traits a woman may possess. She is a gentle woman who throughout the story keeps herself occupied with love and care. She is so gentle and true to life that reading about her one is bound to be reminded of Prince Myshkin one of the greatest characters and most loved by the creator himself in the novel *The Idiot* by Fyodor Dostoevsky. Speaking about him Dostoevsky had stated that he wanted to present a truly good man. This character Prince Myshkin is so gentle and tender that it is impossible for anyone to think ill of him. Even the most evil and devilish persons are mesmerized by his simplicity, humbleness, humanity and love that all their thoughts of ill-will spontaneously drop down. It will not be out of place to say the same for Olenka in this story. Andrew G. Colin in the introduction of Anton Chekhov: *The Woman in The Case And Other Stories* comments on the Chekhov find understanding of Russian Woman that in the spiritual sense woman is higher than man which is evident in his early stories. (Chekhov *The Woman* xv)

Human beings are often referred to as social beings that cannot live in isolation and that isolation is the biggest punishment that can be given. Even

the most hardcore of criminals are afraid of isolated imprisonment. Seclusion is the greatest pain to be suffered by humans. The famous poem by T.S.Eliot *The Wasteland* has an episode of an affluent society woman who regularly pleads with her lover to speak to her:

“Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.” (Eliot Web)

Olenka in the story is most disturbed when she has none to speak. She is unable to bear the moments of isolation and often in her dreams startles to speak her repressed thoughts. Fate has played with her and time and again put her in such situations that she has to live on her own. The title of the story is the most appropriate as no other title would have done for it. Her innocence makes people get pulled towards her like iron filings on a magnet. They call her darling out of compassion and the word has no other overtones. Rarely do we find such characters that are the purest in heart and soul. She is endearingly sweet and unaffected. She has no opinions of her own and treads on the impressions she receives from her relations with her male counterparts.

Critics and scholars find in her the epitome of female disempowerment but the greatest power of a woman i.e. to love is kept intact in her personality by the author. It is not that she has no autonomy to express her opinion or is forced to follow men but she is so simple that the idea to counter or add to the ideas of other does not occur to her. Here in, lies the beauty of her character. She is more concerned with her relationship with her man than to express her opinions. She feels more and thinks less and this is no sin for loving has brought more peace in the world and thinking less. She follows the words of the men with whom she is associated. Chekhov says: “She was always fond of someone, and could not exist without loving” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 212).

Thus the dominating force in her life was love and not the mind. “In earlier days she had loved her Papa . . . her aunt who used to come every other year . . . and before that, when she was at school, she had loved her French master” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 212). Her loving nature made her earn the title ‘darling’.

As she grows young she is first of all attracted to Kukin the manager of Tivoli an open-air theater. Her love is unalloyed and is in turn blessed with the same degree of pure love. Kukin is troubled to see the rains and the clouds for they mean bad business to him and men are more worried if they find their bread earning entering in difficult times. He says to Olenka: “There! that’s the life we lead, Olga Semyonovna. It’s enough to make one cry. One works and does one’s utmost; one wears oneself out, getting no sleep at night, and racks one’s brain what to do for the best. And then what happens” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 212)? Listening to these painful outpourings of her husband Olenka too grows sad and tears came to her eyes. She helped Kukin in his business and soon became a favourite of all the actors and other supporting staff at the theatre. They too started calling her ‘the darling’ out of sheer love for her innocence and sincerity of emotions. Life starts laughing at the couple after some time and they have a sunny time in winter when they took the theater in the town. Olenka was soon satisfied with the progress of the theatre and took it immediately upon her and ‘grew stouter’ while Kukin ‘grew thinner and yellower’.

This shows the purity of her life she is true whereas Kukin in spite of the profits he continually complained about the losses. However, she takes every care of Kukin and his business and when he had to go to Moscow to collect a

new troupe, she missed her sleep in his absence, so deeply was she attached to him. The departure was not thought by either of them as the final one but fate had willed it otherwise. Kukin died of sudden in Moscow and she was summoned there to attend his funeral. When she returned she could not contain herself and “as soon as she got indoors she threw herself on her bed and sobbed so loudly that it could be heard next door, and in the street.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 214)

Olenka observes the mourning period and feels lost in this vast world and wide. However, as is said time is a great healer and she soon gets attuned to life, when another person comes in her life and she started loving him, “Olenka loved him — loved him so much that she lay awake all night in a perfect fever” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 214). Such love may arise only when one is pure in the core of his being. She soon marries Vassily Andreich Pustovalov who is a timber merchant and Olenka finds herself one with her husband. “Her husband’s ideas were hers” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 214). Though she is innocent but the innocence sometimes becomes ludicrous as she says to one of her friends who suggests her to go to theatre for recreation: “Vassichka and I have no time to go to theatres. We have no time for nonsense. What’s the use of these theatres?” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 215). However, she is the personified ideal of female selflessness and this comment of hers may be pardoned owing to the fact that she has no individual identity of her own and has merged and mingled herself entirely with the identity of her husband. Being devoted to one’s life partner is no sin in any way. Chekhov has created a unique kind of female character in Olenka that is not traceable in other writers. She is so much satisfied with her life that she would sometimes

say: “Yes, we have nothing to complain of, thank God, I wish everyone were as well off as Vassichka and I” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 215). But to test the goodness of Olenka, Chekhov still has more miseries for her and after six years of happy and satisfied married life Vassily caught cold and left Olenka a widow once again. And at her husband’s funeral she sobbed, “I’ve nobody, now you’ve left me, my darling” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 215). And Chekhov comments: “It was evident that she could not live a year without some attachment” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 215). She was soon attached to a veterinary surgeon who was acquainted to her. The attachment this time was not in form of marriage but purely on human relationship, one needy supporting the other. The surgeon was living separated from his wife whom he had deserted for her being unfaithful to him. The only reason of the last bond between them was their son who was with the mother and loved dearly by the father.

Olenka is such a spiritual being that she says to the surgeon: “You know, Vladimir Platonich, you’d better make it up with your wife. You should forgive her for the sake of your son. You may be sure the little fellow understands” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 216). Olenka is very happy to live in close relationship with the surgeon but he has to go as his regiment moves to Siberia. She is once again left alone and this time it is awful. Time passed with wings and she grows plain and elderly. But luck is bound to shine upon such a pure soul and years after when somebody knocked on her gate: “Olenka went to open it herself and was dumbfounded when she looked out: she saw Smirnin, the veterinary surgeon, gray headed, and dressed as a civilian” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 218). Speaking to him she comes to know that he has

reconciled with his wife and wishes to settle in this town. She willingly offers her house to the family and that too without any rent. Now there can be no greater proof than this of Olenka's humanity and sincerity. The family settles and Olenka gradually grows liking for the child and feels as if existence has finally blessed her with a baby and she readily takes his charge as his mother goes to Kharlov to see her sister and his father is busy with his profession, and would not come home sometimes for days together. The boy Sasha was a real gift to her from God.

Olenka looks after the child as her own and even did not feel hurt when the child would at times say annoyingly to her:

Oh, do leave me alone!" The child could not grasp the river of love flowing in her heart and showering its last drop on his head. She would help him in all his activities and accompany him to the school but "he would feel ashamed of being followed by a tall, stout woman; he would turn round and say: "You'd better go home Auntie. I can go the rest of the way alone. (Chekhov *Short Stories* 220)

The woman suffers a lot in her life and yet remains gentle. She is blighted by disappointment in all the relations she has had in life. One is pained to see that the sense of fulfilment which she gains in rearing Sasha is also specious because the boy does not reciprocate her love. Chekhov beautifully comments: "Ah, how she loved him! Of her former attachments not one had been so deep; never had her soul surrendered to any feeling so spontaneously, so disinterestedly and so joyously . . . Why? Who can tell why? (Chekhov *Short Stories* 220). Chekhov here touches the chords of human heart with such tenderness that the blame that Olga is unintelligent holds no value.

Her all encompassing love that reaches to the heights of godly love is enough to nullify all the blemishes in her personality. She in taking care of Sasha even surpasses his parents. She is so deeply attached to the child that with every knock at the gate she would tremble for the fear that: “It must be a telegram from KharkovSasha’s mother is sending for him from Kharkov. . . . Oh, mercy on us!” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 220)

Even the slightest thought of separating from the child would run shivers down her spine and she would feel that “She was the most unhappy woman in the world.” The readers are puzzled at the goodness of Olga as the story comes to an end they have mixed feelings for her. They feel both sympathy and irritation towards the protagonist. But think as they will Olenka is made of such stuff that nothing can deter her from loving mankind in whatever form existence offers to her. Chekhov ends the story on the cries uttered by Sasha in sleep: “I’ll give it to you! Get away! Shut up!” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 221). certainly these words are spoken to Olga who must be trying to help the boy in some way but who is bent on feeling of the insult being tied to her.

The story is a rare one in which Chekhov has successfully reached the dark recesses of a woman’s heart. Even Tolstoy is reported to have liked the character of Olga immensely even though he is believed to be an anti-feminist by some critics, who quote some statements for his *War and Peace*, to quote one of the many: “Tie yourself up with a woman, and like a chained convict, you lose all freedom If you only know what women in general are! Egotism, vanity, silliness, triviality in everything. That’s what women are when they show themselves as they really are” (Tolstoy Web). Whatsoever the opinion may the world may have for women but it is rare to find a character in

fiction as Olga who is so immensely loving that she appears not of this world. She has loved and lost so many times that the readers fall in love with her for being an epitome of womanhood.

Chekhov was a master craftsman who could convey his message in a very short space too. His story “The Student” narrates the deep mystical anguish of mankind. The story deals with the theme of betrayal and remorse as expressed in the *Bible*. In this short story a young student Ivan Velikopolsky is returning home from shooting. He is absorbed in his thoughts and it is a very cold winter night. Chekhov narrates the darkness and cold of the weather in a graphical manner and in an elaborate style. It seems that he is trying to express what is going on in the mind of the student who is as dark and despaired inside. He is a student of the clerical academy and it is natural for him to ponder on the spiritual matters. When he thinks he finds that mankind is the same as it was in the days of Jesus when he was betrayed by his favourite disciple Peter. He is despaired to recollect the gospel and all this becomes more important because the day was Good Friday and he had not eaten anything because nothing had been cooked that day in the house to observe fast. The shivering climate made him think that perhaps such a wind also blew in the old days of Rurik, Ivan the Terrible and Peter and also that the same kind of poverty and hunger ruled in those times also. He thinks that nothing has changed for mankind since times immemorial and nothing is going to change also as man is the same with the same tendency to crush the others sometimes out of self-love and sometimes for no reason at all. He thinks: “the same desperate poverty and hunger, the same thatched roofs with holes in them, ignorance, misery, the same desolation around, the same darkness, the

same feeling of oppression — all these had existed, did exist, and would exist, and the lapse of a thousand years would make life no better” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 106). As the student reaches the place called Widows’ Garden he sees a campfire and decides to give himself some heat of the fire. While sitting with Vasilisa, the elder widow he starts narrating her, the gospel of Peter. The gospel has been heard innumerable times but is ever new as it accords with the human temperament of self- love. The student tells the story once again but it appears to be as fresh as ever when the impact of the story is viewed upon the mother and the daughter. The elder lady starts shedding tears listening to the gospel. And the student thinks: “if Vasilisa had shed tears, and her daughter had been troubled, it was evident that what he had just been telling them about, which had happened nineteen centuries ago, had a relation the present — to both women, to the desolate village, to himself, to all people” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 106). The student could analyse the situation and feels that the woman was weeping not owing to his story telling but the fact that she felt Peter to be near to her, “because her whole being was interested in what was passing in Peter’s soul” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 107). He suddenly became joyous at the realization that the past was linked with the present and the situations that prevailed in the days of Peter and Jesus still prevailed which kept them linked to the present. The feeling of exhilaration is immense in the student when he feels that: “he had just seen both ends of that chain; that when he touched one end the other quivered” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 108). The theme of mystical love and universal brotherhood has been beautifully brought out by Chekhov in this very short story. Chekhov had an irrational intuition that certainly there must be some meaning in human existence. He comes close to this viewpoint

in this story and it is reported that he insisted it to Bunin that this work was his favourite and most optimistic piece. In this story we see that Chekhov for the first time shows he has found out the feature that makes art having crucial importance to humanity. The student who is only twenty two but Chekhov makes him understand the mystery of human existence because only a fresh mind with energetic youth may comprehend the forms of power displaying themselves in various ways. The setting of the story is in the background of the campfire and is correlated with the campfire in the story of Peter. In a way this short story is a junction the past, present and future as well as it is a perfect example in miniature of Chekhov's art.

Chekhov has dealt with the theme of love; its fulfilling power, the frustrations arising out of unfulfilled love and the various shades of love within and without marriage, time and again in his fiction and particularly in his short stories. His story "The Lady with the Dog" which was published in the year 1899 is one of the most anthologized and favoured stories of Chekhov. Here he takes up the theme of lovers who cannot marry. This story may be labelled as a dark one as we find no humour here, it is only pathos and bitterness for fate which brought the relationship of Dmitri and Anna to the point of such intensity that it was impossible either to sever or protract the relationship.

Virginia Llewellyn Smith in her article relates this story with "About Love" another story by Chekhov on the same theme. She writes:

The emotional climax of "About Love" is reached as the hero, Alekhin, parts with his beloved forever: 'oh, how wretched she and I were! I confessed my love to her, and with a searing pain in my heart I

realized that everything that stood in the way of our love was irrelevant, petty, and false.’ A similar, if more restrained, emotion is expressed in “The Lady with the Dog”. Gurov and Anna Sergeevna had fallen in love for the first time in their lives: ‘they felt that fate itself had predestined them one for the other’, but in reality fate has brought about incomprehensible fact of their being married to different people, so that ‘it was as if they were two migrant birds . . . which had been caught and made to inhabit separate cages. (Chekhov *Short Stories* 351)

The story is set in Yalta which is a seaside resort in Crimea. The author has carefully selected the spot as it symbolizes the vastness of love as the sea and the prohibitions of the society imposed by the institution of marriage like the limits of the land. Just as no one is supposed to leave the land for his safety in the same way love is not supposed to cross the barriers of conjugal relationship since only within the limits of marriage love is considered by the society as holy and virtuous. However, true love has always been free of any restrictions and only in such freedom does love bloom in all its colours.

Dmitri Dmitrich Gurov is spending his vacations in Yalta alone and is attracted towards a young woman who was fair and not very tall. She was Anna Sergeyevna. Dmitri was no more attached to his wife and had been unfaithful to her several times, though they were married for many years now and had three children all grown up now as he himself was nearing forty. He had several painful experiences too in these extra-marital relationships but “every time he encountered an attractive woman he forgot all about this experience, the desire for life surged up in him, and everything suddenly seemed simple and amusing.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 221)

Gurov had developed the art of enticing women in talks. Introducing himself to her he said that he had a degree in Literature but took up a job in a bank in Moscow and was presently very well to do. She on her part was married only a couple of year ago, she hailed from St Petersburg and that her husband was in some position in the district administration. Gurov was sexually attracted towards her and thought a lot about her. But Chekhov aims at creating this character a bit different from his other heroes who are merely after sex. The thought processes of Gurov move from the beginning of the meeting to the end and finally thinks, "And yet there's something pathetic about her." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 221)

Gurov felt a strange feeling of affiliation for Anna and he inseparably fused with her for the next whole week. The heat being too much they found shelter in each other's company. Anna waited for the steamer which she hopes will bring her husband to her but everyday turned out to be a hopeless one. Gurov had by the time mustered courage enough to kiss her on the lips and moved to her room for the same act which he was so much habitual of enacting with so many women with who he had enjoyed on night stands. Gurov for the first time in all his relationships felt an alien feeling never ever felt before. He felt it was not merely the body of Anna he craved for but something beyond it. Never ever before his women had displayed 'feeling of embarrassment' as was visible in Anna. Gurov wished to make love to her but she was lost somewhere else and it was not an easy job for Gurov to do to her the same as he had done to so many other women. When she is approached with caresses she could not make up with the mind of Gurov and her appearance takes the shape of a repentant sinner in some classical painting.

She says to Gurov: “It isn’t right, you will never respect me anymore” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 225). Gurov is taken back with such a Christian response. He had never thought that he would ever meet with such a situation. He ponders: “How full of strange encounters life is!” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 224). Unable to comprehend her and with tears coming to her eyes he says, “I don’t understand, what is it you want” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 225). Their relationship is growing in a very mysterious dimension. It is both the physical and the spiritual at the same time. She is with Gurov and at the same time always expecting her husband to come and meet her, she is not trying to betray him but at the same time she is enjoying the company of Gurov too.

Chekhov seems particularly interested in the continuity of existence. In his story “The Student” he talks of the gospel of Peter and finds it meaningful even in the present day as the old widow cries bitterly hearing to it and the student sates: “If Vasilisa had shed tears and her daughter had been troubled, it was evident that what he had just been telling them about, which had happened nineteen centuries ago, had a relation to the present.” Again he thought: “The past is linked with the present by an unbroken chain of events flowing one out of the other” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 108). In the same tone in the story “The Lady with the Dog” sitting by the side of the sea with Anna, Gurov ponders:

The sea had roared like this long before there was any Yalta or Oreanda, it was roaring now, and it would go on roaring just as indifferently and hollowly, when he had passed away. And it may be that in this continuity, this utter indifference to the life and death of each of us lies hidden the pledge of our eternal salvation, of the continuous

movement of life on earth, of the continuous movement towards perfection. (Chekhov *Short Stories* 226)

Chekhov seems to suggest that only love has the potential to make us realize that the continuity of life is the blessing of love, love in its various shades, the physical, spiritual or universal. This feeling was rooted deep in Chekhov and this is what makes him one of the most humane writer in the world literature. Love as treated in this story has a unique flavor, it is both the lusty and the lust less at the same time. Gurov finds Anna seductive and virtuous both together. Anna on her part was ever the same and Gurov pondering on her says to himself, “When you came to think of it, everything in the world is beautiful really everything but our own thoughts and actions, when we lose sight of the higher aims of life and of our dignity as human beings” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 226). The relationship starts moving in the vertical direction from the earlier horizontal one and one day Anna received a message from her husband imploring her to return as he was having problem in his eyes and could join her at Yalta. Anna who was never at ease in this relationship with Gurov but was caught in a kind of *Catch-22* situation, finally feels that the letter was a blessing for her as she says to Gurov: “It’s a good thing that I am going. It’s the intervention of fate” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 227). But she is not sure whether this is what she wanted because sitting in the train to home she says: “I shall think of you . . . I shall thing of you all the time . . . God bless you! Think kindly of me. We are parting forever, it must be so, because we ought never to have met. Good bye — God bless you.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 227)

Gurov and Anna separate after this brief stint and with a feeling that perhaps that is the end of their relationship. But fate had some other plan for the couple and Gurov after reaching Moscow hopes that in a month's time Anna "would be nothing but a vague memory . . . she would occasionally appear in his dreams." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 228) But even though the month was over Anna lingered on in his memory as if he had parted with Anna Sergeyevna only the day before. Every moment that he had spent with her came back to him as if it was not the past but the present. The memory was so overpowering that he felt he should see Anna immediately or it will be the end of his life. At the outset of the Christmas holidays he packs his bag and making an excuse goes to see Anna. He is not sure where he shall find her but with a faint hope to see her somewhere in the town she had mentioned in their meeting he sets out.

Reaching the town he searches and soon comes to know about Anna and her husband. He is a rich person and famous in the town. He plans very meticulously and manages to find Anna at the theatre with her husband. He meets her in the first interval as her husband goes out to smoke. Anna is flabbergasted and could well have fainted but controlled herself anyhow. She is true to him and accepts before him: "I could think of nothing but you the whole time, I lived on the thoughts of you. I tried to forget — why, oh, why did you come?" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 232)

This meeting is one of the most beautiful scenes in the story. It shows that now both are in deep love with each other and it is cruelty on part of the existence that they are bound to persons with whom they have no love feeling. Taking a promise from her to come and see him in Moscow he leaves and

soon she reaches Moscow to keep her word. Gurov goes to meet her and it becomes a routine act on part of Anna coming to Moscow on the pretext of meeting a gynaecologist. After several meetings Gurov one day while going to meet Anna in her hotel thinks of his relationship and begins to ponder: "Every individual existence revolves around mystery, and perhaps that is the chief reason that all cultivated individuals insisted so strongly on the respect due to personal secrets" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 233). Chekhov wishes to bring to light the most significant aspect of human life. Everyone is bound to live on two levels; one the social and other the personal. The personal is so secret, so hidden in the dark that at times even the individual himself dares not peep into it. The same feeling as that of Gurov is felt by Anna when on meeting him she starts crying from "her bitter consciousness of the sadness of their life; they could see one another in secret, hiding from people, as if they were thieves. Was not their life a broken one?"(Chekhov *Short Stories* 234). Gurov starts thinking of his relationship with other women in comparison to his relationship with Anna and feels that with all the other women: "There had been all sorts of things between them, but never love" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 234). And it was love which gave him so much pain but at the same time for the first time in his life he was tasting love and that was the most satisfying part of this relationship. Says he, "And only now, when he was gray haired, had he fallen in love properly, thoroughly, for the first time in his life" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 234). Chekhov puts his characters in such demanding situation that they feel life in its utmost. They cannot live together and they cannot live without one another. They finally realized that of their relationship the most complicated part was only just beginning.

This story was very dear to Chekhov and it was bound to be so with any other author for in such a creation the creator feels fulfilled. The joy lies not in solving the mysteries of life but in understanding them and his lovers come to that point in the story.

Chekhov has touched not only the beauties and joys of life achieved through love but he is also aware of the sufferings undergoing these joys. He like Premchand has written on the pains shared by the subaltern sections of the society. A story entitled "Sleepy" written in 1888 truly captures the mind of the working class child who has to bear ordeals in order to meet her two ends. The story has a girl of thirteen for its protagonist named Varka. She is engaged as a nurse to a baby and has to look after a baby when she herself has not moved out her own childhood. She takes care of the child who keeps on crying without end. Varka feels sleepy owing to her hard household chores during the day, "Her eyes are glued together, her head droops, her neck aches. She cannot move her eyelids or her lips, and she feels as though her face is dried and wooden, as though her head has become as small as the head of a pin." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 65)

Chekhov minutely captures the psychological suffering of the child as she sees the master snoring soundly in the next door as if lulled by the lullaby sung by her for the baby. Varka is provided with very hard task masters who are cruel and despotic. She has to keep awake in the night for the baby because if the baby cries and Varka is found asleep her master and her mistress would beat her. The girl is so much tortured by lack of sleep that she starts having hallucinations. The writer through this scene of hallucination tries to emphasize the ill effects of hard labour upon a small girl as Varka. Even in the

hallucinations she dreams nothing else but sleep. She sees dark clouds that are screaming like the baby. She sees people falling on the ground in the liquid mud and Varka asks: “What is that for” and they answer “To sleep, to sleep!” Varka falls asleep hearing these words and “someone hits her on the back of her head so hard that her forehead knocks against a birch tree. She raises her eyes and sees, facing her, her master” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 67). She is a little suffering child to whom fate has denied even a little sleep.

Chekhov lived in an era when such liberties by the masters were common and there was no appeal to any authority. The servants were entirely at the mercy of the master whether it was children or grown-ups. The girl again starts to rock the child. But soon falls to sleep. She again hears angry and harsh words: “Are you asleep, you wretched girl” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 68). It’s the mistress this time and she has come to feed the baby. After feeding she goes back and Varka puts the baby in the cradle. She tries to hold herself back from sleep but her eyes are glued together and her head is heavy. She has not even closed her eyes when she hears the master’s voice to heat the stove. So it is already morning and she has to do the household chores. Running from one job to another she is exhausted. The mistress is roaring loudly near her but Varka longs to flop to the floor regardless of everything, and to sleep. But the owners of her fate deny her even this pleasure for which they do not even have to pay. Varka is so much distressed that at night when she dozes off she again has the same dream. She wants to run away from the place but is unable and is also unable to understand what force binds her to the place. She tries to find the foe who will not let her live. She is possessed by the hallucination and comes to the knowledge that the ‘foe’ is none else than this

baby. And she has the feeling: “Kill the baby and then sleep, sleep, sleep. . .” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 69). She walks up to the cradle and strangles him. Immediately she lies down on the floor, laughs with delight that she can sleep, and in a minute is sleeping as soundly as the dead. The story is moving and makes the readers realize that man has degraded to the extent of devil-hood that would not allow a small sleep to an innocent child. Cruelty on part of the adults breeds cruelty among the children and then they are punished for what they have not done by choice.

Similar to the story “Sleep”, Chekhov has penned another story “Vanka” published two year earlier the former one. It has a male protagonist named Vanka who is even younger to Varka the protagonist of the former story. Vanka is nine years old. He too like Varka is in service of a shoemaker. Chekhov has presented his sufferings in a more direct manner than Varka. It is the Christmas eve and he did not go to bed but sits writing to his Grandpa. At the outset of the story the pangs of the child are shared by the readers as he writes in the letter: “Dear Grandad Konstantin Makarich, I am writing a letter to you. I send you Christmas greetings and hope God will send you his blessings. I have no Father and no Mummie and you are all I have left” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 49). The child is seeking blessing for his old grandfather when he should be receiving blessing from his parents. But he is an orphan like Varka and none to look for him.

Chekhov has the peculiar ability to look in to the troubled souls of the children. He is very close to Dickens while narrating the agonies of the children. Chekhov delves deep into the psyche of the children and brings before the readers all that is going in the innocent minds of the children.

Vanka while writing to his grandfather thinks about him. He is an old man of nearly sixty-five years of age and lives in a nearby village doing the job of a night watchman. Vanka while writing the letter imagines of his grandpa in his rest time and working hours. He is a happy man who has the habit of joking with the cook and kitchen maids on the estate. During the night he is escorted by his two dogs one of whom is very naughty and has been thrashed several times but he remains the same in his activities.

Imagining his past days he grows nostalgic and keeps on writing the letter. He narrates all the agonies which he has to undergo being away from his family. He tells his grandpa in his letter that he was beaten for falling asleep while rocking the baby of the master. He is sailing in the same boat as Varka in "Sleepy". A child's touching words come when he is denied proper food, he writes: "And there is nothing to eat. They give me bread in the morning and gruel for dinner and in the evening bread again but I never get tea or cabbage soup they gobble it all up themselves" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 50). The psychologists have found that a child comes to know the world by tasting. Everything the child gets first takes it straight to the mouth. A child's world revolves around eating. And in such a stage if a child has to write such a thing as this he is for certain dwelling in hell. The pain of the child cannot have been described by Chekhov in more poignant terms than the following: "Dear Grandad for the dear Lords sake take me away from here take me home to the village I can't bear it any longer. Oh Grandad I beg and implore you and I will always pray for you do take me away from here or I'll die. . . ." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 50). Such words of misery coming from so small a child tell more than can be written. Continuing his letter he narrates the cruelties of his

master. He implores his grandpa to take him away along with him and he would be a nice boy never giving any pain to him. He tells that he has even thought of running away from his master to the village on foot but says that he has no shoes and the cold is biting. He very innocently tries to tempt the old man by saying that once he grows up he will not let anyone hurt him and also that when he dies he would pray for his soul as he does for his Mummie.

The child is hopeful of his only living relation in the world. He further describes the city of Moscow from a child's point of view and longs for all the nice things they have to sell in the city. Vanka then remembers his childhood in the village when his mother was alive and he was loved by Miss Olga in whose house his mother was a maid. Miss Olga used to teach him read and write and would also give him sweets. The circle of time has moved so that now he struggles even for the simplest food such a tea and cabbage soup. Remembering his childhood Vanka's lips twitched, he rubbed his eyes with a black fist and gave a sob. The story reaches to climax when he writes: "Pity me unhappy orphan they beat me all the time and I am always hungry and I am so miserable here I can't tell you I cry all the time. . . . I remain your grandson Ivan Zhukov dear Grandad do come" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 51). The child time and again stresses upon calling the Grandad, he is not so much troubled by what is going on at the moment but he is worried that this may continue and infinitum. Man may bear any number of hardships if he has a hope that the days of suffering are numbered but if there is no ray of hope even the small sufferings become gigantic. The immortal character *Dr Faustus* created by Christopher Marlowe in the play of the same title prays towards the end:

"If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,

Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood had ransom'd me

Impose some end to my incessant pain;

Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,

A hundred thousand, and at last be sav'd." (Marlowe Web)

Faustus, the most learned man in Europe could not bear the thought of eternal suffering how can a small child of the age of nine and orphaned find solace in his unending sufferings. These lines of Faustus show how unbearable it is to be put in a place where one has to suffer for eternity.

The child after writing this letter folds it and puts it in the envelope which he had purchased for a kopek. The innocence of child is heart touching when he simply addresses the envelope as "To Grandfather in the village" and on second thoughts adds: "TO KONSTANTIN MAKARICH" not knowing that the ways of the world are different than that of the pure minds of small children. He is more happy not that he has written a letter to his grandfather and he will come to fetch him, that a remote possibility but the joy of writing the letter uninterrupted in solace enough for him, "Pleased that no had prevented him from writing, he put on his cap and ran out into the street without putting his coat on over his shirt." (*Short Stories*, 52) He dropped the letter in the nearest letter box and "An hour later, lulled by rosy hopes, he was fast asleep. . . ." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 53)

The story is heart rending when one sees the kind of comforts he offers to his own children and a mere thought of such sufferings for them sends shivers down his spine. But Chekhov has not exaggerated as such cruelties were the order of the days during the tsarist Russia.

Another story dealing with the miseries of life is “A Journey by Cart” which describes the sufferings of the teaching community in Russia during Chekhov’s days. Chekhov was always very much concerned about the teachers engaged in the rural areas of Russia, speaking once to Gorky he said: “If I had lots of money I would build a sanatorium here for sick village teachers. . . . In Russia we have simply got to create exceptional conditions for teachers, and that as soon as possible” (Chekhov *Collected Works* 7). The working conditions for the teachers in rural Russia must have certainly been very poor which invited Chekhov to comment like this. With such original experience about the poor teachers in his day Chekhov has written this story.

Marya Vasilyevna is a teacher for the last thirty years and has travelled innumerable times to the town to draw her salary and for other works related to the school. She in this long period of service has become totally disillusioned with the system of the government administration regarding the welfare of the school, the students and the teacher. She would often be annoyed with the board of *Zemstvo* (district administration). It was a very poorly managed institution and none cared for nothing. There was not even a person with whom she can confide about the miserable situation of her school. Even the school watchman was beyond her control and was rude to her. All her requests for help, fell on deaf ears. The school inspector too was of no use as he had been promoted from the excise department. The system was so disorderly that Marya said: “The Lord only knew whom one could turn to have complaints remedied and wrongs put right” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 169)! Marya is an example of a person who has not entered the profession of teaching by choice but it was the want that had pushed her into it. In her long

career she never had been interested in teaching as a mission. Her sole concern was the examinations which would judge her skills as a teacher. Chekhov was well aware of the poor recognition that the teachers received in the society and he writes in the story: “School teachers, and poor doctors, and apothecaries, struggling with their heavy labours, have not even the consolation of thinking that they are advancing an ideal, and helping mankind” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 171). Teachers are sadly enough clubbed with heavy labours showing that the Russian society in Chekhov’s day considered school teachers nothing more than skilled labours. Teachers did not get the kind of respect as one today thinks a teacher should be crowned with. They had to struggle so hard for the daily bread that all the ideal talk of teachers being the torch bearers of society etc. held no meaning for them. It was only a few like Marya who are silent beasts of burden and are able to sustain the profession for a long period others “who are sensitive and impetuous and nervous, and who talk of their mission in life and of advancing a great ideal, soon become exhausted and give up the fight.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 171)

Marya ponders upon her life as a teacher while doing her journey from the town back to the village where she is posted as a teacher. The road is rough and dangerous one symbolizing the road of her life. She too has tumbled in her journey many a time but she held tight whenever she had the slightest feeling of falling down. Teachers in government service have always been helpless beings who are thought to be well off by the society but in fact they have their miseries to fight with. The gossips disturb Marya when her coach drivers Semyon informs her that in the village Nizhni Gorodishe some people including the president of the school board, the warden and the teacher made

huge sums of money. Marya calls all this nonsense but Semyon does not believe in the facts forwarded by her. In spite of the fact that she had honestly served the school people thought her to be corrupt: “they also believed that most of the money which she collected from the children for wood she pocketed herself” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 173). People thought that she received a huge salary though it was not more than twenty rubles a month but the people thought that five would have been plenty for her. Marya thinks of all her past, present and the future during her journey. Upon reaching her destination she suddenly has the memory of her parents and her home in Moscow, she is overwhelmed by the feeling of her past and she says: “No! Her mother and father had not died; she had never been a schoolteacher; all that had been a long, strange, painful dream, and now she was awake.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 174)

Chekhov through the journey of Marya has focused upon the hardships that the teachers had to face in his times and how teaching was not a too much sought for profession but on the other hand many people quit it as and when they found the opportunity to do so. Marya, too has never been happy with her profession and is true in expressing her feelings unalloyed. Chekhov brings to the fore the hidden recesses of a teacher’s psyche. He does not glorify the profession of teaching rather with a cool eye of a realist presents the picture in its truthfulness. Chekhov points out through this story that teachers as a salaried class have never been able to attract the respect of society that they ought to have and that was accorded to the ancient teachers who would teach in their own way without being in the service of the state.

Chekhov like all the other Russian writers has written upon the Siberian tortures that were forced upon all those whom tsar desired and also those who were criminals of severe kind or at least proved to be so. His story "In Exile" is one of the few stories that he wrote influenced by the extended journey to Sakhalin Island in 1890. Dostoevsky's account of Siberian prison is the most celebrated work of fiction and fact in his famous work *The House of the Dead*. The story by Chekhov is a short one but very touching and fascinating. It tells of the souls who are tormented by their solitary life in Siberia. These men gain the purity of soul as they come home to the realities of life.

"In Exile" tells about the life and views upon life of a ferryman old Semyon, nicknamed Preacher working in a Siberian village. Apart from Semyon, there is another equally troubled man the young Tartar punished with Siberian exile falsely on the charge of killing a man. There is also the story of a gentleman named Vassily Sergeych who was full of hope and happiness when he arrived in Siberia and within two years managed to bring his wife and their only child to join him in the Siberian village but with the passage of time things all turn against him and he becomes a depressed soul but not like the Preacher who lacks all juice in life. Vassily leads a life with a positive attitude towards it. The young Tartar who is always made fun of by his peers is continuously solaced by Semyon and is time and again advised that it's no use grumbling about the dead past, what has ended cannot be mended and to take to the attitude of not wanting anything as it was the only way to live happily in the hell on earth named Siberia.

The story opens with both Semyon and the young Tartar having a conversation on the riverbank by the campfire. The Tartar who hails from a

Russian province named Simbirsk recollects how nice it was at home. He tells about his beautiful and clever wife left behind at home. Comparing his life in Siberia with his native place exclaims: “It’s bad! It’s bad” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 90)! He looks at the stars and the blackness around and feels it’s the same as at home but something was lacking. As he ponders on his past, present and future he hears the recurring words of Semyon: “You will get used to it . . . I’ve been going like that for twenty-two years, day and night. . . . And thank God for it, I want nothing; God give everyone such a life” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 91). Though the words of Semyon contain a deep truth in them but to a new arrival in Siberia they hold no meaning for these new arrivals are full of hope and they are unable to be compatible with such detached attitude. Their memories of home, relations, friends, work, the right and wrong deeds, all are fresh and indelible. They consider Semyon to be a foolish fellow who has come to this situation because of his long lonely life in Siberia. But Semyon on his part has known the secrets of the functioning of human mind that gets used to any and every situation. The young Tartar still thinks of his sick father and is hopeful that he shall meet his mother and wife once his father is dead, as they will come to him here as promised. Semyon on his part tries to console him and wishes to preach him the way of life that is suitable to the convicts in Siberia, he says: “It’s the Devil confounding you . . . He is on at you about freedom, but you stand up to him and say: ‘I don’t want it!’ I want nothing . . .” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 91)

Semyon appears very cruel to the Tartar but it is the only way one can survive in Siberia or one pines and pines for the golden past and passes away before time. Semyon knows that life should be lived facing it with strong will,

making a choice on your own and then there's no more suffering. Once one realizes this fact there can be no troubles and misery. One creates miseries and if he decides to drop them no power can force them upon him. Semyon has learnt all this from his own experience; under the influence of the Devil he too pined for his wife, his home, his freedom, but says he: "When they sent me here from Russia from the first day I stuck it out; I want nothing!" and "now I have brought myself to such a pass that I wish no one a better life. I want nothing and I am afraid of nobody, and the way I look at it is that there is nobody richer and freer than I am." (Chekhov *Short Stories* 91) Semyon here speaks of a very relevant psychological situation and tallies with the thought of Milton who in *Paradise Lost* had wrote about the power of mind. It is the mind that can make one joyous even in hell and he can be miserable even in heaven if his mind is not in his control. It is a good servant but bad master and according to Semyon one need to beware of it. He says to the Tartar: "if anyone gives way to the Devil and listens to him, if but once, he is lost, there is no salvation for him" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 91). This devil is none other than our own mind.

Semyon narrates the tale of a gentleman to the Tartar to bring home the fact that one who succumbs to the devil suffers like the gentleman, Vassily. He was exiled to Siberia fifteen years ago and since then has worked hard like a coolie as he said on his arrival: "I want to live by my own work" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 92). Even to Vassily, Semyon had preached: "the chief thing is not to want anything . . . if Fate has wronged you and me cruelly, it's no good asking for her favour and bowing down to her, but you despise her and laugh at her, or else she will laugh at you" (Chekhov *Short Stories* 92). But he did

not listen to him and he has suffered all these fifteen years. Two years after his arrival he managed his wife and daughter to come to Siberia and join him. They were a happy lot and he worked hard to keep his family comfortable and he would often say to Semyon: “Yes, brother Semyon, even in Siberia people can live!” But Semyon was a seasoned person and he knew in the heart of his hearts that it’s not going to be the case forever. And then the misery came out of the blue, his wife eloped with an official to Russia. It was doomed to happen Semyon knew but Vassily could not conjecture the simple fact that people who have the option wish not to live in Siberia. Vassily for five days and nights galloped in pursuit of them and then he beat his head, and when Semyon reminded him: “people can live even in Siberia! . . . he beat his head harder than ever. . . .” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 93)

However, Vassily is the brighter side of human mind that never loses hope and he started longing for freedom from the exile in order to see his wife and get her away from her lover. He started sending petitions to the authorities to have mercy on him and allow him to go back home. But as it happened in Siberia these petitions fell on deaf ears. In spite of hopefulness he started growing gray and bent, he appeared as if afflicted of consumption. He became more and more miserable. Strange are the ways of the world, hope keeps one bright but at the same time it feeds upon his vigour and from the one end it leases him new life but from the other it feeds upon the same life. And this eating is at a greater pace than the supply of vitality. None but Semyon knows the truth, all others are under the delusion that hope shall give them a new life and they shall be born anew from their ashes like phoenix. Vassily with the passage of time grew gray and bent. It appeared to others that he was suffering from consumption. But it so happens that his daughter grows up into a sweet young girl and

he forgets his miseries and Vassily is once again given a fresh lease of life by existence. He was very happy with his life but Semyon who has seasoned on the Siberian soil knew the fact: “Wait a bit, the wench is young, her blood is dancing, she wants to live, and there is no life here” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 93). Semyon prophesizes truly and she begins to fade and is taken over by consumption. Now Vassily left no stone unturned to get his daughter cured. That now becomes the meaning of his life.

The young Tatar starts hating the wise Semyon at his casual attitude towards life. Semyon’s statement that one needs nothing is troublesome for the Tatar. He says that something is always good than nothing. He refers to the three years of joy of Vassily spent in Siberia with his wife and daughter. The Tatar says, “His wife lived with him three years — that was a gift from God. ‘Nothing’ is bad, but three years is good. How not understand? . . . Better one day of happiness than nothing” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 94). Semyon is never willing to accept the theory that Siberia is worth living. When Vassily comes to him one day to ferry him across the river to fetch a doctor as his daughter is in a very serious condition, Semyon, again suggests Vassily that: “ but as you know yourself, people have been driving about for years and years, day and night, and it’s always been no use. That’s the truth.” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 97)

On the one hand Chekhov has created one of the most hopeful characters in form of Vassily and at the same time we have Semyon one of the most hopeless characters, but both have their own truths. However, the Tatar does not agree with the opinion of Semyon and in a very touching outburst reprimands him, “He is good . . . good; but you are bad! You are bad! The gentleman is a good soul, excellent, and you are a beast, bad! The gentleman is alive, but you are a dead caracass . . . God created man to be alive, and to have joy and grief and sorrow; but you want nothing, so you are not

alive, you are stone, clay! A stone wants nothing and you want nothing” (Chekhov *Short Stories* 97). The Tatar has certainly some truth in his outpourings, but he is young and dynamic, he is fresh and new on the Siberian soil, he has yet not come face to face with the harsh realities of life, which have been witnessed by Semyon, and thus finds him nothing but a stone. No doubt, he is correct in a sense but he forgets that Semyon has witnessed life in all its colors and has finally come to this conclusion.

This in no way suggests that Chekhov is not interested in the joys of life, since he spares more space to Semyon in the story, he wishes to present the story of human life in the most impartial and just manner, he has pitched two characters, Vassily and the Tatar, against Semyon. Chekhov very seriously tries to draw the attention of the readers to the facts of life that it is a mixture of good and bad both and both need to be accepted with equanimity.

It is hoped that the preceding discussion has amply brought to light the art of Chekhov’s story telling. Chekhov in his short stories has dealt with all the themes related to mankind in a dexterous manner making his fiction pulsating with life. He has through his short stories presented a fictional world based on the real world, and going through his stories one meets the characters and situations that are very much our own. His deep understanding of mankind makes him stand parallel to Premchand in the treatment of human emotions and actions.

The above discussion makes it clear that the stories written by Anton Chekhov reflecting the Russian life which is an overall make up of the history, sociology, politics and the economy of a nation under Tsar autocracy struggling to enrich their culture for new generation. Chekhov's wisdom is perfect in its breadth and in its depth. He was primarily a writer of short stories and he had many things of wisdom to

replete such genres. Like the works of his contemporaries Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, he was interested in wide range of timeless issues: such as love, sex, family life, aging, and death. The wisdom one can gain from reading him is not so much in the thinking of his characters, but in raising significant questions for the readers to consider. In addition to dealing with various timeless issues, the characters in Chekhov's above mentioned short stories deal with important social, political, economical and environmental concerns of his era. His approach to these issues reflects wisdom that is still part and parcel of the social and political system in the present context.

Works Cited

- Chekhov, Anton. *Collected Works, Vol. 1*, Trans. Alex Miler & Ivy Litvinov. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1987. Print.
- . *Letters of Anton Chekhov*. Ed. Avraham Yarmolinsky. New York: Viking Press, 1973. Print.
- . *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories*. Ed. Ralph E. Matlaw. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979. Print.
- . *The Woman in the Case and Other Stories*. Trans. April Fitzlyon and Kyril Zinovieff. London: Spearman & Calder. 1953. Print.
- Karlinsky, Simon. ed. "Introduction: The Gentle Subversive," in Anton Chekhov, *Letters of Anton Chekhov*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. Print.
- Lantz, Kenneth A. "Chekhov's Cast of Characters," in *A Chekhov Companion*. Ed. Toby W. Clyman. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985. Print
- Rayfield, Donald. *Understanding Chekhov: A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. Print.
- Woody Allen and Stig Björkman. *Woody Allen on Woody Allen*, rev. ed. New York: Grove Press, 2005. Print.

Internet sources:

- Chekhov, Anton. http://www.online-literature.com/anton_chekhov/1260/. Web. 25 Oct. 2015.
- Eliot, T.S. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/176735>. Web. 27 Oct. 2015
- Keats, John. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173753>. Web. 31 Oct. 2015.
- Marlowe, Christopher. https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/doctor-faustus_christopher-marlowe.pdf. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.

Miller, Arthur. http://www.pelister.org/literature/ArthurMiller/Miller_Salesman.pdf.
Web. 11 Oct. 2015.

Milton, John. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/2289>. Web. 25 Oct. 2015

Shelley, P.B. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174413>. Web. 31 Oct. 2015

Synge, M. <https://archive.org/stream/riderstosea00syngiala/riderstosea00syngiala>.
Web. 17 Nov. 2015.

Tolstoy, Leo. http://www.planetpdf.com/planetpdf/pdfs/free_ebooks/War.pdf.
Web. 29 Nov. 2015.

CHAPTER-IV

UNDERSTANDING PREMCHAND THROUGH HIS SHORT STORIES

Premchand was a sharp and sensitive observer; he had a wide range of experiences of rural life from his childhood and saw closely the city life during his student life and as a government servant. His description of rural as well of urban life of India is so vivid, live and so vibrant that a reader feels that he is actually roaming in the environment of his description. He not only describes the atmosphere but the inner feeling, emotions and characteristics of the society reflecting their way of thinking, living and dealing with the different situations. In this chapter there is an attempt to analyze Premchand's treatment of different problems and resource of Indian society of which he with his sharp and sensitive observation speaks. The effect of Anton Chekhov on the short stories Premchand can be assessed by this observation of David Rubin in the introduction of his *The World of Premchand: Selected stories of Premchand* (Trans.) that the stories of Premchand are preoccupied with social problems and their tone and techniques are essentially Chekhovian (Rubin 14). The discussion will on some of the stories from the *Premchand: Deliverance and other stories* translated by David Rubin and published by Penguin Books New Delhi.

The first and opening story of the volume is "The Road to Salvation" and its original title was "Mukti Marg" (Salvation Road). It is a story about rural life including farmers, untouchables and minorities. Premchand's narrative starts with the description of the feeling of a farmer when he sees his crop flourishing: "The pride of the peasant takes in seeing his fields flourishing is like the soldier in his red turban, the coquette in her jewels or the doctor in the patients seated before

him. Whenever Jhingur looked at his cane field a sort of intoxication came over him.” (Rubin19)

Jhingur, the farmer becomes angry and loses his temper and starts beating sheep of the shepherd Buddhu who is a shrewd man. Buddhu in order to take the revenge burns the sugarcane field of Jhingur and other farmers. Premchand was very well aware of vulnerability of the farmer. As the narrator comments:

To take vengeance on a farmer is easier than slicing a banana. Whatever wealth he has is in his fields or barns. The product gets into house only after innumerable afflictions of nature and the gods. And if it happens that a human enemy joins hand in alliance with those afflictions, the poor farmer is apt to be left nowhere. (Rubin 20-21)

Jhingur realizes his mistake. He wants to make peace with Buddhu because “a farmer’s prosperity comes precisely from being humble. God doesn’t like when a peasant walk with his high head” (Rubin 20-21). Jhingur did not like the idea of going to Buddhu but others urge him to do so. When he reaches out of village, he sees the fire in the fields and run like a leopard to save the crop but in vain. Jhingur and others know very well that it was none other than Buddhu who has put the crop on fire. Jhingur decides to cultivate an intimacy in order to take the revenge and to bring the Buddhu on the same level as he was prospering day by day. Jhingur starts working in a jute factory in the city.

Jhingur hatches a conspiracy with Harihar, the tanner, for teaching a lesson to Buddhu. Here also Premchand presents a fine piece of human psychology through the plot of Jhingur and Hariher . He tries to reveal the mystery of human nature in these words:

But when a thief finds another thief in distress he helps him. Everybody is united in hating evil so the wicked have to love one another; while everybody praises virtues so the virtuous are jealous of each other. What does a thief get by killing another thief? Contempt! A scholar slanders another scholar and attains glory. (Rubin 25)

In this story Premchand again shows that not only the farmers but the people doing other professions dependent on agriculture are also easy prey to trap. Here the real masters are the Brahmans who keep other illiterate peoples under their foot in the name of religion and fear of hell. They decide the plenty for breach of the code of behavior set by them. The narrator exposes the intension of the Brahman.

The Brahman, the divinely also stood to profit from the imposition of penance. Naturally he was not one to neglect an opportunity like this. The outcome was Buddha was charged with death of a cow, the Brahman had got very incensed about it too and he determined the manner of compensation. (Rubin 27)

Buddhu's punishment included three months of begging in streets, after that a pilgrimage of seven holy places, donation of five cows to Brahmans and feeding of 500 Brahmans. Buddhu who was living a prosperous life is ruined while performing the rituals of punishment and finally starts working as a laborer in the city with Jhingur.

The story "The Road to Salvation" not only describes the problems of farmer, their hard life and the vulnerability but also the ways of exploitation by upper castes of the uneducated and naïve villagers in the name of the religion and social customs. Though Buddhu belongs to an untouchable community hence

Brahamans and other upper caste cannot eat and drinks the food and water of his house. But the food cooked by the upper caste people in the household of the untouchable becomes pure because the fire purifies everything. Such kind of ambivalence and dual standards can't be swallowed by Premchand and he exposed it in this short story very well.

Premchand understood it clearly that in such a hierarchal and stratified caste system, only the Brahamans who are on the top can enjoy and flourish at the cost of the others. He also made it clear that economic well being of a person decides the states of a person in the society. Buddhu belongs to an untouchable caste but none in the village dare to challenge him because he is a rich man in the village and all have to come to his door for one reason or another. Premchand in his article "The Unfortunate Farmers" wrote:

The profession of eighty percentage of Indian population is agriculture. Many percent of it like carpenters, labors ironsmiths etc are dependent on it for their livelihood. Whatever income the nation has is due to the hard work of those labors and farmers. Our schools, educational institutions, police, army, courts and legal institutions all survive on the income of these workers. But the producers of food and cloths strive for filling their bellies, shiver in the cold and die like fly. (Srivastava 73)

"A feast for the Holy Man" is another story showing the miserable condition of Indian farmer. In this story Premchand reveals the dilemma of a farmer family when a holy man (Sadhu) comes to their door for food when they themselves had nothing to eat as the narrator describes: "The crops had been cleaned out of barn, the money lender had taken the half, the landowner's agent's

agent had collected the other half, and the chaff had been sold to get the ox-trader of their back and that was all.” (Rubin 30)

After dispensing with whatever was there in the house including the flour kept for offering to God the poor family sleeps hungry. The Sadhu enjoys the food offered by the farmer Ramdhan. Ramdhan could not say no to the holy man to go vacant handed. A farmer would like to die before facing such a situation. In the end of the story when the holy man was enjoying a sound sleeps in front of his house after having a healthy meal Ramdhan says to himself, “Well he is a better man than I am.” (Rubin 32)

The original title of the story “The power of Curse” was “Garib Ki Hay” (The Laments of the poor) and was first time published in 1911. In the story Munshi Ramsevak refuse to return the money of a Brahman widow who kept her money with him for safety purpose. Nobody in the village came for her help and gradually the widow’s mind gave way. Everybody in the village was frightened of her because she used to remain to bare food and without clothes. Finally Munga, the widow died on the door steps of Munshi. After this, there began the train of event crossing misfortunes for Munshi’s family. Munshi’s wife Nagin died due do the fear of Munga’s ghost. Ramsevak left home to and became a Sadhu and his son Ramgulam went to jail for burning the crop of a landowner where he used to work.

There is a lot of moralizing in the story. Premchand here seems to bring home the point that a man can’t remain happy and enjoy on the money snatched or earned through illegal means. Munshi Ramsevak is ostracized not because he is a wicked man but because he is responsible for death of a Brahman. Premchand is critical of villager in no loss terms because they remain silent and

inactive. In Premchand's view the person who sees the crime silently is equally culprit with the person who commits it. Premchand also highlights the situation of widows in Indian society where no one comes forward to help them but everyone tries to exploit them economically as well as physically. To set an example before people, Premchand himself married with a widow.

The next story of the volume "A Catastrophe" originally it named "Vidvance" (Destruction) was written in the early twenties. In this story Premchand depicts how merciless and cruel landlords used to treat and exploit the poor and landless workers. Pandit Udeybhan, the landlord of the village Bira, in the story orders to dig up the oven of a Gond widow, who fails to complete almost impossible task of parching the two full big baskets of grain. The description of Pandit Udeybhan and his justification of his inhuman deed are sarcastic and ironic in tone. Pandit Udeybhan forces Bhugni to do all the odd jobs of his household without paying anything because he has allowed her to live in the village. As narrator tells "it couldn't be called an injustice it would have been an injustice only if he had paid her for it. In his opinion if she receive food for working for him, how could be considered a work done without pay." (Rubin 44)

Bhugni again tries to rebuild her oven and it makes Pandit Udeybhan angry. He hit her with his leg and orders to light the stack of dry leaves and the little hut on the oven. Bhugni with a violent dash hurled herself into the flames. The whole village is engulfed in the fire spread out of the Bhugni's immolation.

Premchand puts before the reader miseries and exploitations of a woman of a lower caste and that too a widow. Bhugni do not stand for a single widow of lower caste but represent the all women of lower caste who unfortunately became widows. Nobody cares for them and everybody is ready for exploitation whoever

and whenever finds an opportunity. Bhugni represents the weakest section of society being a woman and a widow. She is triply subaltern. These people are more honest, humane and emotionally attached to their native place, people and environment. Bhugni refuses to leave the village when the pundit Udeybhan asks her to do so. She raises her voice in the protest. She says “how can I? After twelve years of working a field the tenet earns a share in it. I have grown old in this hut. My in laws and their grandparents live in this same hut. Except for Yama, king of death, nobody’s going to force me out of it now.” (Rubin 47)

The pain and anger of Bhugni represents the pain and anger of the poor and exploited. If the all such people will stand and raise their voice the exploitative system of landlords will be destroyed like the mansion of Pandit Udeybhan in the fire of rage of the people who are suffering it from centuries. O. Henry in his play *The World and the Door* (1908) rightly point out: “My purpose is to show that in every human heart there is an innate tendency towards a respectable life; that even those who have fallen to the lowest depths in social scale would, if they could, get back to the higher life; that the innate propensity of human nature is to choose the good instead or the bad” (Quirk 38)

“January Night” (Original Title of it is “Pus ki Rat”) *Pus* is a month in Hindu solar calendar corresponding to the December-January presents an eye opening account of the working conditions of a farmer who works day and night in all weather even without sufficient cloths and food to save him from devastating and murderous effect of the weather.

In this story when Halku ask his wife Munki to give the three rupees saved for purchase of a blanket for giving it to the landlord who was at his door. When she refuses to give the money, Halku tries to coax her in order to avoid the insult

from the landlord. He makes an excuse that he will figure out another plan for blanket. Munni draws herself away in anger and her pain comes out in the form of anger in the following words:

You have already tried “Some other plan” You just tell me what plan can be found. Is somebody going to give you a blanket? God knows how many debates are always left over that we can’t play off what I say is, give up this tenant farming! The work’s killing you, whatever you harvest goes up to pay the arrears, so why not finish with it. Were we born just to keep paying off debts? Earn some money for your own belly; give up this kind of farming. I won’t give you the money, I won’t! (Rubin 49)

But when Halku retorts, it’s fine and I am going to bear the insult; self esteem and reputation is very dear to farmers, the words of Halku charged Munni like a wild beast. Handing over the money to her husband Munni said: “Give up farming this time. If you work as a hired laborer you’ll get enough food to eat from it. No one will be yelling insult at you. Fine work, farming someone else’s land! Whatever you earn you throw back into it and get insulted in bargain.” (Rubin 50)

In this and most of the other stories, the woman character raises the voice of protest against the exploitation but within the four walls of household. It is so because in Indian Bramminal social system, if a woman comes out and speaks, the man loses his social reputation. Hence there is a full proof action plan for each and every section of society. There is a check and balance everywhere: the upper caste people are there to stop the lower caste people and within the lower castes and communities there is an hierarchy. Fifty percent population is blocked in the chain of the four wall of house hold in such a manner that there is no

danger of revolt from that side. Bhugni in the story “A catastrophe” is able to speak because her husband is not there to stop her. Premchand understood and exposed this exploitation system in his stories.

Premchand in his story “Neyur” delineates how life of a happy and loving couple is ruined by the greed for money. Neyur the protagonist in the story is a simple hearted, hardworking laborer who loves his wife and leaves no stone unturned to keep his wife Budhiya happy and comfortable. A cheat in the disguise of a Sadhu robs all of his saving & and jewellery kept for the livelihood of Budhiya if she lives after Neyur. Neyur himself becomes a Sadhu in order to cheat others for regaining the money. He could not cheat an abandoned woman and return the money back. He comes back to village and is shocked too much that he loses his speech when he comes to know that his wife is dead.

There is superb description of the relationship of husband and wife and the love between them. Only a master craftsman like Premchand can dare to enter in this field. Premchand asserts his belief that simple and hardworking village folk are easy prey to cunning cheats. But there the naive people can't cheat others even they wish to do so. They remain faithful to each other even in the worst situations. Budhiya dies after three day when Neyur left the village without eating anything. Neyur remains in the same hut even when plague broke out in the village.

Premchand was a great psychologist, who understood not only the human psychology but also the psychology of animal and birds which lack the gift of gab. In his story “The Story of Two Bullocks” Premchand analyses the basic characteristics of different animals and also tries to reveal whether the calling of a particular animal Donkey the fool is justified or not. Premchand

ascertains in his stories that animal also have emotions as they feel happy angry and sad.

Premchand raised the voice of voiceless in his writing than how he could have left the animal that are voiceless literally. In his stories he not only gives voice to these speechless creatures but also demand for their rights. The narrator while talk about the bad reputation of the jackass in the story says: “If they learned to fight back, well, maybe people would begin to call them civilized. The example of Japan is before us a single victory has caused them to be ranked among the civilized people of the world.” (Rubin 64)

The animals also expects love and care from their owners. If they receive it, they return it in multiples in the form of loyalty, hard work and devotion. Take two bullocks do not receive the love and care in the house of the in-laws of Jhuri, which they used to receive in the house of Jhuri. They become weak but as soon the little motherless daughter of Jhuri’s brother in law gives them some pieces of bread lovingly, they feel as they have been fed with a full meal. It is the result of love that even though they eat a few mouths full of dry straw they did not grow weak.

Premchand’s satire is on the philosophy of “Karma & Dharma” in the story very pungently. It is ironical that Brahamns binds other in different kind of dharma while they themselves do not follow it and mould it in accordance to their suitability. When, Gaya, the brother in law of Jhuri beats the bullocks on the way to his house. Moti wants to teach him a lesson but Heera stops him saying “No that’s not the dharma of our community” (Rubin 68). Again after escaping from Gaya’s house, when they realized they have lost their way, Moti says, “you took to heels without thinking. It would have been better if we would have knocked

him dawn load on the spot” (Rubin 69). Then narrator through Heera again retorts: “if we’d killed him what would the world say? He abandoned his dharma, but we stuck to ours.” (Rubin 69)

Premchand here takes to the task the Indian concept of valour that one should fight with one and one should not attack a fallen and sword less enemy. After defeating the bull in the pea field, when the two bullocks were coming back, Moti says that “I felt like killing the bastard” (Rubin 70). Heera scolds him and says that one should not attack on a fallen enemy. Moti protests: “That’s all hypocrisy. You ought to strike the enemy down so he doesn’t get up again”(Rubin 70). Because of these ideals and philosophies India had to remain under foreign rules for centuries and Indian glory touched the ground.

Many NGOs Groups are working for the animals on various such grounds. Indians used to leave everything on the God as Heera leaves when the butcher was taking them away but Moti does not leave the hope and waits for an opportunity to strike. When they see the familiar path, they run towards the house of Jhuri. When the butcher tries to take them away Moti takes him to horns and forced him to run away. It is right that fortune favours the brave. The writer seems trying to awake the Indian people for the freedom struggle and their rights: “For getting the right one will have to rise and fight for them. Nobody will give you voluntarily you will have to.” (Rubin 70)

Premchand in the story “Ramlila” bring to light the reality of so called religious and prestigious people who abstain from charity for promotion of religion and its teaching but waste money for satisfaction of their lust. There is danger of abolition of ancient custom and traditions because of reckless following of Western culture and concepts. Premchand here brings home the points that

children learns from our behavior not from our teaching. In the story the narrator who is not able to respect his father from the day when he gives a gold sovereign to the dancing prostitute Abadijan while he puts nothing on the worshipping tray of Ramlila procession. On the other hand village choudhary strikes a deal with the leader of prostitute, Abadijan about the money she is going to extract out of the pockets of the people who will gather to enjoy her dance on the last night of *Ramlila*.

The story “The Thakur’s well” depicts the inhumane and miserable living conditions of a large section of Indian society. See the double standards of the high people that they get polluted if someone from an untouchable caste touch them or their food, it gets polluted, but they and their household is not polluted when they do all the odd jobs for them. There are so mean and inhuman that they cannot allow them to take a jug of water from their well for ill and thirsty person. In the story Jokhu, an untouchable by birth, who has been sick for many days takes a ‘*lota*’ of polluted water to drink it because there was no other options to him from where he could get the fresh water. There are two other wells in the village but he knows the result of the effort to bring water from there, that is why he stops his wife Gangi when she goes out to bring water: “You’ll come back with your arms and legs broken, that’s all you’d better just sit down and keep quite.” (Rubin 83)

Gangi despite knowing well the consequences of going to the Thakur’s well, waits for the opportunity, hiding herself behind a tree, near the well when all will go the sleep, to steal a jug of fresh water for her sick husband. Gangi’s resentful and agitated heart questions the validity of restrains and barbs of customs:

Why was she so low and other so high? Because they wore a thread around their necks? There wasn't one of them in the village wasn't rotten. They stole, they cheated, they lied in court.... Just how were they so high and mighty? Whenever she came into the village they looked at her with eyes full of lust. They were on the fire with lust, every one of them but they bragged that they were better than people like her. (Rubin 84)

This resentment of Gangi is genuine and exposes the duality of character and behaviour of the rich and high society people. They had no answer for the simple and basic questions of the people of the community of Gangi and hence resort to use of force for subduing their voices. They do not get polluted when they force the woman of untouchables to sleep with them. Premchand had firm belief that individual and scattered effort will not be able to bring the desired change.

The entry of untouchable in the temples was a contentious issue during the first half of twentieth century. The heroine of story Mandir (Temple), Sukhia is denied entry into the temple by the temple priest when she tries to worship for the cure of illness of his son Jiavan. She breaks the lock of the temple in the night but the priest wakes up and makes a noise. Upper caste people not only stop her from entering into the temple but also beat her severely that Jiavan falls from her hands and dies. The rationale of the priests to ban the entry of untouchables into the temples who were counting bags of money, was exposed by great saint Namdev when he was not allowed to enter into the Vitthal Temple. Namdev sang a song to Vitthal how the deity saves the fallen and most wretched of the world. Hearing the song the doors of the temple open suddenly to the amazement of all including the Brahman priests. (Bhagavan 39)

In this story “A Desperate case” Premchand picks up a very crucial problem of Indian society i.e. the discrimination between a male and female child. This discrimination is result of a superstition that only a male child can carry forward a family line and he only can offer tributes to the fore- fathers in the heaven. It is also believed that parents without a son cannot get a berth in the heaven. It is common in Indian that couple keeps on increasing the number of children till they get at least a male child. The mother who gives birth to a male child is respected in the family and the mother who fails to do so is considered as ill omen. People consider woman responsible for the birth of girl child but it is scientifically proven that woman has no role to play in it.

Nirupma is the unfortunate wife of a lawyer Ghamandi Lal Tripathi, he and his family hold Nirupma responsible for not giving them a son. So she is maltreated when they come to know about the blessing of a saint to Nirupma for a son, their behaviors change altogether and Nirupma becomes a queen from a maid. Sukeshi, the sister in law of Nirupama plays the trick with Gamandi Lal and his family. She is absolutely right when she say to Nirupma, “The people of your house are very cruel to curse fate for having three such darlings! They must be heavy for you, give them to me” (Rubin 88). Sukeshi prepares Nirupma for the trick of the saint because she feels that to pull the wool over the eyes of such a selfish person is not the sin but a virtue. Nirupma dies after giving the birth to her fifth daughter, heart- broken thinking what will happen to her daughter after her death.

Ghamandi Lal though an educated person seems ashamed to give credence to blessing and other such thing in this day and age but the desire to get a son blinds him to believe it. Premchand gives a satirical and touching

description of Nirupma's condition in the family that it forces the reader to think seriously about it. Nirupma's in-laws call the saint a cheat but do not look in themselves how big fraud they are.

In the story Premchand makes it clear that the condition of woman is no better even in Brahman families and the woman there are in more wretched condition than their counterparts in the lower sections of the society.

Seth Chetram of the story "A Day in the Life of a Debt Collector" is a typical money lender. He knows how to take back the principal amount with interest. Sethji treats his defaulting customer so severely and directly that no one could dare to deny him. It is the normal routine of Sethji to go out for dunning exercise as the narrator describes "He was absolutely dedicated to the theory that persisting dunning was a way to prosper. From right after breakfast until evening he was constantly occupied in dunning." (Rubin 99)

Sethji not only used to collect money during his visit to the customers but also used to enjoy the delicacies of milk, *ghee*, *puris screeet* and other dishes at his debtor's expenses. He has saved at least 800 rupees in thirty year of his profession at the rate of one *anna* per meal. If he visits a customer second times he takes crude oil, vegetables and cow dung cakes and other fuel as gift. One day when Sethji was on a dunning expedition of a farmer who owed him five rupees and the rogue had paid neither principal nor the interest for last six month. Sethji engages an *ekka* driver with an intension of making food of him with gift of his gab. But table is turned and the *ekka* driver who is a Muslim proves superior in the art of cheating. He and his wife makes Sethji run in order to save his religious soul, when the wife of *ekka* driver tries to induce a pan leaf in his mouth. A miser person like Seth Chetram do not care his purse full of money because he think

that he can earn money again but not the another soul. It proves religion is like the opium which never allows a person to escape from its effect. Premchand also bring this point home that a cheater meets another cheater one day or another.

The Story also deals with the theme of prostitution. Ekka deriver works as an agent who entices customers while his wife robs the rich and gentleman customers. If one is trapped it is very difficult to come out of their trap.

The narrator is the protagonist in the story “A Car Splashing” is also a pundit. He is a healthy and strong man because he enjoys the best food in the houses of rich and wealthy customers, who feels obliged if he accepts their invitations. When he was on the way to his customer’s house a passing by car splash through a puddle and spatters his cloths and face. It makes him angry in the rage and he with other onlookers beats and misbehaves with the people in and every car passes through that road. The protagonist says that he select and tells the auspicious occasion for his customer and in return gets a lot of money. The scene of disorder and muscle power dominates the road till someone says that police is coming. The narrator like the other onlooker enjoys the scene of beating and manhandling. Here Premchand shows how miscreants and hooligans make a fuss of a small incident of a splash by a moving car and take law in their hands, without caring the problems, pain and miseries of the passer by people.

There is no scope of any doubt about Premchand’s intension to speak for those whose voice is unheard. He not only raises the voice of subalterns but also suggests the ways for alleviation of their suffering and resolution of their problems. Caste base discrimination and inhuman treatment with down trodden is not a new thing in India. In his stories he depicts the beastly behavior of the upper caste people in such a touching way that the reader feels agitated against this

irrational behavior. Though in most of his stories he presents the miserable and wretched conditions of the lower sections of the society but there are some stories in which he offers before the reader and society the practical solutions of their problems. "From Both Sides" is one of such stories.

In this story Premchand through his narrator suggests that nothing is going to be changed with mere lip service in seminars, discussions and debates. Most of the so called crusaders of change become the presidents and secretaries of associations and societies; give their statement in newspaper, magazines and other media in order to remain in the limelight and that is all. But the protagonist "From Both Sides" is a different sort of person. He has established a little society for the upliftment of untouchables and devotes his leisure time and a small part of his income to this charitable cause. After finishing his work in the court he takes his cycle and rides to the villages surrounding the city. There he sits with tanners scavengers, sweepers and other untouchables and converses with them in their own rustic language about morals and behavior. He takes their children in his lap and arranges magic shows and other entertainment shows for them. It is the effect of his company and sympathy that a lot of improvement can be seen in the behaviour of the untouchables of the district as the narrator narrates: "The eating of dead cattle was completely stopped. And if the consumption of liquor did not altogether cease, nevertheless Hamid Khan the police inspector, was much displeased no doubt from the decrease of fights and rows that liquor had formerly caused every day." (Rubin 111)

In this manner he establishes a fraternal relationship with the untouchables. He attends the patients if someone is ill and offers medical and financial help for it but in most of cases his love and sympathy was sufficient.

Behind his these achievements it was not the money but selfless humanitarianism and zeal for social service. He produces a sort of revolution in the houses and huts, in their eating and drinking habits and in their rituals and customs through his enthusiastic and unflaggingly sympathetic endeavors. And the most important and significant thing is that they learn to respect themselves. He not only taught them good ways of living and behaviour but also broke the centuries old tradition by dining with them in the wedding of tanner community- headman's daughter. Eleanor Zelliot warns the Indian people that "Rationale for conversion was psychological, but it is clear that this is not enough. Economic improvement for the masses, freedom from village harassment and urban prejudice, room at the top for the ambitious and the able- all this must come through some other path" (Bhagavan 7)

In this story Premchand stresses this point that there naïve and simple hearted people are not thankless like the clever and sophisticated people. They pay back more than they receive, when Pandit Shyamsarup do not return to these villages even after a waiting for two weeks. They reach at his house. Panditji speaks a lie that his wife is ill instead of telling that his wife has taken a vow from him to break the connection with the untouchables that is why he has broken this connection. They bring the best doctor available in the area for treatment of Panditji's wife paying their fee in advance. Panditji's wife Kolesari Devi realizes her mistake that she had stopped her husband from going to such honest and loving people just because of a sarcastic remark of a rich and haughty woman. She herself joins her husband in this holy and soul satisfying cause.

So through this story Premchand asserts that social revolution can be brought not through mere words but by the real and practical work which motivates other also to follow the suit.

The story "Penalty" highlights the deplorable working condition of lower class working people as well as their miserable living situation. The protagonist, Alarakkhi is hardworking sweeper woman as the narrator describes: "During these chilly days she would be out with broom before it was light and go on assiduously sweeping the road until nine" (Rubin 153). It is her misfortune that she has not received her full pay since her joining the duties. A part of her pay is cut in lieu of the fine imposed for neglect of the duty. She finds the sanitation Inspector Kharat Ali Khan on her head whenever she sits down for a moment to catch a breath. She can't sleep even at night partly because of cold and partly because of the crying of her daughter who is suffering from cough and fever. Alarakkhi becomes so much frustrated as she is not able to attend her ill and crying daughter. It is visible in the following words: "Shut up, Alarakkhi brushing the broom. If you don't I'll hit you with the broom and that'll be the end of you. The bastard of an Inspector's going to show up at any moment." (Rubin 154)

Inspector reaches there at the very moment and rebukes Alarakkhi for not caring the little girl. He tells her to go on leave. Alarakkhi's simple answer is "If my pay is cut, Huzzor, what will we have to live on? (Rubin 155). Alarakkhi fears that she is going to be fired for abusing the inspector. The words of Husaine, her husband, while consoling her press for the need of a union of worker for the safe guard of their rights and for the protection from undue harassment. "If our people stuck together like that would Khan Sahib ever dare

fine us so much” (Rubin 155). Here one can see the effect of the principles of Carl Marx on the writing of Munshi Premchand.

The readers also see in the story the pay day is no less than a festival for the workers. Vendors and Peddlers gather at municipality office to sell their items because it is the only day on which the workers have some money in their pockets. Not only vendor but moneylender Pathans are also swarming there to collect their installment from who owe them.

The story “The Price of milk” was published in 1934. The story contains in it every aspect of the rural social life. There are characters from every section of the society and even animals are not left. Premchand unravels the mentality of everyone in the society whether they are landowners, Pandits, untouchables, servants, children or dogs. One can see the miniature of Indian rural social life live when he or she reads the story. Premchand not only offers a live account of the social activeness but also raise pertinent and valid question or the customs and rituals of the society in this short story.

In the very beginning of the story Premchand takes the issue of the lack of Medical facilities in rural India. Nobody can imagine of the availability of doctors and nurses for deliverers. The delivery room remains in the charge of an uneducated untouchable woman. Secondly he describes the differences of atmosphere at the birth of a girl child and a male child. Babu Maheshwarnath, the Zamindar of the village, though an educated man waits eagerly along with all other villagers for the birth of a son. He has three daughters. There are celebrations in the village and everybody is given gifts, sweets and fruits. Bhungi, the sweeper midwife takes care of the child and feed him her own milk at the cost of her own child. She becomes an important person in the house hold. The

mistress promises Bhungi that she would eat at ease right down to her grand children's time. She will receive five *bighas* of rent free land.

Bhungi once daared to answer the remark of Maheshwar Nath because of her this position when he said that sweeper will remain sweeper and it is too hard to make civilized people out of them. On this Bhungi Says: "Master, it is the sweepers who make it possible for the high caste people to be civilized. Just let somebody do the same for us!" (Rubin 225). But keeping the care of his child in the mind Maheshwarnath only remarked, "Bhungi always has something wise to say." (Rubin225)

The period of Bhungi's rule in the Zamindar's house could not stay more than a year because the Brahman objected to the child being nursed with and untouchable woman's milk. Pandit Moteram Sastri wishes for a penance, though nursing is abandoned but the question of penance was laughed away. Taunting the Brahman Maheshawrnath says: "A penance Shastrij? Very Sensible! Until yesterday the child was nourished by the blood of this same Untouchable, so he must already be contaminated. My, my that's the great religion you've got." (Rubin 225)

Bhungie dies of snake biting while cleaning a sewerage drain in Bablu Maheshwarnath's house leaving his son Mangal alone to dwell on the leftovers of the family, as her husband Gobar had already died of plague. He lives under a Neem tree in front of Maheshwarnath's house in all weathers. He used to go to visit the ruins of his house where he found the love and care. He used to weep there while sitting on a jagged wall. A dog named Tommy, his only friend understands him. He is mistreated by other boys during the play and forced to serve as a horse to them. He runs away from the house out of fear when mistress

threatens him for touching Suresh. She restrains her from beating him because after that she would have to take purificatory bath. He returns back when he sees no place to go. In the evening the servant calls Mangal for the leftover food. He receives the food with humble gratitude. Mangal says to Tommy that his mother nursed Suresh. In these words of simple hearted Mangal lie the deep irony: "They say no body can ever really pay the price of the milk, and this is the payment I am getting." (Rubin 232)

Premchand was a writer who picked every nerve and pulse of society that nothing could escape from scanner of his visilent eyes. His characters are from each and every walk of life but they are not a typical type because the variety in the nature and behavior can be seen in every section of the society. This story "The Shroud" is sufficient to break this conception that all untouchables and lower caste people are not simple hearted honest and hardworking and all upper caste people are not exploiters cruel and miser.

In this story Ghisu and Madhav are father and son who are more concerned about the roasted potatoes than Madhav's wife who is in the labour pains inside the cottage. They are cheaters and know very well how to exploit the hardworking farmers and other villages. They always succeed in getting something from them in one pretext or another. They sleep soundly near the fire after drinking water without worrying about the condition of Budhiya inside the cottage. She dies at night and in the morning they weep and beat their chest in order to receive the sympathy of the people. They are able to collect sum of five rupees in the name of funeral arrangements but waste the money in drinking wine and eating delicacies in the market knowing that people will do everything for her funeral. Ghisu is sure that she will get the shroud as he answers to the question of

Madhav “How do you know she won’t get a shroud? Do you think I am such a jackal? Have I been wasting my time in this world for sixty years? She’ll have a shroud and a good one too.” (Rubin 239)

Premchand makes it clear through his story “Deliverance” that the untouchables or other subalterns of society which suffer continually until they stand against injustice and atrocities of upper caste people. If they do not unite together they will have to serve and face humiliation at the hands of Brahmins and other upper caste people. Dukhi services Pandit Ghasiram whole the day and dies while splitting a trunk of a tree. Pandit binds his legs in a noose of rope and threw him in an open field to be picked up by kites, dogs and crows. This treatment of the upper caste Hindu to the untouchables is heart rendering and disgusting. Through such kind of description Premchand wants to awake the almost dead soul of the people. He also hopes to incite the humble and dormant untouchables to stand and unite for a dignified and respectable life.

The story “The Road to Hell” presents what a girl expects from her husband and married life. The mismatch marriages were common during the time of Premchand and poor parents under the pressure of social customs used to marry their daughter to old persons least she will not remain hungry. They do not think about her tender feelings, her hopes and aspirations in the life. In the story the narrator who is young girl married to an old man feels that she would have been happier if she might have stayed at her home.

She narrates: “But because of accursed custom it’s felt to be inevitable that every unfortunate girl must be tied to neck of some men or other. They do not know how many tender hearts shaken with longings are trampled under its foot.” (Rubin 194)

Narrator describes not only the girl but the old man who marries a young girl always feels suspicious about her and want to keep her like a caged bird. She describes the condition of such an old man in the words: “A beggar sitting on a King’s throne can’t sleep in peace, one enemy after another seems to appear on every side. I think this must be state of any old man who marries.” (Rubin 195)

The narrator compares her with her friend Sushila who is poor but enjoy love and care of her husband and the empire of three worlds is nothing before the love of husband and wife if it is mutual and pure. After death of her husband the narrator leaves her house at the night and falls in the hands of a wicked woman. Her desire for true love remains unfulfilled. She urges parents that they may kill or poison their daughter but should not marry them to ugly old men because a woman can bear everything except the trampling down of her longing of youth.

Premchand was a writer who understood basic nature and characteristic of each and every section of the society, society as well as of the family. None of them can depart from this basic rule of his or her nature. In the story Premchand puts bare the basic characteristics of nature of the man and the woman. A woman is by nature if infatuated or attached to someone, she will do anything and will remain loyal to him. On the contrary, a man runs after a woman until if he does not get her. Once he gets her he becomes fed up and tries to get another one with hope that he will get more love and satisfaction which he never gets.

Miss Padma a young, beautiful and educated lawyer considers marriage an unnatural bond, decides to remain independent and enjoy the life. She sees no more harm in sexual enjoyment and considers it an appetite of the body. She has a dozen of lovers from high society and professions. But she finds all of them

mere sensualist who like the bees want to drink the nectar unconcernedly. Now she realizes that her heart demands not just physical enjoyment but complete dedication, which she has not found. She becomes infatuated with Mr. Prasad, a professor in the local college. She proposes him and asks him to stay with him without marriage after an oath to remain faithful to each other. Miss Padma spends happily on his extravagances which go on increasing. He starts ignoring her and he enjoys cinema with college girls and finally runs away with a college girl taking all the saving of her away when Padma was going through delivery in the hospital.

In the story the writer delineates the repercussions of man woman relations. Padma shows her weakness and hence Parsad cheats and exploits her. For him she becomes like a rare commodity, no longer prized, because of over availability. In the end of story when Padma sees a European woman going with her husband tears come out of her eyes. It confirms Premchand's belief that there could be no parallel to institution of marriage for living a happy life. Exploitation of woman in the hand of man will continue till she gives up her weakness and faces the problem boldly.

“A Servant of the Nation” is shortest story of Munshi Premchand, but it is the most striking one. Premchand knew and understood very well the hypocrisy and affectation of politicians. They play with the emotions of the people for their political benefits. He speaks about the equality of all, high or low, untouchables or upper caste. He brings a low caste young man into the temple but turns away his face with eyes of doom when her daughter Indira asks for the permission of the marriage with the same young man.

Premchand was well aware that roots of caste are so deep in the psyche of the people that the caste discrimination can't be stopped without finishing the caste itself as Dr. Bhim Rao Amedkar said in his essay "The Untouchables" that the fortress of caste can be broken if the people starts marrying beyond their castes and it will bring the equality and change in the behaviour of the people.

Almost all the stories dealing with the theme of freedom struggle depict the freedom fighter heroes sacrificing their money, life, happiness and every comfort for the sake of the freedom. Because ,the man who is not free, cannot be happy. The characters whether man or woman in these stories comes forward and set an example before others. Seeing the dedication and selfless service of these freedom fighters, other people also become ready to participate in this holy struggle for freedom. "A Little Trick" and "A Moral Victory" are such stories dealing with the theme of freedom struggle. He wants to convey the message that the moral courage and non violence can make to bow even the most powerful.

Premchand was a writer of progressive thinking. He believed that without active participation of the all, a nation can't progress. One of the major reasons of backwardness of India is that a few work and most of the people sit idle and eat. This habit of the idleness is to be change otherwise it will surely take India into deeper in the gorge. This kind of behaviour of Indian people forced the country to remain under the foreign rule for centuries. If they will not change this nature how long it will remain God knows.

In the story "The Chess Players" two aristocrats Mirza Sazzed Ali and Mr. Raushan Ali spend their whole time in playing chess without carrying for the affair of states. They live a luxurious life without doing anything. English Army takes the Nawab of Awadh without any struggle because those who were

appointed to defend the state were lost in the luxuries. In the end they kill each other with their sword in the name of superiority of blood and reputation of their forefathers.

Through the story “The Chess Players” Premchand gives a message to those who brag of their past glory and reputation of the family that life runs on the present not on the past glory. It is one's duty to maintain the glory and add some more features to it otherwise the situation of the country will be like the state of Awadh and the Nawab of Lucknow.

Premchand was a writer, a writer who never compromised with the ethics and principles of writing from beginning to end of his career. He wrote freely without any hesitation and fear that's why the copies of his first short story collection *Soje Vatan* were seized and the book was banned and it was only by the grace of God that he escaped the prison. Then he started writing with a pen name 'Nawabrai'

In the story “The Writer”, Pravin who bears all the hardship of poverty and devotes his life and energies for writing sincerely. A writer always remains hungry for the name and fame. Once he gets an invitation from Raja Sahab to attend a party in his house where Raja Sahab introduces him with the English loving people and who were his guests. One of them suggests him for translating the poem of English poets. Pravin retorts him saying that the Indian poets and Hindi language are no way inferior to them, then why should he should translate English poets. Whenever Raja Sahab introduces Pravin with his guests that Pravin is a Hindi poet then every body's answer was the same, “Oh I see, you are a poet! (Rubin 165). It made the poet heart of Pravin angry. He bluntly refuses to recite a poem when chief guest, a judge of the High Court arrives and Raja Sahab

asks him to do so. Then irritated Raja Sahab says that he had wasted his time while introducing him to the guests. Pravin answer in the similar tone “You have indeed wasted your time (Rubin 166.) In response to a guest who suggests that he should recite some other poet’s line, Pravin says: “Certainly not if you will forgive me. I’m not minstrel or street side story teller” (Rubin 166). He departs from the party immediately for his house and feels relieved and happy. In response to the question of his wife for her happiness, he responds, “Only because tonight I learned a lesson for all time. I’m a lamp and I was created to burn. Today I forget that principle. But the good Lord didn’t let me astray for long. This wretched dwelling of mine is heaven for me. I understood the truth that service of literature demands complete sacrifice.” (Rubin 167)

Through this story Premchand reminds the writers of India their duty. He urges them not to mortgage their dignity and self respects to the rich and rulers. They are born to serve the humanity and society not the blood sucking lords and professionals.

This debate that Pramchand is greater as a novelist or as a short story writer has divided the critics. Ramvilas Sharma casts his vote in the favour of Premchand as a novelist. In contrary Indernath Madan believes that indeed undoubtedly Premchand is a great novelist, he is even greater as a short story writer. Ganga Parsad Vimal slightly says in this regard that a comparison of this kind is hardly proper because Premchand as a short story writer and Premchand as a novelist are not different persons. On the basis of the stories or novels alone he would have not attained the status as a literary artist (Sharma 143). More than 250 stories make Premchand’s world thicker and fuller as they were effective and

important means of maintaining nearness and relations with the reading public even more than the novels.

The most important thing of Premchand's short stories is his unusually wide range, including characters representing Rajas, nawabs, aristocrats, feudal landlords, westernized sahibs, middle class men, clerks, shopkeepers and professionals like doctors, lawyers, judges, professors, engineers and workers. The spectrum of village life in which Premchand himself was brought up and observed its each and every activity with his sensitive and unerring eye of a society based on rank and states, caste, class, age and sex. He stands for and fights for the case of downtrodden and provides them voice through his stories and non fictional writings. Women and untouchables beg his love and respect and vent his anger against the social sanctions and conventions which perpetuate them inferior status just like political and social exploitation and religious corruption. Much before the term like socialism, feminism and progressivism acquired their modern definitions Premchand wrote for uplifting and championing the cause of untouchable, peasants, widows and prostitutes.

The discourse whether the subalterns can speak or whether their voice can only be recovered with the interventions of some postcolonial writer or historian, Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak is of the view that subaltern cannot speak and postcolonial intellectual must represent it. She finds her subaltern in sati (a Hindu widow burnt on husband pyre) and provides the air for the fire of the debate but widow remains absent. The issue has been high jacked instead of taking the issue from its roots. Subalterns have existed and represented by intellectuals and writers like Munsii Premchand in his novels, short stories, non-fictional writings and speeches. It is naïve to assume that there were no cases of labor, peasants,

dalit, tribal and minority movements in pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial period. Or to assume that lower and oppressed casts and classes were never in a position to rebel or stand against the powerful and oppressors. Though they were powerless even then could negotiate the shortcomings of dominant people. The people rebel, resist and challenge to change their fortune and not for anybody else. On the contrary the desire of intellectual to represent sub subaltern has nothing much to change their lot but as Baudhrillard is of the opinion that the major theme of every discussion on subalterns of the social considerations which they have to deal with.

Spivak's selection of the Hindu widow as the perfect choice of subaltern silence is a choice of convenience. Ania Loomba questions the representation of all the *satis* of colonial India because there were few who survived to narrate their tales of agony. Sati was a practice prevalent from medieval times. Her discourse on sati starts from British government's legislations and patriarchal narratives and did not ponder over document and literature available in vernacular media. That's why post colonial critics and intellectuals charge her of not being able to pay heed to the natives and their voice. They drive their theories from the field of psychoanalysis, post structural, and post modernism and take literature in English as the text for subaltern studies. The stories of subaltern experience and resistance representing their concerns and commitments can be better found in vernacular literature.

Munshi Premchand was the first writer who narrated and showcased the whole gist of these experiences in his short stories and novels during the first three decade of 20th century. Though his condemnation of Indian feudal and caste system is not explicit yet he gives them sufficient space to raise their voice and

opportunity to register their wrath anger and frustration. His social realistic mode presents a live and vivid reality of subalterns exposing complacencies and affections of dominant, feudal and patriarchal suicide. In his stories “The shroud,” “The Road to Salvation,” “A Catastrophe,” “The Thakur’s Well,” “A Desperate Case,” “The Story of Two Bullocks” and almost in all the stories, Premchand exposes and satires the philosophy of exploitation as well as the exploiters and management of situations by the subalterns.

In the story ‘*The Road to Salvation*’. Buddhu the shepherd belongs to an untouchable’s community invites the wrath the Jhingur the farmer, who beats his sheep severely because they break into his field. Buddhu do not care about the threats of Jhingur although he speaks meekly. “He thinks! If I derive the block back for a few little threats how will I graze my sheeps?” (Rubin 20). Buddhu is a tough man, who owes 240 sheep and gets eight *annas* per night to leave them into the fields of the farmers. He sells milk as well as blankets made of the sheep wool. He further thinks: “why he getting so angry? What can he do to me? I’m not his servervant” (Rubin 20). Buddhu burns the crop of Jhingur and whole village and destroys the framers but nothing could be done against him without a proof.

Narrator rightly describes that “to take vengeance on the farmer is easier than slicing of banana” (Rubin 20). Premchand highlights the vulnerability that he gets his produce into the house after so many afflictions of nature and God and if a human enemy joins hands he is apt to be left nowhere. Jhingur regrets himself and other held him responsible for the ruin of the crop because if he had not stopped Buddhu at all, the crop would not have been ruined.

“The Shroud” is the story (*Kafan* original title) on which Mrinal Son has made a film. It is not an explicit or interventionist story condemning the caste and feudal system. Ghisu and his son Madhav belong to *chamar* community among the untouchables sit at the door of their hut besides a dead fire eating the roasted potatoes. Budhiya, the wife of Madhav is going through the pains of child birth. They do nothing to help her out of this situation but waiting for her death so that they may sleep with peace. Father and son are more concerned about the roasted potatoes than her screams. Ghisu knows the trick how to exploit the villagers without doing any work. Clever Ghisu knows the inverted logic of society and tells Madhav: “The very people who would not give us a piece before will send for us tomorrow and give us rupees” (Rubin 234). As expected they find Budhiya dead in the morning. They go begging around the villages in the name of cremation of Budhiya and within an hour collect a sum of five rupees. They enjoy afeast in the city instead of purchasing a shroud for Budhiya because Ghisu was more than sure that villager themselves will make all the arrangement for her cremation.

Premchand begins his story with a depreciatory note castigating the father and son for their laziness. They are described as useless from upper caste point of view because upper caste people are not able to get free or cheap labor out of them. The value of lower caste people in the society is measured by their utility to the upper castes. As Dukhi, a man of the same community to which Ghisu and Madav belongs follows the orders of upper caste Brahman meekly and works whole day without eating anything and dies. His body is dragged out of village by the Brahman like an animal with a noose of rope around his legs and left to be eaten by crows and dogs. The people of Dukhi’s community defy the order of the

upper castes and refuse to take away the body of Dukhi. The Gond (a lower community) whose house is nearby to Pandit goes to tanner's settlement and says: "Careful now! Don't go to get the body. There will be a police investigation yet. It's no joke that somebody killed this poor fellow." (Rubin 248)

But Ghisu and Madhav and Buddhu are perceptively different from other subalterns who resist all the efforts of their exploitation rather exploit upper caste to satisfy their anger for the exploitation they are bearing for centuries. Even though Ghishu and Madhav are able to resist the exploitative forces but surprisingly and tragically, Budhia the only and poor woman in the family who catapults Ghisu and Madhav to a bargaining position and she herself dies without a voice. They exploit her even after her death and enjoy a sumptuous feast while she is lying dead. After her arrival in the house they stopped whatever they use to do to fill their stomach. Just like the ruling upper caste people they are also not short of justifications. Ghisu say to Madhav about her going to heaven that she never hurt a fly, never bothered any soul throughout her life and even after death fulfilled their dearest wish. If she will not go to heaven than who will? The privileged always justifies the exploitation in order to serve his self interests. Budhiya is crushed under the tripartite forces of poverty patriarchy and feudalism. The story explains the complexicity of relationships in agrarian society. Premchand raises of the problems of lower caste woman more pathetically even without any word from Budhiya.

Beside the woman character there are so many other characters who resent and fight against the atrocities of the powerful for example Munga in "The Power of a Curse" Subagin in "Subagi," Bhungi in "A Catastrophe," Padma in "Miss Padma" etc. Padma even being and educated and open minded lawyer is

being cheated and exploited by Mr. Parsad as he understands her weak points. (Looma 41)

Women whether in the upper castes or in lower castes suffer in Indian patriarchal society. It is the women who work day and night and treated badly because they are considered weak. It is not that Premchand depicts them only in the hands of men but he also expresses their discontentment and frustration and their voice of resentment and rebellion in his short stories. One can see various instances of resentment and revolt of the women character nailing from the all sections of society. In the story "The Desperate Case" Nirupma with the help of his sister-in-law Sukeshi makes her in-laws suffer and exploits their desire to have a male child. When Nirupma asks her sister-in-law Sukeshi whether it would be sin or not to lie before the husband, Sukeshi says "To pull the wool over the eyes of a selfish fellow like him is a virtue" (Rubin 89). Nirupma plays the trick of boon of a saint that she will give birth to a son this time, so her in-laws leave no stone unturned to make her comfortable and happy. She leaves no opportunity to exploit their weakness. She thinks "The more I torment you selfish ones the better you honor me, don't you, only because I'm going to give birth to a child who'll carry on your name. I'm nothing, the child alone is everything. I have no importance, everything hinges on your child." (Rubin 90)

In the story "The Road to Hell" a young girl who is also the narrator of the story is married to an old man by her parents. She suffers from the pangs of agony, frustration and desire to get the true love. After sometime her husband dies and she leaves home at night and falls in the hands of a wicked woman and becomes a prostitute. She held her parents and her husband responsible for her suffering and hell like life. She says: "Still the responsibility of my ruin is not on

my head but on my mother and father and that old man who wanted to be my husband” (Rubin 199). She further says that she is writing all this only because the other girls may be saved from this kind of mismatch and hell like life emerging out of such kind of mismatch.

The condition of farmer is not less miserable than the other subalterns of society. He works day and night but what he gets in return is poverty, humiliation and hunger. Everybody in society exploits them whether it is landlord, moneylender, beggar and other professionals of the society. There are so many hurdles which he has to cross before reaching of the crop in the barn, such as unfavorable weather, attack of insects, pests, animals and human enemies etc. Till the crop remains with the farmer the prices remain low but as soon as it goes out of hands of the farmer the prices touch the sky. The grain merchants store the crop and sell this very produce back to farmer in the form of seed at a very high rate. Being illiterate and naive he is bound in social customs and rituals that he follows them blindly without applying his own mind that he has to take the loan from the money lender on the occasions of each and every such activity. He always remains indebted without any hope of being free from it. Premchand observed all the activities of farming community very closely; hence he was able to bring the pain, suffering and problems of the farmers on the surface in his short stories. They are people who can do anything but cannot let their self respect and dignity lower in the society. They can't leave the profession because for them to work for others as a labourers is shameful and below dignity. Premchand in his story “*A Feast for the Holy Man*” present the pathetic condition of the farmer in these words:

The crops had been cleaned out of the barn, the money lender had taken half the landowner's agent had collected other half and the chaff had been sold to get the ox trader off their backs and that was all. For themselves they had saved a small sack. By threshing it over and over again to had managed to get scarcely mound of grain out of it. Somehow or other they got into the spring, but God knows how they would go on or what the oxen would eat or even the people in the house. (Rubin 30)

The farmer had learnt to face all such kinds of situations from the centuries. But dilemma before Ramdhan and his wife is that how they will make the Sadhu (The holyman) who is waiting on the door for food because a farmer can't bear it that a holy man goes empty handed from his door. So Ramdhan offered all the edibles to the Sadhu including that his wife had kept aside for offering to the God and they themselves sleep hungry just drinking water of dal.

In another story "Night January" (original title: Pus ki Rat) when Halku, the farmer asks his wife Munni to give him the three rupees kept aside to purchase a blanket in order to save him from the cold in cold night in the fields, as the landlord's agent was standing on his door. His wife becomes angry and says: "God knows how many debts are always left over that we can't pay off" (Rubin 49). In his anger and frustration she advises Halku to give up the tenant farming because the overwork was killing him and all the production goes into the payment of arrears. She further says that we are born just to pay off the debts. So he should give up the farming and earn something for his own belly. In the last when Halku cannot bear the cold of January he goes to a nearby grove of trees, collects the leaves and burns them to save himself and his dog Jabra from the cold. He falls asleep there near the warm ash and the cattles ruin the whole

field and she remains shocked to see the condition of the field. She awakes Halku and says “that now” he will have to hire himself out to earn to pay off the rent and taxes. Halku answers with a contended smile: “But I won’t have to sleep nights out here in the cold.” (Rubin 49)

It is clear from the stories and historical documents that condition of farmers in colonial India was even worse than the wage earning labourers. In the story “Neyur” Neyur is a wage earning labourer. Through his hard work he is able to earn too much that he provides her wife all kinds of comfort, cloths and jewels. She does nothing in her household even then Neyur has saved and deposited twenty five silver coins and some silver jewellery for his wife. In a conversation about his wife his co-worker Deena says: “She tries to give young woman a run for their money. All she thinks about cinnabar, make-up and jasmine for her hair. You never see her without a fancy colored sari and what more she can’t live without jewels.” (Rubin 56)

Neyur only knows handwork but not the ways of the world that is why cheated by a cheat in the disguise of a Sadhu, of all the money he had and the borrowed from others to make it manifold. But it is not that the condition of the worker was good during the colonial period. In the story “The Writer,” Pravin the writer is a mill worker and also earns some money through his writings in magazines and newspaper even than his condition is miserable. He wears tattered Cloths, drinks tea without sugar and milk and every shopkeeper owes him. In the similar way in the story “Penalty” both Alarakki and his husband Husaini works whole day even than they are not able to earn sufficiently to eat contentedly. They are fine even for a little negligence in duty without caring for the reason of

the negligence. So Husaini feels the need for the union of the workers in the story.

Children are also subalterns of the society, particularly the orphans who suffer at the hand of all in the society. In the stories of Premchand one can see many examples of such children who suffer from every side in the society. In the short story “The Price of Milk” Mangal suffers maltreated and dejected by the other children as well as by the elders of the society. Their woes know no found because there is no one in the society to listen them. Mangal is forced to become a horse by other boys despite her unwillingness. When he makes Suresh, the son of the landlord falls from the back, he starts weeping and tells a lie to her mother that Mangal has hit him. This shows the resistance of Mangal despite all the odds. The resistance is also visible in these words of Mangal: “So long as I’m not going to get a rider, I won’t be a horse” (Rubin 228). Being an untouchable and orphan Mangal has to bear all humiliation and disagree because he had no other option to go anywhere but to live on the leftovers of the Jamindar whose son was fed with her milk by her mother.

The motherless girl, who gives Hira and Moti pieces of bread in the household of Gaya in the story “The Story of Two Bullocks,” is ill-treated by her step mother. She knows the pain of being helpless that’s why she sympathizes with the bullocks. It is she who sets the bull free in order to save them from atrocities and it is a sort of resistance against the inhumanity and cruelty. There are other cases of children maltreated and exploited in the stories of Premchand like Hamid in the Story “Idgah.”

Human beings have power of speech and they can express their disgust, pain frustration and sorrows by telling it to others but what about the animals

who cannot speak. They bear all the cruelty and injustice without an expression of it. The cases of zoo animals' killing their caretakers and others whenever they find opportunity are common. In the story "The Story of Two Bullocks" Premchand in the beginning talk and about the nature of animals like dog, ass and finally starts the story of two bullocks of the vegetable farmer Jhuri named Hira and Moti. Jhuri takes a great care of them and they work for him whole heartedly without and complain. An intimacy and friendship has been developed between two because they had lived together for a long time.

Once, Jhuri sends the two bullocks to his father –in- law's house. The animals think that the master has sold them, hence feel very sad and dejected. They resist Jhuri's brother in law Gaya's attempts to take them away. The bull thinks if the God would have given them voice they might have asked Jhuri: "Why are you throwing us poor wretches out? We have done everything possible to serve your will. If the hard work as we did couldn't get the job done you could have made us work still harder. We are willing to die laboring for you... so why did you sell us into the hands of this tyrant." (Rubin 65)

When the two friends run away from Gaya's house and Gaya comes with a dozen of men with stick in their hands. Moti says that they will show him a little fun if he beats them with stick. But Hira cautions him and advises him to stand still. But Moti in rebellious tone say. "If he beats me I'll knock one or two of them" (Rubin 68). Hira again cautions Moti that it is not the dharma of their community. Seeing the rage of fierce looks Gaya and his helpers concluded that it is best to put off this time and take the bullocks' home without beating them. Now they are bound with thick rope which they could not break even after trying their best. This time the little girl who used to give them bread comes to their

rescue and opens the ropes. They do not want to run away because it would cause problem for the girl but the girl makes a noise that the bullock have run away hence leave no choice for them but to run away. In the hurry they forget their way and taken into custody and finally sold to a cattle trader. In the way they recognize the path and reach to the housed of Jhuri. In this way through combined efforts of both patience on the part of Hira and aggression on the part of the Moti, they win their freedom.

From this story Premchand seems to support the middle path which is the golden path for success. Directionless aggression can also cause harm and with too much submissiveness one can't achieve his goal. So he never supported Gandhiji's idea of complete non-violence in his novels and short stories.

Works Cited

- Baudrillard, Jean. (1983) *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman. New York: Semio-text(e), 1983. Print.
- Bhagavan, M. & Feldhaus, A. (eds.) *Speaking Truth to Power: Religion, Caste, and the Subaltern Question in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print.
- Looma, Ania. *Colonialism/Post Colonialism*. London: Routledge, 2013. Print
- Quirk, L.W. *How to Write A Short Story: An Exposition of the Technique of Short Fiction*. New York: The Editor Publishing Company, 1906. Print.
- Premchand, M. *The World of Premchand: Selected Stories of Premchand*. Trans. David Rubin. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969. Print.
- Morris, Rosalind C, and Gayatri C. Spivak. *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. Print.
- Sharma, G.N. *Prem Chand: Novelist and Thinker*. Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1999.
- Srivastava, Jitendra. *Bhartiya Samaj ki Samasyaien aur Premchand*.(Hindi) Delhi: Shabdshristi, 2009. Print.

CHAPTER V

CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE OF CHEKHOV

AND PREMCHAND

In the third and fourth chapter of this thesis, the short stories of Anton Chekhov and Premchand have been analyzed keeping in the mind the problems and suffering of subalterns of Indian society. Both the writers under interrogation were able to foresee the problems of the society, in which they were living, to be faced by the people in future. They not only took up the problems of their time but also their effects on the social environment. Though every writer takes situation in his writings from the environment but the influence and implications of great writers like Anton Chekhov and Premchand become universal because such a great understanding of basic human nature was rare. In a letter to Harry T. Baker, Frank Goewey Jones justly said that he who is able to see the life steadily and whole may tell what he has seen in very simple language with profound effect (Baker 29). It is their understanding of basic human nature that makes them and their writings to appeal not only the local readers but the readers throughout the world.

Premchand raised some of issues and problems which were not much prevalent at that time but which are taking serious turn today and demanding their immediate solutions. During the study it appeared that in the attitude of both Premchand and Chekhov in dealing with the problems of their respective societies, there were many similarities. Though there are a few differences in their opinions and problems of their respective societies. These differences are but natural in the writings of two writers lived in different cultural, social and

geographical surroundings. Despite all these differences there appears a broad consensus in the short stories of the two writers regarding the problems, sufferings and their alleviations. There can be no doubt in that if the problems are area specific the solutions of the problems will also be area specific keeping the environmental and cultural factors, and resources of the area. But the basic principles working behind these solutions are the same because basic human nature always same and it will remain the same. One of such factors is faith or religion. This is a factor which can't be pulled out completely from the mind of a human being. These influence each and every person in one way or another. In their known fictional writings Premchand and Chekhov seem following the middle path but the influence of the faith of their characters' gets reflected in their short stories. This very faith helps them to come out of the situation or courage to face them.

Neither Premchand nor Chekhov was ready to tenets of a particular religion or faith but were eagerly ready to accept what was better and helpful in relieving the pain and misery of mankind and progress of civilization. Despite their refusal to follow the traditional religion they possessed strong ethical and spiritual qualities. Chekhov wrote in his Notebook in 1897: "between, there is a God and, there is no God' lays a whole vast tract, which the really wise man crosses with great efforts. A Russian knows one or other of these two extremes, and the middle tract between them does not interest him; and therefore he usually knows nothing, or very little" (qtd. in Walter 34). In 1900 he wrote to a friend, "I am not a believing man, but all the beliefs I consider his [Tolstoy's] the nearest and most akin to me." (qtd. in Walter 34)

In the similar way Premchand believed that human life is more important than any religion. Premchand expresses his ideas without any type of sugarcoating like a writer who believes completely in humanity. He was very upset about the ignorance of the people who under the influence the communal feelings disturb their peaceful life and it neither benefits religion nor the man. He wrote while explaining it that when one says all the people worship only one god, then why Hindu wait for the Muslims to respect their religion only then they will respect their religion. If to respect other religion is good, it is good in every respect (Srivastava 54-55). This line of Gandhiji's favorite religious song is apt in this regard: "Ishwar Allah Tere Naam, Subko Sanmity De Bhagvan." (Srivastava 54-55)

Such kind of thinking in the field of faith and religion and that too in India is certainly the sign of progressive thinking, and progressiveness is always area and time specific. The problem of disbelief among the Hindus and Muslims in India appears time and again in the form of communal riots. It is only because of misinterpretation of religion by the vested interests and creation of fear 'Psychosis' among the common people. Not only in religions riots but also in cast riots such kind of felling appears among the people. The communal riots of Bhagalpur, Meerut, Mujafarnagar, Godhra are the result of such psychology of religion and cast in the minds of people. So many innocent people were killed in the riots after the demolition of Babri Masjid and terrorist attacks in Kashmir in the name of the religion. It is often said that the time is the best dealer but can anyone bring back the near and the dears of the people who are snatched from them by the riots. They cannot forget that the riots have snatched their dearest things and the people allowed it to happen. It

is often seemed that women are affected most in the riots. The plunderers think that they have destroyed the self esteem of the opposite community by raping their woman and the women and children always remain in constant fear that such a thing may happen again any time.

Premchand was very well aware of the sociology of the riots. Commenting on the riots in 1931 he said that why people's attention does not go towards these massacre which cause irreparable losses to the nation and the society. Premchand warned Indian people for their communal outlook. In 1932 he said that outwardly how much they sought nationalism but inwardly all of them are communal. Whenever communal riots take place, immediately they become eager to know how much people of their community are killed and many of the others. If the numbers of the death of their community is more they become desperate and in contrary if the number of the death of other community people is more, they feel satisfied. This tendency is very dangerous for the health of nation as well as for the society. One will have to nip this tendency otherwise the dream of one united and progressive India will remain only a dream.

Premchand knew that the problem of social disharmony will arise time and again in India because he understood psychology of people as well as the psychology of the Indian politicians very well. That is why he had to say with great pain that it is unfortunate that today the people do not take religion as too of belief and the way for good behaviors but it is made as the tool for fulfilling these political self interests. The condition of such people is like those mad men who want to get everything for themselves and nothing for others. The day competition of surpassing other religion is removed from the religion that

very day nobody will feel alerted about the conversion of the religion. Premchand knew that one can be strong if one is able to demolish the wall of jealousy between the sects and communities. In any era no force can be stronger than the force of unity. So it becomes clear that Premchand was very intelligent and sensitive and an oracle who has foreseeing the situations of the coming time. India is a country and as a society cannot progress without communal harmony and unity among the people of different religions, sects and communities.

The report of National Crime Record Bureau certifies the relevance of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov. This report reveals that 66042 cases of the riots were recorded in year 2014 which is 2.3% of the total IPC crimes. The rate of crime is 3.5%. Charge sheets were framed in 1.5% cases and conviction rate is 17.2%. (NCRB Web)

This statistical data points out that in India there is much need to be done in order to make people aware about the harms of communal disharmony. Premchand recognized the seriousness of the problem not only for his time but also for its future implications. Premchand expressed his views on the issue of religion and effect of religion on the psychology of the people and their day to day life. It is true that religion despite all kind of propaganda will never be removed from the minds of people. Soviet Union Disintegration on the bases of religion like that of India and Pakistan certify this conception. These two great writers were aware of the fact that religious feelings may get subdued with the passage of time but will never vanish. That is why these two writers try to search some points of agreements instead of

advocating the removal of religion from the life of the people while performing their duties for the nations.

Chekhov also expressed his opinions frankly in the matter of religious dogmatism and prosecution of innocent people. In Dreyfus's case in 1894, the French Jewish army officer was found guilty of treason and was sentenced for life imprisonment. French novelist Emile Zola wrote an open letter in French newspapers in January 1898 accusing military of convicting of innocent man. Zola was convicted of criminal libel and he had to flee to England. After a lot of controversy and public rancor Dreyfus was pardoned and released in 1899, but not fully exonerated till 1906. Chekhov wrote in January 1898 to a friend:

The immense majority of educated people on Zola's side and Dreyfus is innocent. Zola has gained immensely in public esteem, his letter of protest like a breath of fresh air, and every Frenchman has felt that, thank god! There is still justice in the world, and that if an innocent man is condemned there is still some are to champion. The French papers are extremely interesting while Russian is worthless. (qtd. in Walter 67)

From the above discourse it emerges that the feeling of faith and religion were always there and will remain forever. No one can crash these feelings of people. The last way is to allow the people to follow these faith with and fear and pressure and to search for some common point on which all the people following and believing different faith may contribute in the progress of nation and humanity in general.

The narrator in the story "An Anonymous Story" who is the chief character also in the following statement characterizes Chekhov's own beliefs:

Listen. I have passed through so many experiences in my time that my head goes round at the thought of them, and I have realized with my mind, with my racked soul, that man finds his true destiny in nothing if not in self sacrificing love for his neighbor. It is towards that we must strive, and that is our destination! That is my faith! (qtd. in Walter 34)

He was also aware about the people's duty toward the coming generation that they should provide them a better world so that they may remember them for their deed and contribution in making of it. In the similar fashion Premchand also expressed his notion of maintain the diversity of religion and sects and believing all of them under the single umbrella of nation and progress which will be beneficial for all of them and humanity and civilization as well. Premchand said that Hindu and Muslims were never like a mixture of sugar and milk and never will they be. Their different identities should be maintained and it will be maintained. What is needed is that there should be tolerance among their leaders with the progressive thinking. In the story "Panchayat: The Voice of God" Algu and Juman Seikh live with a very close friendship and have full faith on each other. In the *panchayat* there is no issue of religion. When the issue of Juman's aunt comes to *panchayat* it is decided on the basis of merit and all the parties accept the decision of *panchayat*. There is a need of such kind of harmonious relations among the Hindus, Muslims and other communities.

Chekhov wrote most his of short stories during the period of 1880 to 1904, when Russia under the despotic rule of Tsar and Aristocratic feudalism. The conditions of women were miserable and they were not independent even in an independent country. Chekhov treats the women in his stories

sympathetically and gives them full opportunity and space in his writings. Premchand started his writings work near 1900 and it continued till his death in 1936. In Indian society women were facing dual slavery. On the condition of the woman, Suryakant Tripathi Niraala rightly stated that during British rule Indian women were the slave of the slaves. It was the time when the women were getting pressed in the grinder of feudalism and colonialism. It is not difficult to find in the history of the world that the society which had been under the rules of the other, the women of that society has feared the burnt the most. In the feudal system to establish the sovereignty over the enemy, the abductor of their woman was the most favorable tool. India is not free from this mindset. When Walter Benjamin said that slavery whether it is social, political, or physical it is a curse. A slave can never be happy and this pain of woman was well recognized by Premchand and expressed it in his short stories. He was also aware that Indian society or any other society cannot progress leaving behind the half of population suffering and leaving the second grade life. Premchand in his stories made the woman to stand against the social norms and traditional responsible for the bondage of the woman. He wanted them to be equal partner in the progress of the nation, society and family. In the story "Someone to Lean On" Anup the wife of Mathura refuses to marry his brother-in-law whom she had reared up like her child. She advises to her mother –in-law to search a girl for Vasudev. Premchand knew the result of mismatch marriage that is why he makes Anup to say: "I have thought that a woman cannot exist without a man, but I found that I have passed these years with my honor intact. When I have passed through the days of adolescence, why should there be any worry for future? (Premchand 56)

Premchand was of the views that people will have to provide good education to the girls for bringing them to such a level that they may take care of themselves. Once talking about the dowry system he said that the solution of this problem is that girls should be provided good education and to be set free to make their own destination in the world like the boys. People should have faith on the girls as they do not care about the devastation of the boys from the right path. (Srivaastava 14)

Two things are very much clear here, one is the rage against the inhuman tradition of dowry and resolution to eradicate it, second is the mindset of men to see women within the four wall of the house by making accuse of her physical weakness. He has been afraid to the women may take control of the area of their dominance if they come out of the house that is why they exist of the woman form the boundary of house was banned. Premchand know it that the difference of men and women is more cultural than the natural. These ideas of Premchand are very much relevant and proving to be true as women in all fields of human activities are working in all types of organizations, institutions, and managing their households and frankly responsible more effectively than the man. Premchand was a writer of renaissance in India and effort of his efforts and his predication are becoming reality which we are also to see on the surface. In 1931 Premchand wrote in his essay "The Right of Women" that men started to capture the rights of women last the weave of nationalism and wisdom will remove all the difference and out mother will achieve their due respect in the society.

The level of understanding the relationship between men and women is matchless in case of Premchand. If man expects faithfulness from a man, a

woman also expects it from the man in no less terms. The faith on each other is the basis of vibrant and happy relations and of a happy family life. This basic concept of love gets reflected in the words of Jhunia in the novel *Godan*: “If the man will run after other run the woman will also run after the man unfaithfulness of man hurts woman as much as it hurts the man.” (qtd. in Srivastava 47)

But Premchand was not in the favour of the illegal and uninterested sexual relations because he was of the view that such kind of relations can make a family which is loose of the revolution of the human race. Premchand was in the favour of love marriages but not in the favor of illicit love relations. Premchand was of views that the love marriages are the only effective weapon which can break into the fortified caste system which is the major source of exploitation and discrimination. In the short story “A Servant to Nation” a politician who delivers a speech that all are equal and there should be no discrimination. He takes an untouchable youth into the temple and gets the applause of the people for his selfless service to humanity. But when his daughter Indira asks his father’s permission for marrying the boy Mohan whom his father embraced and took into the temple, his reaction the narrator describes in these words “The servant of the people looked at her with the eyes of doom and turned away.” (Premchand *The World* 181)

Premchand was aware that when girls will get educated and well think of choosing their life partners of their choice such kind of problems eradicate. Today one can see in the media reports the cases of honor killings by the parents and family members of the girls. In the famous Manoj-Babli murder case, in Karora village of Kaithal district of Haryana in 2007, the couple was

mercilessly murdered by the family members of the girl for marrying against their wishes. So many cases occur in India.

So it is evident that Premchand is still relevant in present context. K.L. Sharma in his research paper “Explaining Multiculturalism” while discussing the cultural intolerance says: “Fatwahs and dictates on paintings, films, books, posters and artistic creations are inductive of cultural insulation. What Khaps are doing in one or two states in relation to inter-caste, in intra-gotra and inter-religious marriages not only negate multicultural social relations, acts such as fines, ostracisation and even killings belie human dignity and freedom. A bounded society leads to cultural wars, and multiculturalism brings about respectable coexistence of individuals, families and social groups. (Sharma 4)

In his essays and article Premchand takes favour of love marriages and on the other side he calls the desire of women to live independently just the blind following of the western mode of living. Premchand appears right when sees the increasing number of psychic problems and mental disorder in the world because of the breakage of the families. According to WHO’s World Health Report 2001, 450 million people in the world are suffering from mental disorder in the world and breakage of family is one of the major reasons for those disorders because people are not getting the mental solace and security. (W.H.O. Web). The percentage of mental disorder is much higher in western countries in comparison to India. In India family system is still working effectively. Premchand knew it also that the influence of western mode will affect India also and so he has raised this problem in advance in his story “Miss Padma”. In this story Padma wants to live independently and enjoy the life without any inhibition to free sexual relations but she cannot do so

because she finds all her lovers just interested in sucking her youth like the bees who suck honey from the flowers. She wants to have complete possession of the man so she starts living with Mr. Prasad without marrying him. He cheats her by taking all her money out of her bank account and runs away with a college girl. Padma feels dejected and becomes depressed whenever she observes a happy married couple.

Premchand considers the desire of woman to live independently is the result of blindly acceptance of western model of living and thinking, whether it is the case of new bride of story "Manovarti" or Neela and Meena of the story "Jadu". This sentence of Premchand about Malti of his novel *Godan* that she is like a butterfly from outside and a bee inside is the limit of his concept of the woman. Premchand was sure that the woman is the foundation of a civilization on which whole structure is standing. He says that woman is like the earth. There is limitless power of tolerance in her. Man is incapable of it. The woman can sail the boat of the man across the sea of life. One can love independent and free women but he cannot marry them. If the woman gets the traits of the man she becomes a whore. Here appears the difference in the opinion of Premchand and Chekhov. Chekhov advocates the woman's choice to live their life in their own way. He even justifies the extra material relations of women who are dissatisfied with their partners in their married life. It indicates the cultural and environmental differences of the two writers appearing on the surface in their respective short stories. Chekhov depicted variation in male and female love. One finds many varieties within each category. He was against Tolstoy's dogmatic opinion about love and sex.

Chekhov criticized Tolstoy's portrayal of love and sex in a letter in 1890 in his novel *The Kreutzer Sonata*:

His statement about syphilis, founding hospitals, the aversion of women for the sexual relation, and so on, are not merely open to dispute but show him up as an ignorance who has not, in the course of his long life, taken the trouble or read two or three books written by specialists. (qtd. in Walter 57)

When Tolstoy added an afterword to his novella in which he said that celibacy is preferable to marriage and a Christian will never desire marriage but will avoid it, Chekhov called this a few words fanatical and stupid.

Sex is primarily connected with romantic love and Chekhov's training and experience as a doctor of inspection of the prostitutes on government assignment provided him with more realistic understanding of sex and sexuality than that of her men of his time. Dealing of love and sex in the short stories of Chekhov seems matching with Karlinsky's observation that "for Chekhov sex like religion is also a morally neutral quantity, whose moral and ethical implication depend on the circumstances and the attitude of the people involved" (qtd. in Walter 57). This approach was named "Situation Ethics" in 1960. Karlinsky further wrote that there is not even a vestige of dual sexual standards in the mature works of Chekhov. In his *Notebook* Chekhov wrote that "To demand that the woman one loves should be pure is egoistical: to look for that in a woman which I have not got myself is not love, but worship, since one ought to love one's equal." (qtd. in Walter 58)

In the short stories of Chekhov it is often found that many of the male and female characters remain unfaithful to their spouses. Unlike Tolstoy,

Chekhov is more interested in realistic portrayal of characters than making them sufferers for their transgression. In the stories “Agaphia” and “Peasant Wives” the protagonist peasant women are guilty of adultery but Chekhov does not talk about the consequences of the deeds of adultery in “Agaphia”. Masha in “Peasant Wives” is sent to Siberiya for poisoning her husband. In the “Grasshopper” Olga realizes that her husband was much better man than her lover for whom she had been unfaithful. In *The Lady with the Dog* both the lovers perform infidelity with their counterparts. Gusov, the male lover, had been unfaithful to many women and calls the women as the ‘inferior race’ but he comes to true love in case of Anna, the lady of upper class, who reciprocates his love and feelings. Andrew G. Colin says about the tragedy of Chekhov's stories that there are no murders no suicides and even there is no illness and poverty but there are spiritual murder spiritual suicide in plenty. (Chekhov *The Woman* xiii). Chekhov’s depiction of various cases of infidelity does not mean that he approves unrestrained sexual behavior. In a letter to his brother Nikolai that “cultured people seek as far as possible to restrained.....than instinct (Walter 58). Rayfield seems probably correct in indicating Chekhov’s fluctuating attitude about woman, marriage, sexuality and prostitution.

Not only Chekhov but Premchand also remains sympathetic towards women and prostitutes if they are forced to be so by circumstances. In his novel *Seva Sadan* Suman says that she knew that it is an immoral act. “But I was helpless and there was no other way to perform. I tried to earn two ends meal by stitching the cloth but the bad element tortured me and I had to jump into this well” (Srivastava 26).

It is evident that Premchand and Chekhov are relevant and effective in today's context because in today's context prostitution is taking a form of industry and helpless and poor women and girls are forced to jump into this well. According to the report of Indian Ministry of Woman and Child Development 2007 there were three million sex workers in India. 35.47% of them enter in this profession before the age of 18. The report also tells that the number of prostitute rose 50% between 1997 and 2014. The above report clearly indicates that the works of these two writers are more relevant in today's context than their own times. (Ministry of Women Web)

These words of Kunwar Anirudh in *Seva Sadan* are the words of Premchand and very relevant in the present context that “we have no right to understand prostitutes as low. We take hush money day and night, their own interest, and suck the blood of poor, cut the throat of helpless people; we are not in a position to consider any part of society as low. We are the lowest and mean sinner and immoral and cruel, who think them educated, civilized, liberal and true” (Shrivastava 56). Premchand rightly said that the problem of freedom of woman is the problem of economic and social freedom.

Premchand gave due regard to Russian society because women were independent there and were not sold in the market. But what happened after disintegration of Soviet Union and establishment of capitalist system forced the Russian women to jump into this well not only in their own country but in other countries of the world. So the writings of Chekhov and Premchand are relevant in present context in the sense that this weak section of society will find the solution of this large and inhuman problem by following the way and precepts of these two great sages. Premchand wished to give solution of the

problem but historical limits were hurdled in the way. The question of freedom of woman and keep her respect intact was the part of social and political problems of the country.

Premchand and Chekhov raised the issues of discrimination in the society by the upper caste people in India and upper class people in Russia. Untouchability was the problem of Hindu society and such system of planned discrimination and exploitation is found nowhere in the world except India. After understanding the political dependence and its causes Premchand realised that man is more important for man than any caste or religion. Communism in any form is dangerous.

Premchand was surprised about his own society and even by his religion and caste. He has no doubt that this tendency is not only harmful for Hindu society but for the whole country. In his essay "Our Duty" Premchand wrote clearly in 1932 that people's duty will be fulfilled only then when they will be able to destroy this menace of untouchability completely. He was so much enraged that he further wrote in this essay that if any system can say honestly that untouchability is justified from religious point of view. Self interest is the only cause behind it. This vested interest may satisfy one for some time but it will dig out even deepest foundation. The Hindu society is playing with the toy of vested interest is actually dynamite which will destroy everything. So wisdom lies in throwing it as early as possible otherwise it will not give time even to repent. Premchand's this view was adopted by Indian political system after the independence which shows that how much he could see in advance. A writer who is able to realize and express the truth of his society and time and also puts forward his reasonable advice frankly is great.

In other words one can say that a writer who is able to see the future of society in the truths of his time and society of great in the real sense.

When Premchand was writing on this burning problem of the society, at the same time it was faced by Gandhiji who was fighting on the political front. Gandhiji said “If untouchability is part of Hindu religion, then, I have no hesitation in saying that it is full of inhumanity and it is not a religion. It is my firm belief that Hindu religion is not such. Till then, I will not consider the Hindus ‘Hindu’ when they will treat their *chamar* and *bhangi* sweepers and tanner Hindu bothers like their real brothers” (Shrivastava 97). In this statement of Gandhiji makes it clear that religion is important but not important than the equality.

The question of entry of untouchables in the temples was a crucial question in Indian society during the last quarter of 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century. As, Premchand was a sensitive and aware writer, that is why he discussed the issue widely in his writings. The entry of the untouchable in the temple was more important for the equality point of view than the religious point of view. He criticized the priests in the temple for their attitude towards the downtrodden and untouchables and used these hard words: “whether Hindu community is made only of the priests of temple and the *mehants* of the sanctuaries. If worshiper will not be there, whom they will make to worship. He further uses satirical language and says that if your Gods are weak to become untouchable just because someone touched them, then it is wrong to call them gods. (Shrivastava 101)

Premchand raises the issues very diligently in the story “Temple” in which an untouchable woman wants to worship in the temple with the hope

that it will erase her ailing. She is not only stopped from entering into the temple but also beaten so severely that her son dies after falling from her hands. What can be more ugly form of untouchability and exploitation? Here question can be raised again the progressive thinking of Premchand but it was a hard reality at that time that people had more faith on religion than the medical system. Sukhia in the story is illiterate and now going to the temple for recovery of his son from the illness which was not unnatural. Premchand's progressivism is in it if anybody wants to go temple for his faith he or she should be allowed to do so and it is best from a human and social point of view.

Premchand is still relevant because still there is several rural areas where still the untouchables are not allowed to enter into the temples. The ideas and true presentation of the issue made the people of country think on this inhumanity with a large section of the society. Government made many laws after the independence incorporating the ideas and suggestions of Premchand with the help of the Government legislations and awareness created by the writings of writers like Premchand. That's why in 1950 Indian Constitution was amended carrying with it in Article 25 allowing all the Hindus irrespective of the cast free access to temples. (GK today Web). The situation has improved a lot but still a lot is to be done in this regard.

According to National Crime Records Bureau report 2014, 47064 cases were registered by the police against non scheduled caste people for committing crime against the scheduled cast peoples and 11451 criminal cases were filed against non-scheduled tribes' people. In first case conviction rate is 28.8% and in the second case conviction rate is 37.9%. (NCRB Web)

These data clearly indicates that despite the improvement, there is need of more to be done. In such conditions the idea and suggestions of Premchand expressed in his fictional and non fictional writings are still very much relevant and there is urgent need of propagation of his idea among the people. If people will read Premchand's writings they will understand the root cause of the problem and motive behind it. The aware public will not come under the influence of the vested interests of people. So the writings of Premchand as well as of Anton Chekhov will put the communal and fanatical forces at the back foot. Zelliott seems agreed with Premchand when she says: "Set him the ancient past, origin stories those whom high castes view as 'untouchables' present a jati's ancestor as performing, with the most admirable of intentions, an act that nonetheless unjustly condemns his descendents to a defiling occupation. By asserting the essential goodness of the dalits, such story subvert the Brahmanical view that they are contemptible." (Bhagavan 138)

Today in different part of India different caste and communities are demanding reservation in government jobs. This is the result of the reservation provided to schedule castes and schedule tribes and other backward castes by government that social and economic condition and status of these castes and communities has improved. There is also a demand of abolishing the reservation because people of upper castes are not able to bear it that a person from lower castes becomes their superior in the office. Premchand knew it very well in advance that reservation in the jobs and education institution will not only improve the social and economic condition of untouchables but also be helpful in finishing the gaps between the higher and the lowers, when they will set together, eat together and live together in schools, colleges, offices,

hostels and housing societies. Premchand raised the demand of reservation for the Schedule caste and Schedule tribes when there was no issue and demand from any side during the British Rule. Premchand knew the condition of untouchable and tribes. In his article “The Pious Date” on December 1932 he wrote clearly that “the real problem is economic condition. If we want to uplift to our schedule caste brothers we will have to create the resources which will help them in it. There is need of scholarship in schools and concession in the jobs.” (qtd in Srivastava 40)

Certainly those who have got job with the help of reservation are in better position now but still a large portion of schedule caste and schedule tribes population is living in miserable conditions as they used to live before. So preference should be given to those people who have not got the benefit of reservation instead of those who have already taken the benefit of the reservation. As it has been already said that Premchand had seen a dream of such an India in which there will be no slavery, there will no discrimination and exploitation on the basis of caste, religion or gender. Premchand advocated and supported that every effort which would be helpful in the development and progress of the nation. That is why he wrote on January 8, 1934, that the days of dominance of temple priests are left a few and it is in the favour of the nation and society that tendencies of discrimination, denounce and blood sucking should be removed. As already have been said that the first condition of nationalism is to dig out the roots of *varanshrama* system, difference of low and high and religious superstitions. Premchand’s social, political and religious awareness gets reflected in his essays, novels, and short stories. “Thakur’s Well,” “Deliverance,” “Price of Milk,” “Mantra” and

“Temple” are the stories which depict the miserable condition of untouchables in Hindu social system. These comments of Dr. Manager Pandey are very apt and appropriate regarding the two short story writers, Premchand and Chekhov, about the condition of the people in their respective societies when he writes that after reading Chekhov’s story “Ward No 6” Lenin said that whole Russian society seems converted into Ward No 6. In the similar manner after careful reading of Premchand’s story “Thakur’s Well” the readers feel that whole Hindu society is on the Thakur’s well and whole untouchable section of society is denied access to it.

Premchand is known as a writer of rural life and farmers. He understands it very well that without solving the problems of untouchables, women, workers and farmers India cannot progress. There is no need to discuss here the condition of the farmers during the British region. They were grinded between the foreign rule and feudal lords and most their income was use to be taken away from them. In 1932, Premchand wrote in his essay “The Unfortunate Farmers”:

The profession of eighty percent of Indian population is agriculture. Many percent like carpenters, barbers and ironsmiths are dependent on it for their livelihood. Whatsoever income the nation has is due to the hard work of these labors and farmers. Our schools and educational institutions, our police force and army, our courts and legal institutions, all survive on the income of these workers. But the producers of food and the cloth strive for filling their bellies, shiver in the cold and die like flee. (Shristava 73)

Premchand was so much concerned about the miserable condition of Indian farmers. Lord Curzon estimated that annual income of the farmers was thirty rupees and it was taken to fifty rupees by applying another method in 1915. In 1930 the annual income of farmers was not more than twenty five rupees. By these data he brought the condition of farmers in the notice of British Governments and people of the country. Premchand was of the views that the progress of nation was not possible without the progress of the farmers and workers. He felt too much disturbed about the fact that a few people are sucking the blood of the eighty percentage of population of the country. He knew that the farmer remains under the burden of debt throughout his life. On the condition of the farmer he wrote in one of his article that who do not know that farmers are under the bundle of debt. Those who work hard day and night remain hungry and those who suck their blood enjoy the life. They are not able to do anything without the loan. Seed they purchase by the money taken on interest. They use to borrow bullocks form the cattle traders. On the occasions of marriage and death, pilgrimage, festival they have to take the loan to protect their esteem. The money lenders and feudal lords used to make the farmers work throughout their life by giving them loan of fifty to hundred rupees. In the story "One and Quarter Sher Wheat" Premchand depicts this horrified condition of farmer family. A farmer is made to work by the money lender throughout his life and when the farmer dies his son follows the suit. In such matters the people who show the farmer the fear of God, they themselves becomes greater than the God.(Srivastava 103).Nothing can be more heart rendering than these words of Premchand when he says that the miserable

condition of farmers can be described in the words. Further they themselves know about their helplessness or their God knew it.

Premchand was so much concerned about the farmer that he always kept on thinking about the ways and means through which they could be brought out of these flues. It should be kept in the mind that Premchand in his writings do not divide them into castes and religion but think about them as a section of the society. He demands consolidation of the land in his article in 1932. In the same year in another article "Hat Bhage Kisan" he said that the land is divided so rapidly that there is no limit of it.

In 1771 in South average holding of the land was 40 acres. In 1915 it remained 7 and half acres. It was three acres in Bengal and one and half acre in the joint Province. This one and half acre was also in the different directions of the village, so a lot of hard work of the farmer goes waste. If consolidation of the land is done then it will be easy for the farmer to cover his land with hedge, to make wall and keep a vigil. There are some scopes of increase in his income. Some influential and such people take benefit in it also even though it is a suitable system which proved its usefulness after the independence.

Premchand also did his efforts in the direction of the removal of feudalism. He questioned the usefulness of the feudal lords. If anyone is important in the feudal system it is the farmer and workers. So he takes the favour of both these sections of society. Premchand supported the five demands of Rao Krishan Pal Singh. He said while attracting the attentions of government on these demands that if government does not accept the demands of Rao Shab, it will prove that government does not think about the farmers. Besides the failure of government Premchand turns his attention to the main

reason of their plight that they are not united. Bholu in his novel *Godan* says that “we are the bullocks born to plough. We cannot see each other. If the farmers do not go to each other, then how will they love each other?” He further wrote in his article “Sakker Sammelan” that “the good day of country cannot return till all the professions are not nationalized till the fate of farmer is in the hands of capitalists, how much government may do the drama of control, no benefit farmer can get. I would give the farmer only one advice to organize themselves.” (Shrivastava 107)

Chekhov was a realist and believed in presenting the true picture of the society unlike Tolstoy who romanticized the rural present life. Chekhov in his short stories presents the miserable living conditions of the poor farmers and dehumanizing effect of hunger, poverty, and lack of medical and other facilities. The depiction of peasant milieu in his short stories makes it clear that he had better understanding of it than the industrial world. He starts with two stories “The House with the Mezzanine” and “My Life”, the depictions of rural peasant life and this trend continues in his stories “The Peasants”, “The Journey by Cart”. “The New Villa” and in the “The Ravine” he draws peasant characters excellently even in his early short stories like “Agaphia”, “Huntsman”, “The Stepee”, “Gusev” and “The Peasant Life”.

In his early story “The House with the Mezzanine” Chekhov examines certain intellectual and populist solutions of Leo Tolstoy that condition of peasant can be improved by education and sanitation. The story indirectly takes the peasant questions thorough its many discussion of solution of village problems. A familiar contrast of beauty and sense with prosaic and utilitarian attitude of life can be seen in this story. The artist in the story tells Lida that

medical aid to peasant is not so important because here it is not the question of saving of few lives but to realise:

...that all these Annas, Pelageyas must bend their backs from dawn to dusk, are ill from overly heavy labor, tremble all their live for their hungry and sick children, live all their live in fear of death and illness, are ill all their lives, fade away early...and die in filth and foul smells. And their children, as they grow up, live to the same tune. And thus hundreds of years pass by and billions of people live worse than animal...The whole horror of their position is in the fact that they do not have time to think of their soul...Hunger, cold, bestial , fear, constant work have, like snowdrifts, closed to them all roads to spiritual activity, to that very characteristic by which man is distinguished form the animal, and which is the only part of man's life which makes this life worth living.... (Winner 140)

When Lida argues about the highest moral duty of man, the artist remarks that she could no more expect her remedies to cure these problems than the light from her window to illuminate the entire garden. He further says that what is needed is the change on order to liberate farmers from eternal struggle for survival to live like human beings. The views of artist are actually the view of Chekhov himself, who was a grandson of a serf and seen the life of farmer very closely.

In the story "The Duel" the protagonist Misail Poloznev and Maslila had a romantic view of farming life. Misail loves his family and profession to become a simple farming labourer. But soon they become disillusioned. Maslila said before their marriage: "One must...harvest one's own bread; that

is, one must plow, sow, cut and thresh, or one must do something closely connected with agriculture, such as pasture cows, dig the earth, build huts” (Winner 143). Soon Masha realizes her mistake and says that it is trouble to live in the village. She leaves the village as well as Misail applies for the divorce.

In the story “The Peasant” Nikolay Chikildeev, a waiter in a hotel becomes numb and his goat is changed while serving hem and peas, decides to spent rest of his life in his native village because he thinks it better to be ill at hove and life is cheaper in the village. It indicated the irony of the story that idealized dreams are destroyed by the reality of peasant life: “In his Childhood memories he had pictured his home (the Russian is “native nest”) as bright, cozy, and comfortable. Now, entering the hut, he was positively frightened: it was so dark, crowded and flirty.” (Winner 151)

The hunger and the misery changed the attitude of the peasants towards death and express their hopelessness often. The family members tell the old peasants time and again that they have stayed overtime and they do not mind it. They also wait openly and eagerly for Nikolay’s death. In the end after the death of Nilolay his wife and daughter leave the village to return to city and seen begging before house of a rich man. Nothing can be more pathetic, ugly and heart rendering than this.

From above analysis it is quite clear that both Chekhov and Premchand were deeply attached to the farmer and tried their best to fight for upliftment of farmers in their real life and in these short stories. They demanded a complete upheaval in the system only then situation of the peasant can be improved. The condition of farmers is still almost same. According the

National Crime Record Bureau Report 2014, 5650 farmers did suicide and percentage of farmers' suicide is 11.2% of total suicides in India. (NCRB Web)

In such situations Premchand and Chekhov are relevant and their approach to the problems of farmers makes them worth reading in the present day context. It is also a reality that one can't expect the progress of nation without improving the conditions of the farmers.

Premchand stresses time and again that India cannot progress till the farmers and workers remain backward and miserable. Premchand takes most of his working men from the unorganized sector of rural economy not like that of Chekhov's factory workers. Upper cast Brahmins, landlords and money lenders force them to work like bonded laborers. The unemployed villagers who are not able to get work in the villages to go work in cities to work in the factories or in construction work of buildings.

In the short story "The Road to Salvation" Jhengur, the farmer starts working in a jute factory after his crops being destroyed in the fire and later Buddhu, who had burnt the crops of villagers joins him in the same city. Their condition is so much pathetic that they take solid food once in a day. In the similar way Pravin, the writer in the story "The Writer" takes tea without sugar and milk and wears clothes because he is a mill worker. Despite his extra income from his working in newspapers and magazines, every shopkeeper owes him. He and his wife are not to arrange two ends meals.

The plight of the workers to the unorganized sectors like agriculture and service sector in the cities was not much better than the farmers. The workers like tanners, labourers, carpenters, weavers, porches, washing man

and agriculture labourers etc. were depended for their livelihood on the good crops. If the crops are destroyed by natural disaster or by some other reasons these workers also used to get destroyed. Most of them had to work without and any payment for landlords, priests and money lenders because they used to give a little loan to them at the time of need. Such blood sucking parasites used to keep on adding interest and their working class people had to work throughout their life and after their death their children had to follow the sect. In the story “Deliverance” the tanner Dukhi dies working whole day with eating even a morsel of grain just to please the Brahmin to know the pious occasion for the marriage of his daughter. In the short story “Neyur” Premchand describes the working condition of labourers, their life style, their way of thinking and attitude towards the life.

In the short story “A Catastrophe” landlord of the village Pandit Udaybhan orders a gond caste woman to go out of village because she failed to porch the grains of the landlord properly and within stipulated time. He digs out her over and orders to leave the village. She challenges him saying: “How can I? After twelve years of working in a field as a tenant earns a share in it. I have grown old in this hut. Except for Yama, king of death, nobody is going to force me out of it (Shrivastav 47). In the similar manner Housani the sweeper, who is also husband of Alarakkhi another sweeper working for municipality becomes angry on cutting of salary time and again form Alarakkhi’s account as penalty. He says to his wife: “If he’s fired you, won’t we ask on what grounds? And who heard you abuse him? Can there be no justice that he can for anyone he pleases? If I’m not heard I’ll complain to the panchayat, I’ll beat

my head on the headman's gate...If our people stuck together like that would Khan Sahib ever dare fine as so much." (Rubin 155)

Like Premchand, Chekhov was also excessively concerned and painful on the condition of workers and farmers. His pain comes out on the surface in his letter to Suborein: "A Workman's labour is practically not paid for at all, and that is why I am well off. I am beginning to understand the delights of capitalism." (Winner 123)

There are many stories of Chekhov dealing with the growth of Russian Industry, the new bourgeoisie of the workers and life in the village. These stories explain the source of human frustration in the social system, where a great majority of Russian population lives in deprivation. Edm and Wilson rightly assume that they compose an analysis of Russia in miniature.

The story "A Woman's Kingdom", "Three Years" and "A Doctor Visits" are concerned with the industrialization and emergence of a new bourgeoisie. "A Woman's Kingdom" was published in 1894, presents before the readers the frustration of a woman factory owner who hails from the working class and wants to be in touch with the workers. But neither she is able to remain with the worker not she belongs to the capitalist class. Her portions are indicated by the two floors of her house in which she lives. She meets with workers at lower floor and secures such guests at the upper floor and she keeps on hanging in between. In his story "A Doctor's Visit" Chekhov depicts the inhuman and pathetic working conditions of the factory workers in these words:

"Fifteen hundred or two thousand people are working without rest in unhealthy surroundings, making bad cotton goods, leaving on

the verge of starvation, and walking from this nightmare only at rare in the tavern, a hundred people work as overseers, and whole life of that hundred people is spent in imposing fines, in abuse, in injustice, and only two or three so called owners enjoy the profits, though they don't work at all, and despise the wretched cotton. (Chekhov *Short Stories* 207)

From the above analysis of the short stories and nonfictional writings of these two great artists, it emerges out that they were the true champions of the cause of workers and farmers. They are relevant even today because the situation of the workers has not changed much even today. After collapse of communism in Soviet Union and Balkan Countries, the ground is open and vacant for the capitalism to exploit the working force throughout the world. In such conditions the advice and depiction of these two writers becomes more important for saving the workers from the clutches of the capitalists.

According to Fourth Annual Employment Survey Report 2013-14 by the Labour Bureau Government of India 50% of person above the age of 15 years are unemployed in India. The report further states that 5% persons above the age of 15 years in India wanted to work but could not get the work. So in such a situation when labour force is surplus, definitely the capitalist will exploit them. (Labour Web) So there is an urgent need to look after the interest of the workers. So it is the duty of labour organization and government to enact laws in favour of workers and ensure their employment. The suggestions and depictions can be helpful in solving the problems of worker in the present context.

Premchand and Chekhov left no section of their society untouched. They raised the issues and problems of everyone in the society who failed to protect his or her rights. The story “Panchayat: The Voice of God” the widow having sons and Chekhov’s “The Peasants” etc are the stories in which he presents the case of old aged people dejected and misbehaved in their own house by their own near and dears and nobody listen their woes in the society.

Society is moving from joint family system to nuclear family system and the more trends of the live- in- relationship system. In such conditions the problems of aged people are increasing in many folds. They are not only dejected and neglected but also murdered in their lonely houses for the sake of a little money. In such situations the writings of writers like Chekhov and Premchand are proving even more relevant than their own times. National Crime Bureau Report 2014 fully supports this view. According to this report 18714 cases under IPC were registered for the crimes against senior citizens (NCRB Web). It shows the gravity of the situation. In such a critical situation the short stories of Premchand and Chekhov are more relevant in the sense that people may get a right direction about these duties and responsibilities towards the senior citizens. If these stories are made part of school and college curriculum, it could provide a great help in the solving the problem many such kind of problems in the society.

Chekhov and Premchand not only gave support to the old aged people in their stories but also to the children who are essentially subaltern in every sector of the society. Premchand in his stories “Idgah”, “The Price of Milk” and in many others and Chekhov in his stories “Vanika”, “Sleepy” etc. raise the issues of inhuman treatment with the children. The crime against the

children are increasing day by day, so fast that this problem is also expecting an early solution. Newspaper and Television reports keep the parents as well as children under constant fear that anything may happen at any time and children are not safe in their houses. This problem is turning serious day by day. In such a situation the stories of writers like Premchand and Chekhov are becoming more and more relevant. The National Crime Records Bureau 2014 certifies it. According to this report in year 2014, 89423 criminal cases were registered for crimes against children and conviction rate in these cases is 33.1%. (NCRB Web)

Despite these major issues and concerns Premchand and Chekhov also raised some minor issues in their short stories which the present society is facing as serious challenges. Such issues are like honour killings, family breakups, corruptions and crime against the animal etc. Premchand supported marriages across the castes and religion because he believed that only such marriages can be the only weapon to break the fortified walls of stratified caste system and religious enmity. In his story “A Servant to the Nation” Premchand indicates towards such kind of incidents in coming time. When the girl, Indira asks her politician father for the marriage with an untouchable boy Mohan, whom her father has made to enter into the temple. The reaction of the father is so furious and dangerous.

Premchand in his story “The Story of Two Bullocks” criticises the ill treatment with the voiceless animals. Chekhov in many of his stories shows that animals like human beings too have feelings and they can share them with human beings also. When in today’s materialistic world man has no time for their fellow human beings these voiceless animals become their companions.

The ill treatment with animals is not justifiable in any sense. Many of such cases of cruelty appear in media these days. A recent case of cruelty reported by India Today News in (Dehradun) dated in March 14, 2016 in which a politician is shown breaking the leg of police horse. A criminal case is filed against the erring MLA.

Premchand in his stories “Namak ka Daroga”, “Wife to Husband” and “Two Sisters” raises the issue of prevalent corruption in the society. Chekhov also raises this issue in many of his stories. The problem has taken a serious turn today. Because of prevalent corruption it has become almost impossible for the poor and uneducated people to get their works done in government offices. In this sense Premchand and Chekhov are more relevant today and it appears that they will remain forever because they touched the basic human nature in their short stories and basic human nature never changes.

Works Cited

- Baker, H.T. *The Contemporary Short Story: A Practical Manual*. Boston: D C Heath & Co. Publishers, 1916. Print.
- Chekhov, Anton. *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories*. Ed. Ralph E. Matlaw. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979. Print.
- . *The Woman in the Case and Other Stories*. Trans. April Fitzlyon and Kyril Zinovieff. London: Spearman & Calder. 1953. Print.
- Premchand, M. *The Shroud and 20 Other Stories*. Trans. Madan Gopal. New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1972. Print.
- . *The World of Premchand: Selected Stories of Premchand*. Trans. David Rubin. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969. Print.
- Srivastava, Jitendra. *Bhartiya Samaj ki Samasyaien aur Premchand*.(Hindi) Delhi: Shabdshristi, 2009. Print.
- Sharma, K.L. "Explaining Multiculturalism." *Journal of Rajasthan Association for Studies in English*.. Vol. 8. Year 2012. 1-5. Print.
- Winner, Thomas. *Chekhov and his Prose*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. Print.

Internet Sources:

- <http://www.gktoday.in/articles-25-28-and-right-to-freedom-of-religion-in-india/> Web. 2.4.2016
- Labour Bureau of India. <https://india.gov.in/survey-reports-and-statistics-labour-bureau>. Web. 20.03.2016
- Ministry of Women & Child Development. <http://wcd.nic.in/> . Web. 22.03.2016
- National Crime Records Bureau. <http://www.ncrb.gov.in/> Web. 20.03.2016.
- Walter G.M. <http://www.wisdompage.com/ChekhovEssay.pdf> Web. 22 Oct. 2015.
- WHO. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization. Web. 20.03.2016

CONCLUSION

What this analytical journey has tried to demonstrate through the analysis of the short stories of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand is that the authors had perfectly positioned their short stories contextualizing with a specific social, political and economic contemporary issue. Contextualizing the short stories is an important motif for Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand. It is wonderful to see that their contextualizing reflects the respective Russian and Indian societies as successfully as Yoknapatawpha for William Faulkner, Wessex for Hardy and Malgudi for R.K Narayan. They contextualise more truly than any other writer. The elements of history, politics, sociology, economy, culture and nationality inherent in their short stories are the main factors responsible for the intensification of the characters' feelings. Thus, closer the context, the tenderer and deeper is the issue raised by them. This equation is clearly demonstrated in their short stories.

This study has included the original script with endnotes and a structural analysis of the selected short stories of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand. Social as well as historical backgrounds of the characters are presented. This background includes the history as it pertains to Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand and the national mindset in prerevolutionary Russia and India.

This background which formulates the contexts is integral not only in the development of the character, but also in the script which supports the characters of the short stories. Much of what is contained in the short stories is from elements of history, politics, sociology, economy, culture and nationality

of these writers to which correspondences, anecdotes, and written material from and about Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand strongly support. These materials are perfectly used in the short stories as interpretive tools in the development of the characters, and included clues to physical appearance of the authors' personality and its contextualising.

The short story analysis contained herein this study is, in part, a reflection of the historical and environmental contextual concerns. In addition to all this, external and internal portrayals of the characters and the means used to achieve them are being discussed. These means included emotionally and energetically presence of the active authors.

Since this study falls under a comparative interrogation, the active contexts of both the writers has taken the form of the texts and characters have reflected their subsequent ideologies. This phenomenon, and its effect on the readers, is the basis of this study. The acting approach in execution of the contexts is also reflected in the study, which contains a record of the successes, challenges, choices and adjustments made by Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand in the process of writing these selected short stories. Included among these are the various adjustments made by them in order to achieve a highly perfect level of spontaneity in the narration, propagation of their respective ideals, and the semi improvisational approach which aided in adjusting to each unique context in reading.

The contextual or historical background necessarily incorporates for a complete view of the character of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand's short stories. To discuss first Chekhov, this background information includes the political, social and cultural happenings of the late imperial period of

Russia. Consideration is given basically to the period of Anton Chekhov's life, the years he lived between 1860-1904. The social and political upheavals during this era of Russian history are the precursors to the 1917 communist revolution that followed. The Russians, during this period, were experiencing a change from the previous era. In addition to all this, various key examples of the Russian mindset are detailed.

Almost for two hundred years earlier to the birth of Anton Chekhov, Russian nation had been under the cruel control of a Tsarist autocracy which had long depended on a strict class system, began with the nobility and leading down to the gentry, peasant, and the serf classes. This kind of social organizational set up made it possible to sideline a central governance and control the production of agricultural inputs, which were significant for the economy.

The demolition of serfdom in 1860 was a kind of catalyst for a restructuring of an old economy. This old economy was powerfully linked to the social stratification present at this time in Russia. The serfs were at the low levels of society, overseen by all the land-owning gentry, for whom they worked. This arrangement was a backbone of the agriculture that drove a large part of the Russian economy. The issue of serfdom reached at a violent, protest-filled height at the middle of the century, prompting government action to peasant's revolt and a strong public opinion against the firm feudal institution. Soon after the serfs were completely freed, the government began to turn over some sort of rule to local governing bodies, that is, called zemstvo. The zemstvo reforms were enacted in the year 1864, in reaction to the fact that the gentry could no longer be governed and organized the newly

freed serf population. Chekhov himself had direct experience with zemstvo, working together with the local governments in both Melikhovo and Yalta to organize all and everything from the famine relief to the construction of the schools and libraries.

Another effect of the abolition of the serfdom was upheaval in caste system of Russia. Without the serfs as free or cheap labour, many of the gentry classes found it economically impossible to flourish. At the same time, the serfs were being displaced in an economy and social structure by the growing middle class (Riasanovsky 188). This middle class was created almost by a climate of the “reform” in 1860s Russia, which the Tsar Alexander II had instigated out of the economic necessity and peasant unrest (Riasanovsky 168). This was a time of new bureaucracies, such as a zemstvo and the civil service, and the reform also hastened the industrialization and the creation of a new urban working class (Riasanovsky 172). Ruler Alexander II’s reforms stopped sort of a constitutional government, however, and thus began the powerful anti-Tsarist sentiment throughout the country (Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia 99-100). The Tsar bore many assassination attempts, culminating in his death in 1881.

Alexander II’s son, Alexander III, ruled Russia for the next fourteen years (1881- 1894). His reaction to the assassination of Alexander II was to cease all progressive reform measures (Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia 101), and to re-establish a strong central control. This did not, however, cease the protest activities, particularly among all the intelligentsia and students at the universities.

Since the loss of Crimean war in 1856, the intelligentsia and the writers had openly criticized the Russian autocracy for its inflexibility and also for falling behind all the cultural and technical advances of the Western countries (Offord 45-46). By this time, Anton Chekhov had begun his career as a writer and the political protest was reaching its culmination, both in print and in the streets. This period of the late 1880s and 1890s reflected, in many ways, the great cultural and the political upheaval of 1960s United States (Hingley Russia 134). Like the United States in the 20th Century, 19th Century Russia had, specifically by late mid-century, swung politically from a kind of patriotic, nationalistic state to the period of upheaval and questioning. Like United States's Vietnam experience, Russia's failure in Crimean War generated various questions about Russia's political and the economic priorities. A good deal of this kind of questioning was generated by all the intellectuals and the youth power of Russia.

Much protest was occurred in university campuses, where almost all the intelligentsia held sway over the new views of young students. Nihilism, generated by a distrust of authority and the elevation of an individual, took root (Riasanovsky 174). Populism was also experienced resurgence, due to the terrible famines and epidemics which gripped the Russia in the earlier years of 1890s. One of the leading proponents of the Populism in the press was Mikhailovsky, same leftist critic and the Marxist who had reviewed Chekhov's literary work (Offord 98-99). At the death of Tsar Alexander III in 1894 and the ascension of his son, the weaker Nicholas, the political opposition to the autocracy reached its zenith. Overall, the period from 1881 until 1904, year of Chekhov's death, was an intense time of the change. Due to

the modernization and a history of protest leading up to it, the autocracy had more difficulty in controlling opposing public opinion and the unrest (Moss 52). Leo Tolstoy became the primary critic of Russian society as a whole, and the Russian Orthodoxy in particular. For his pains, he was then excommunicated (Moss 53). The Orthodox Church, like the autocracy, was the singular power. This was resulted in the intolerance and persecution of the other religions, and the Jews suffered most particularly. Other writers, as Maxim Gorky, were exiled or arrested for political views, but this did nothing to stop the tide of the anti-Tsarist sentiment.

Despite their political predilections, writers in Russia were a part of the period of greatness in the arts. In Chekhov's time, there were the restraints on certain forms of the political expression, but the artistic expression was flourishing. Chekhov himself had to deal with the possibility of the censorship when working with the imperial theatres like the Alexandrinsky, which had the hierarchy leading to the Tsar himself (Frame 20). Still, the free artistic discourse was the order of the day and such arguments as to merits of the Symbolism versus Realism (Frame 13) were the lively ones. First of all, Chekhov had to deal primarily with the Tsar-approved theatres, most of them were in St. Petersburg, a long-acknowledged cultural capital. But the gradual death of the theatrical monopolies in the Europe had its effect. In 1881, the Russia abandoned the monopoly system as well. (Frame 12)

The independent theatres sprung up in the latter days of 19th Century, foremost among these being the one and only Moscow Art Theatre. There, of course, Chekhov would flourish as a playwright. In literary circles Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Gorky achieved the international prominence. This

was not a mean feat, considering that Russia was struggling to pull itself out of several hundred years of the isolation. The Russian classical music was also on a zenith level, with such great people as Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov and Rubinstein. This period saw the Russian music heavily influenced by the European Romanticism (Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia 222- 24). The overall success and the advancement of the Russian artistic and literary endeavors stood in the stark contrast to her struggles in developing socially and economically.

The society of Russia in late 19th Century is inevitably related to the historical experience. This past experience had created the mindset among the Russian nationals. This was uniquely carved out by the history, economics, ethnic orientation, world view and the long-established ways of living the daily life. In the case of Anton Chekhov, this mindset was begun by his birth as a peasant in the caste society. In spite of the abolition of the serfdom in the year of his birth, 1860, the caste system was still ingrained in the fabric of the Russian society and therefore in its people. Being a serf or peasant in the 19th Century Russia would not tend to bring the feelings of inferiority. This is due to the fact that the individual rights and expectations were predetermined by the caste into which a person was born (Gorer and Rickman 94). It was an infrequent occasion when the member of a caste was allowed to marry outside that structure, for example. It is also interesting to note that, while child-rearing was usually done in a responsible manner, there would have been no romantic notion of the modern love attached to the process. There would not have been any sense of the masculine or feminine fulfillment attached to the child bearing, as it was viewed as an inevitable facet of the life (Gorer and

Rickman 95). The work habits for rural peasants would have long been centered on system of the seasons. The harvest and the planting cycles served to provide not only the frame of the reference for the passing of the time, but the rhythms of the everyday life. In Chekhov's time, these attitudes and the life ways would have still been quite prevalent. Because of the freedom from the legal caste restraints he was free to advance socially and intellectually. As his grandfather had to purchase his freedom during the serf era, in the same way, his family had been free to pursue the interests in business, art and the literature even before the abolition. In a nutshell, Chekhov had the freedom to become a cosmopolitan.

But Chekhov could not have easily escaped the psychological traditions of the old culture. For example, the Russians of his time frequently looked upon themselves as having opposing qualities. Being humane meant, at that time, also being cruel; being the industrious had its antithesis in the laziness. This latter contrast is the example of the phenomenon of the *strada*, a suffering related to the short bursts of the energy and work expended in the traditional country life. This would have followed all the age old dictates of the seasons where, for example, the flurry of the harvest activity would be followed by the inactivity in the winter (Hingley 34-35). Chekhov himself always joked about his "Ukrainian laziness," yet he himself proved to be the exceptionally hard worker.

Anton Chekhov certainly understood the concept of the *toska*, which is the feeling of yearning or the longing, often for that which is the unattainable (Gorer and Rickman 149). Here are evidences of this in Chekhov's writings, nothing more obvious than the longing for Moscow and the better life in *The*

Three Sisters. Another interesting point of seemingly opposing behaviour is the love of togetherness that coupled with the tendency to be uncooperative. The communes and the collectives were familiar to the Russians before the Revolution of 1917. The unanimity was highly prized in the decision making there, and the Russian Orthodox Church had the sense of strong community mindset. However, the group action, as opposed to the mindset, involved a lot of the individual counter action and the resistance (Hingley 122-25). The resistance was often passive, and based on the orientation towards the individual concerns. This could be construed as the prototype for Chekhov's depiction of the close knit groups who could not act in the concert with one another. Related to this phenomenon of the emotional community coupled with the resistance is the "failure to communicate," seen in his short stories characterized by no communication on the surface level, but the agreement on a sympathetic level. (Hingley 127)

These examples of the long-held attitudes and the behaviours were supplemented by a so-called higher culture that Chekhov was exposed to by his upward mobility. The intellectual attitudes which mentioned earlier were certainly familiar to him, which was the critical concept of the truth-verity versus the truth-justice (Riasanovsky 179). The former correlation is referring to the objective truth, which Chekhov vigorously supported in many of his scientific observations. The latter refers to the subjective truth, which Chekhov came to the terms with later in his life. Subjective truth is that which is related to envisioning the best society for all the people. Chekhov roundly criticized the writers who used the subjectivity to get their point across the issue, but also came to realize, through many of his experiences at the Sakhalin and his

clinic practice, that this kind of projection of a better social reality definitely had its place.

Intellectual Russia of the late 19th Century was certainly emerging from a period of the great Romanticism. The romantic notion of the late 19th century Russia was effectively destroyed by the questions that were being raised by loss of the Crimean War in 1856. The imperial supremacy was suspected thereafter, and the Russian economy was beginning to be scrutinized. The tendency of Russia to idealize the Tsar and treat their leader's will as the mysterious and divine (Gorer and Rickman 166-69) had been seriously eroded by the loss in war and reforms that brought new freedoms to the Russians as a whole. The public opinion became the catalyst in the emerging, modern country. The addition of the industrial business caused capitalism to be introduced, and new economic freedoms gave more power to the emerging urban middle class. Many universities opened in latter part of the century, giving the youth a forum for advancement as well as for the debate and protest. Reforms of Alexander II were like a genie in the bottle and, once released, could not be completely rescinded, even amid the reactionary environment of his son, Alexander III.

The new, emerging Russia was one that Chekhov was to expose when he came to the Moscow city as a medical student in the year 1879. There Chekhov observed and read about the changes occurring in his own country, but he did not accept himself to be swept away by that. Instead, Chekhov was enthralled with the science and medicine, both of which were in the period of the huge advances. Ivan Pavlov's studies of the conditioned reflexes was during this period, and Alexander Popov created the first radio receiver in

1895 (Riasanovsky 192). At the same time, the Russian literature was also enjoying the period of greatness. Chekhov's foray into writing began at the same time he was in medical school. With the swirl of political change, new ideas in the social reforms and student protests, he began using the observation from the science to write about what Chekhov had experienced in his life. In spite of Chekhov's love for Moscow and his experiences of abroad, many of his stories and plays mirrored his rural experiences, his knowledge of all the old systems of the peasantry and gentry and his keen observation of Russian mind.

In various ways, Chekhov was like his country Russia. Clashing and merging of the old, the rural ways and the new industrialism or the intellectualism was a part of both the fabrics. The reflecting-image aspect of Russia's mindset: the humane and cruel, the community mind and the sense of the individual, had manifested itself in politics and the culture of the land. Chekhov observed and absorbed the best of both the worlds. On the more immediate level, he had great love for the both: the individual and the greater good; both: the steppe and the city of Moscow. He maintained almost all these connections through management of his country estates at Melikhovo and Yalta; his closeness to his family; and travel all over the Europe and Russia. In his later years, the social and political questions played on Chekhov more powerfully, but he never tried to leave the roots of his art, the peasant blood, the love of science and the observational skills.

The above mentioned contextual factors got reflections time and again in the short stories of Anton Chekhov. The short stories of Chekhov discussed in the earlier chapters have an impression of these historical, national, rural,

cultural and political aspects of Russia of Chekhov's times. Same is the case with the short stories of Munshi Premchand.

The contextual or historical background is necessary for a complete view of the character of Munshi Premchand's stories. This background information includes the social, political and cultural highlights of Indian freedom movement. Consideration is given primarily to the period of his life, the years 1880-1936. The social and political upheavals during that period in Indian history are the precursors to the 1947 independence that followed. The people of India, during most of that period, were experiencing change from the previous era.

Munshi Premchand was writing during the first half of the twentieth century when India was facing colonialism, imperialism and National Liberation Movement. He wrote on numerous subjects touching almost each and every aspect of the contemporary Indian social and political life. Right from the beginning of his creative life, he advocated the cause of farmers, exploited people and marginalised sections of society. He understood that the writers have a mission to envisage revolutionary changes and they must perform a committed role in nurturing the literary and artistic trends which bring awakening and freshness to the society and throw light on the real problems of the people. Premchand resigned from his government job in 1921 after attending the public meeting addressed by Gandhiji in which he appealed people to join the non-cooperation movement and he contributed to the Freedom Movement as a writer-activist.

Premchand's writings are voluminous, ranging from the novels, plays, short stories, essays and the journalistic writings with the extensive notes on

the contemporary subjects that reshaped the very course (including content and the form) of Hindi literature, which got immensely influenced by his style and narrative technique.

Literature, for Premchand, becomes the beacon for the politics that guides it at all the directions. Literature is exploration for the harmony, having equality, liberty, solidarity, the compassion and independence as the salient principles to cherish with the idealistic realism that generates the dynamism, struggle and the uneasiness and a new kind of aesthetic sense that has to be evolved and generally testifies a sense of the independence, essence of aesthetics, soul of reconstruction and the regeneration embedded in the problems of human life.

This understanding of literature led Premchand to write on the different contemporary issues, which were being faced by his own times. He also wrote on the many problems of Untouchability along with other topics in his journalistic writings, novels and short stories. In the beginning, he wrote with the Gandhian outlook but with the passage of time, got influenced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In his later writings, Premchand considered many of the problems of Untouchability that cannot be resolved unless the inherent exploitative Caste System is eradicated and the *Dalits* are the economically empowered and politically assertive ones. He regarded Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the unparalleled leader of a community and got the inspiration from the on-going *Dalit* movement that Dr. Ambedkar was leading at the time of the first half of the twentieth century.

Premchand is always blamed for having a kind of soft corner for the oppressed. In most of his short stories Premchand portrays this class as the one

with a heart of gold and having no fault whatsoever they commit. They just work hard to make both the ends meet, and even then they always remain the oppressed.

The years between 1930 and 1940 were the crucial years in the history of the twentieth century: India in general way and for the *Dalit* movement in the particular. These years witnessed the important developments during the great National Liberation Movement e.g., the Civil Disobedience (1930-31), the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (March 5, 1931), the Second Round Table Conference, the Communal Award (August 1932), the Government of India Act, 1935 and the twenty-eight months of the Congress Rule, the peasants uprisings and the more intensive attack on the British *Raj*.

This was the same period when the northern India was also experiencing the *Dalit* uprisings and the political consciousness among the *Dalits* got enhanced with its political articulation and the expression. All these developments, particularly Dr. Ambedkar's leadership was extensively influencing the very shape and the expression of political consciousness among the *Dalits*.

It is important here to note that during this time, the *Dalit* movement was trying to explore the new possibilities for autonomy, their identity, the mobilisation and empowerment with the dynamic leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. Now the fact was that the *Dalit* movement was shaping itself, not specifically on the lines of the 'Reformative movements' but really attempting to create the alternative socio-cultural structure for the egalitarian society.

In north of India, there was a political assertion during the mid-1920s to 1930s by the *Dalits* in the shapes of the *Adi Hindu* Ideology, the *Bhakti*

Resurgence and the challenge to the Arya Samaj's *Shuddhi abhiyan*. Recent researches on the *Dalit* movement are highlighting the various levels of assertion during these years. For example, the leaders like Swami Acchutanand and Ram Charan were highlighting the importance of education, the economic independence, the social and religious reforms and asserting the dignified self-identity that is inherently political with equality. Swami Acchutanand there organised a massive Untouchable Conference in 1922 at the Old Fort, Delhi and he proposed a seventeen point Charter of Demands then to the Prince of Wales. That Charter primarily asked for a political representation of the *Dalits* in all the local and provincial bodies.

The then Secretary of State, responding to the Charter of Demands, ordered the nomination of one representative from the *Dalits* to the local bodies. It was also then ordered to all the district authorities that Swami Acchutanand would be given permission to organise the conferences and rallies wherever he wanted. This was a kind of significant achievement and Swamiji then subsequently, organised the several rallies and conferences in the different parts of Uttar Pradesh and then attended such events in the other provinces of the country for the cause of *Dalit* empowerment.

Ambedkar's influence was significantly spreading in the north part of India and the people from the *Dalit* community were making conscious attempts to challenge the *Brahmanical* Caste System at all the possible levels: intellectual, political and social with the explorations from the historical anecdotes: the popularising Ravidasji and Kabirji; establishing the contacts with the Marathi *Dalit* Literature; proliferating the ideas of Phule and Dr. Ambedkar; and participating in the Freedom Movement with the vision of

Independent India where the equality, liberty and fraternity could be ensured to all the nationals.

Thus, it becomes clear that years between 1930 and 1940 were very crucial in the history of the *Dalit* movement in the Indian sub-continent and the developments during these years had a positive impact on the movement. There was an all-round challenge was being felt in all walks of life then to the *Brahmanical* social and caste system. Hindi literature was also started responding to these *Dalit* issues and Premchand became the prominent writer to address these types of issues in his literary works.

The most important characteristic quality of the literary writings of Munshi Premchand, signifying the traditional Indian mindset, is his everlasting sympathy with the downtrodden people. Premchand's association with the Progressive Writers' Association is better understood and well known, and hence this kind of feeling of sympathy seems to everybody arising from the left-wing politics. The short stories are replete with many Hindu mythologies in which the Gods themselves support the weak (for instance, Rama supported Sugreev against his brother Bali; Krishna favours the Pandavas against the Kauravas). His very famous short stories are those that explore the plight of the downtrodden, those who live and die poverty-stricken, and also those who deal with the untouchability, and do not hesitate in condemning the well-to-do moneylenders and the landlords who belong to the upper castes.

The social and economic condition of the Indian people belonging to the marginalized sections is a topic much debated and discussed all over the world. In an economy like India, with around 70% of the total population

living below the poverty line, and more than 80% of the population engaged in agriculture for their employment, and there were no sufficient opportunities for the poor people to improve their conditions. Despite the social reformative efforts by the people like Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar and also by the writers like R.N. Tagore who gave their voice to these people by pointing out their problems in front of that section of society which just ignored their situation, the scenario was improving but only in a snail's pace. People were so poor at that time that they were not able to manage a proper food to satisfy themselves. They were continuously oppressed by the people of upper sections in the society. The upper castes had always considered them as lower even than the animals or any inferior breed. Most of the people in India were born in poverty, lived in poverty, and died in poverty.

Reflecting his cosmopolitan attitudes, Premchand's Marxist ideologies are evident within his short stories in which he incessantly supports the cause of the oppressed and criticizes the powerful or the oppressors. Though he has written on a number of themes including the nationality, romance, the Indian middle class, and the discrimination on the basis of gender, it is his sympathy with the poor classes that makes him stand out from the rest of the literary authors. It is also very important to understand the background from where he came, as many believe that he himself had faced the similar hardships to help him painting in a more realistic portrait of them.

Thus, it becomes clear that both Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand share similar backgrounds which subsequently serving as the contexts of their short stories. It would positively help in contextualizing the short stories of both the writers. In order to do that, this study draws primarily

on their experiences and the conclusions, the outlines of the targeting issue. The synthesis of their philosophical conclusions about life begins with the history of their life; where they had been, what they had done, who they had known and what effect this had on their literatures.

Thus, this study is an attempt towards understanding the social and the economic contexts of the marginalized sections of the society during the last years of the 19th and earlier years of the 20th century by studying the contextual portrayal of these sections in the short stories of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand, finding out the important themes therein, and then finding out the relevance of these themes in today's society.

Anton Chekhov, today accepted the world over as an unsurpassed master of the short story, had to overcome innumerable difficulties in his early years and to struggle against many moribund traditions before he gained the recognition of both readers and critics and took his place in the world of great literature.

Though Chekhov himself believed that everything he had written would be forgotten in a few years, he nevertheless realized that he was breaking new paths in literature. An author's originality is not only in his style or the technique but also in the mode of his thinking, in his convictions, etc. Thinking all this Chekhov made innovations both in the ideology and style. The artist, as he believed, must have always a new word to say. He must find a new angle or range from which to look at the outside world, at the life which surrounds him and all the people he depicts, and all this means that he must also find a new kind of way of revealing this phenomena in his art. He must find a new form for his works.

The Russian literature of the period immediately preceding Chekhov (the sixties and seventies of the 19th century) showed a great tendency to follow the trends of the magazine essay; Chekhov whole heartedly endeavoured to re-establish the short story in its own right. His short story is always a “snapshot” photographed by a master painter; a sketch or the draft that has, nevertheless, crystallized into an integral, the finished product with its own specific rules of the style.

Some of the sketches, studies or portraits of Chekhov which at first sight claim to do nothing but more than play up a curious incident in everyday life, depiction of some accidental meeting or conversation, photography of some moment in the lives of very ordinary human being, suddenly and unexpectedly reveal the broad picture of the Russian life to the reader. That is why world renowned writers and critics have spoken very admiringly of Chekhov’s ability to create an unforgettable story out of simple, everyday material.

Indian culture is reflected through its villages, and Premchand, in his literary writings portrays every aspect of the Indian culture. He commands the living, the language, and the characters of his time, and the time itself, which it is said keeps changing. Even if one looks at the villages of these times, he or she does not find the conditions of poverty and helplessness as fully changed. If they have changed, they have changed for the worst. His writings are as relevant today as they were at the time they were written, and this makes him a great story-teller and a writer of excellence.

Premchand was a writer who did not rely on a kind of ‘readymade tent’ to connect with his readers. He used to dig in the psychology of his characters

in search of the characters of his writings. He did not try to portray a character as innocent only to project him or her as an ideal. It is said that the History remains always the way it was, yet everything seems always fictional, and story is mostly fictional, but it seems to be real. His writings move ahead with the time, hence there is no scope for the stagnancy. He made efforts to change the face of the society to make it always worth living. But he does not hold hands with the religion and virtue to bring about the equality. His language is replete in ‘motion’ and ‘passion’, without which poetry too seems feeble.

Premchand’s characters make ready to the readers with the power and grit to deal with circumstances. He holds the view that there is a new and better way than Gandhiji’s *Ahimsa* to take revenge. In 1931, he wrote in the magazine *Hans*, “Himsa would only lead to our destruction. On the other hand, Ahimsa in just the physical sense would also not suffice. We would have to internalize Ahimsa in our bodies, minds and souls” (Kumar, J. 14). He supported Gandhiji by saying that “Gandhi’s sole aim is the welfare and happiness of the farmers and the labourers. He is leading a movement and I am trying to encourage and support him through my writings. Gandhi wishes unity among the Hindus and the Muslims and I am trying to mix Hindi and Urdu to create Hindustani.” (Kumar, J. 14)

This contextualising of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand through these selected short stories, includes the national mindset in prerevolutionary Russia and India. This background is integral in not only the development of the characters, but also of the text which supports the characters. Much of what is contained in the texts is from scenario, anecdotes, and written material from and about their respective societies. These materials

will be used as interpretive tools in the development of the character, and includes the clues to the physical appearance and personality. The characters analysis contained herein is, in part, a reflection of these historical, social and economical concerns. In addition, external and internal portrayal and the means used to achieve them are thought provoking.

In the Russian and Indian contexts, one comes across mainstream Russian and Indian writers challenging the dominant British or American tradition, thus paving a way for establishing their true Russian and Indian literary ethos. In the same way these writers too have inspired their contemporary writers to empower national literature.

Similar comparative studies as the present study are being done in various languages at present. But the emphasis is more on living or modern authors rather than authors of the previous centuries. Studies such as the present one can be an incentive to fruitful research on writings of earlier writers. Premchand was a writer who was very sensitive to the happenings in the world and to the emerging trends in the literature. So comparative studies on the writings of different writers like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Galsworthy as well as of Bhartendu Harishchandra, Prasad, Yashpal and Premchand can be topics of further research. Similarly Chekhov can also be made the focus of some other research and a comparison can be made between Chekhov and various other writers belonging not only to his own climate and period but also to different milieus and periods.

An analysis of the contemporary and the modern Indian writers in comparison with Premchand and also among themselves can be done without any problem. For example, the novels of Mulk Raj Anand can be compared

with the novels of Premchand and the poetry of the noted Urdu poet Mohammed Iqbal can be compared with the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. In the present literary environment the poetry of Khalil Gibran echoes the sentiments of the metaphysical poets, and of Omar Khayyam, Mirza Ghalib, Rabindranath Tagore and Mohammed Iqbal. Studies can be pursued always keeping this idea in mind. Comparisons can be made in general or with the specific approaches in mind.

Influential studies, the analogical studies or the studies combining both the influential and analogical aspects can be pursued. The list of writers, the movements and ideas for the topics in Comparative Literature would be exhaustive. The present study only forms a reminder to provide impetus further research in the genre of Comparative Literature.

Works Cited

- Frame, Murray. *The St. Petersburg Imperial Theatres: Stage and State in Revolutionary Russia, 1900 – 1920*. Jefferson, N. C.: McFarland, 2000. Print.
- Gorer, Geoffrey and John Rickman, M. D. *The People of Great Russia*. New York: Norton, 1962. Print.
- Hingley, Ronald. *Russia: A Concise History. Revised ed.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1994. Print.
- . *The Russian Mind*. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1977. Print.
- Kumar, J. *Premchand - A Life in Letters. Trans. Sunita Jain*. Agra: Y. K. Publishers, 1993. Print.
- Moss, Walter G. *A History of Russia. Vol. 2*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997. Print.
- Offord, Derek. *Nineteenth-Century Russia: Opposition to Autocracy: Seminar Studies in History*. Essex, UK: Pearson, 1999. Print.
- Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. *Russian Identities: A Historical Survey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.
- The Cambridge *Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*. Ed. Archie Brown, John Fennell et al. Cambridge: U of Cambridge, 1982. Print.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Chekhov, Anton. *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories*. Ed. Ralph E. Matlaw. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979. Print.

---. *Anton Chekhov: Collected Works in 5 Vols. Vol. 1*. Trans. Alex Miller and Ivy Litvinov. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1987. Print.

Premchand, Munshi. *Deliverance and Other Stories*. Trans. David Rubin. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1988. Print.

---. *The Shroud and 20 Other Stories*. Trans. Madan Gopal. New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1972. Print.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Adler, Stella; Paris, Barry. *Stella Adler on Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov*. N.Y., L.: Random House International, 2000. Print.

Agarwal, Bharat Bhushan Dr. *Premchand - Parvati-Hindi Upanyas Par Pashchatya Upanyaas Ka Prabhav*. Delhi Rishabh Tharan Jain Sons, 1971. Print.

Allen, David. *Performing Chekhov*. L., N.Y.: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Ambedkar, B.R. *Annihilation of Caste with Reply to Mahatama Gandhi*. Mumbai:

Higher & Technical Education Dept. Govt. of Maharashtra, 2013. Print.

Andreach, Robert J. "The Maiden's Prayer". *Nicky Silver's Chekhovian Play*.
American Drama 11:2, 2002. Print.

Andrew, Joe. *Selected Stories. Introduction and notes by Joe Andrew*. Ware
 (Herts, UK): Wordsworth Classics, 2002. Print.

Appleford, Rob. "No, the Centre Should Be Invisible. Radical Revisioning of
 Chekhov in Floyd Favel Starr's "House of Sonya".
Modern Drama 45:2,
 2002. Print.

Arkin, Steve. "Mary Lavin and Chekhov. Something Autumnal in the Air."
Studies. An Irish Quarterly Review 88:351. 1999 (Autumn). 278-83. Print.

Aronson, Arnold. "The Scenography of Chekhov." *The Cambridge Companion
 to Chekhov*. Cambridge, 2000. Print.

Atkinson, G. D. *A Handbook of Social Science Research*. Oxford: Oxford
 University Press.1997 Print.

Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist.
 Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
 Print.

Bartlett, Rosamund. "About Love" and Other Stories. *Translated with an
 introduction and notes by Rosamund Bartlett*. Oxford, N.Y.: OUP/OWC,
 2004. Print.

Bassnet, Susan. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford:
 Wiley-Blackwell, 1993. Print.

Bates, H.E. *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey*. London: Thomas
 Nelson, 1941. Print.

- Bates, Evan. *Best-loved Short Stories. Flaubert, Chekhov, Kipling, Joyce, Fitzgerald, Poe and Others*. Large print edition. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2004. Print.
- Bender, Ernest. "Review: *The Gift of a Cow. A Translation of the Hindi Novel, Godan, by Premchand.*" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91.1 (1971):162. JSTOR. Web. 3 May 2009. Print.
- Bérubé, Maurice R. "Why I Hate Chekhov." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 48:25. March 1, 2002. Print.
- Bloom, Harold. *Anton Chekhov*. Edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Views. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999. Print.
- Braun, Edward. "From Platonov to Piano." *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000. Print.
- Bruford, Walter Horace. *Chekhov and His Russia. A Sociological Study*. L.: Routledge, 1998. Print.
- Burnett, Leon. "Colour and Composition in Ibsen and Chekhov." *Neo-formalist Papers. Journal of the British Neo-formalist Circle*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998. Print.
- Chekhov, Anton. *Collected Works, Vol. 1*. Translated by Alex Miler & Ivy Litvinov. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1987. Print.
- Chudakov, Alexander. "A Biographical Essay (29 January 1860 – 15 July 1904)." *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000. Print.

- Constantine, Peter; Gray, Spalding. *The Undiscovered Chekhov. Fifty-one New Stories*. Translated by Peter Constantine. Foreword by Spalding Gray. L.: Duckbacks, 2012. Print.
- Culler, J. *Literary Theory: A very short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.1997. Print.
- Dalmia, Vasudha. "Introduction to the New Edition." *The Gift of a Cow*. Trans. Gordon C. Roadarmel. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007. V-xvii. Print.
- Das, Bikram K. "Book Reviews: *The World of Premchand*." *Asian Affairs (Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society)* 1.2 (1970): 198-99. Print.
- Desai, Mahendra V. "Literatures of India." *Books Abroad* 28.3 (1954): 261-80. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Dec. 2010. Print.
- Deshpande, Shashi, Keki N. Daruwalla, and Gopikrishnan Kattoor. "A True Pioneer." *The Hindu: Literary Review* 5 Dec. 2010: 1. Print.
- Dominick, R. D. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. Wadsworth Publishing. 1983. Print.
- France, Peter. "Indian Languages: Modern Indian Languages." *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 459-66. Print.
- Gandhi, Mahatama. "The Gospel of Swadeshi." *India of My Dreams*. Delhi: Rajpal, *Gandhian Thought*. Delhi: Commonwealth Pub., 1995. Print.
- Gilman, Richard. *The Making of Modern Drama. A Study of Büchner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett, Handke*. With a new introduction. New Haven, L.: Yale UP, 1998. Print.

- Gioia, Dana. "Anton Chekhov's "The Lady with the Pet Dog"." *ELF: Eclectic Literary Forum* 8:3-4, 1998. Print.
- Gopal, M. *Munshi Premchand - A Literary Biography*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.1964. Print.
- Gottlieb, Vera; Allain, Paul. *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*. Vera Gottlieb and Paul Allain (eds). Cambridge: CUP, 2000. Print.
- Gulzar. "Living with Munshi Premchand." *Indian Literature* XLIX.2 (2005): 119-25. Print.
- Gwynn, R. S. *Fiction. Compiled by R. S. Gwynn*. Second edition, 1998. N.Y.: Longman. A Longman pocket anthology, 2015. Print.
- Habib, M.R. *A History of Literary Criticism from Plato to Present*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Print.
- Han, Luna. *Treasury of Classic Russian Love Stories. In Russian and English*. N.Y.: Hippocrene Books, 1998. Print.
- Hansen, Kathryn. "Review: *Twenty-Four Stories by Premchand and Premchand: His Life and Works*." *Pacific Affairs* 56.1 (1983): 174-176. JSTOR. Web. 9 Dec. 2010. Print.
- Hunter, Adrian. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English*. Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Print
- Jha, Prabhakara. "The Moment of *Godan*." *Economic and Political Weekly* 18.19/21 (1983): 931-36. JSTOR. Web. 3 May 2009. Print.
- Johnson, Donald Clay. "Review: *The Gift of a Cow*." *Library Journal* (15 Mar. 1969): 1163. Print.

- Kalia, Mamta. Ed. "Premchand as a Short Story Writer" *Hindi: Language Discourse Writing*. Vol. 4 July-September 2009. Print.
- Karr, Justin. *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 51, 2002. Print.
- Kelly, Aileen. *Views from the Other Shore. Essays on Herzen, Chekhov and Bakhtin*.
- Kirjanov, Daria A. *Chekhov and the Poetics of Memory. Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature*. N.Y.: Peter Lang. 2000. Print.
- Kulka, John. *The Best Stories of Anton Chekhov*. Edited by John Kulka. N.Y.: Barnes & Noble, 2000. Print.
- Kumar, Dinesh and A. L. Madan. trans. *Godan*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.
- Kumar, J. *Premchand - A Life in Letters (Translated by Sunita Jain)*. Agra: Y. K. Publishers.1983. Print.
- Lal, A. *Munshi Premchand: The Voice of Truth*. New Delhi: Rupa Books.2002. Print.
- Lal, P. "On Transcreating Premchand." *Transcreation: Seven Essays*. Kolkata: Writers Workshop, 1996. 69-83. Print.
- Laurence Harris, V. K. (2000). *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*. New Delhi: Maya Blackwell.2000. Print.
- Lawn, Beverley. *40 Short Stories. A portable anthology*. Edited by Beverley Lawn. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's. Second edition. 2004. Print.
- Lindheim, Ralph. *Modern Drama* 42:4. *Special Issue: Chekhov*. Edited by Ralph Lindheim. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999. Print.

Litvinov, Ivy. *Short Novels and Stories*. Translated from the Russian by Ivy Litvinov. Honolulu: University of the Pacific, 2001. Print.

Livshin, Julia. *Classic Christmas Stories. Sixteen timeless Yuletide stories*. Edited by Julia Livshin. Guilford, Conn: Lyons Press, 2003. Print.

Makanowitzky, Barbara Norman; Struve, Gleb. *Seven Short Novels*. Translated by Barbara Norman Makanowitzky and with an introduction and preface by Gleb Struve. N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 2003. Print.

Malcolm, Janet. "Three Journeys. Anton Chekhov on the Road." *New Yorker* 77:33, October 2013. Print.

Malcolm, Janet. "Travels with Chekhov." *New Yorker* 76:1. February 21-28. 2000. Print.

Manheim, Michael. *The Cherry Orchard*. Translated by M. Manheim. N.Y.: Dramatists Play Service, 2001. Print.

Marsh, Cynthia. "Design on Drama. V. A. Simov and Chekhov." *Russian Literature, Modernism and the Visual Arts*. Catriona Kelly and Stephen Lovell (eds). Cambridge: CUP, 2000. Print.

Mazhar, Mohd., trans. *Godan: A Masterpiece of Peasant India*, by Premchand. Agra: Harish Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, 2005. Print.

McHugh, Deborah. *Classic Cat Stories*. Guilford, Conn: Lyons Press, 2004. Print.

McMillin, Arnold. "Chekhov and the Soviet Village Prose Writers. Affinities of Fact and Fiction." *Modern Language Review* 93:3, 1998. Print.

- Mehta, P.P. *The Indian Short Story in English: A Survey*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1976. Print.
- McVay, Gordon. 'Anton Chekhov. "The Man with the Little Hammer".' L.: Folio Magazine, Summer 2001. Print.
- Minnick, Michelle. *The Three Sisters*. Translated by Michelle Minnick. Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing. 2004. Print.
- Mir, M. *Makers of Islamic Civilization: Iqbal*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2006. Print.
- Mishra, Pankaj. "A Spirit of Their Own." *The New York Review of Books* 46.9 (20 May 1999). Web. 25 Mar. 2010. Print.
- Mitchell, Ken; Chase, Thomas; Trussler, Michael Lloyd. *The Wascana Anthology of Short Fiction*. Ken Mitchell, Thomas Chase and Michael Lloyd Trussler (eds). Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Print.
- Morrow, Bradford. *Conjunctions 31. Radical Shadows. Bi-annual Volumes on New Writing*. Edited by Bradford Morrow. N.Y.: Annandale-on-Hudson: Bard College, 1998. Print.
- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. "Milestones: Writers Workshop @ Fifty." *The Hindu* 1 Mar. 2009. *The Hindu: Archive*. Web. 14 Feb. 2011. Print.
- Naravane, V. S. *Premchand - His Life & Works*. Delhi: Vikas Publishing House. 1980. Print.
- Negri, Paul. *Great Russian Short Stories*. Edited by Paul Negri. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2003. Print.

- Noor, Ronny. "Review: *Widows, Wives and Other Heroines*." *World Literature Today* 72.4 (1998): 901. JSTOR. Web. 24 Mar. 2010. Print.
- Orr, Inge C. "Premchand's Use of Folklore in His Short Stories." *Asian Folklore Studies* 36.1 (1977): 31-56. JSTOR. Web. 12 Sept. 2010. Print.
- Orsini, Francesca. "Introduction." *The Oxford India Premchand*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004. Vii- xxvi. Print.
- Pahlau, Randi. "Chekhov's "Enemies"." *Explicator* 62:2, 2004. Print.
- Pattee, F.L. *The Development of the American Short Story: A Historical Survey*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1923. Print.
- Petievich, Carla. "Review: *Widows, Wives and Other Heroines: Twelve Stories by Premchand*." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58.2 (1999): 555-56. JSTOR. Web. 24 Mar. 2010. Print.
- Pevear, Richard. Volokhonsky, Larissa. *The Complete Short Stories*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. N.Y.: Bantam Books, 2000. Print.
- Phelps, William Lyon. *Essays on Russian Novelists*. N.Y.: Snova Books, 2004. Print.
- Pitcher, Harvey. *The Comic Stories*. Chosen and translated by Harvey Pitcher. Introduction and Notes. L.: André Deutsch, 1998. Print.
- Premchand, Munshi. "The Aim of Literature." Trans. Francesca Orsini. *The Oxford India Premchand*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004. N. pag. Print.
- Premchand, S. D. *Premchand ghar mein (Hindi)*. Delhi: Atmaram and Sons. 2006. Print.

- Pritchett, V. S. *The Pritchett Century*. L.: Chatto & Windus, 1998. Print.
- Rai, Alok. "Afterword: Hearing Nirmala's Silence." *Nirmala*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999. 197-211. Print.
- Ratan, Jai and P. Lal, trans. *Godan: A Novel of Peasant India*. Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2008. Print.
- Ray M.K. ed. *Studies in Comparative Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002. Print.
- Rayfield, Donald. *Understanding Chekhov. A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama*. L.: BCP, 1999. Print.
- Rexroth, K. *World Outside the Window: Selected Essays of Kenneth Rexroth*. New York: New Directions.1987. Print.
- Roadarmel, Gordon C., trans. *The Gift of a Cow: A Translation of the Classic Hindi Novel Godaan*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007. Print.
- Rocher, Ludo. "Review: *The Gift of a Cow: A Translation of the Hindi Novel, Godaan by Premchand*." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 29.1 (1969): 196-97. JSTOR. Web. 3 May 2009. Print.
- Rockwell, Daisy. "The Oxford India Premchand." *Journal of Asian Studies* 1 (2005): 232. *e Library*. Web. 11 Jan. 2011. Print.
- Rubin, David. "Introduction to *Widows, Wives and Other Heroines*." *The Oxford India Premchand*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004. 10-16. Print.
- Ryfa, Juras T. *The Problem of Genre and the Quest for Justice in Chekhov's "The Island of Sakhalin"*. Lewinston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999. Print.

- Safran, Gabriella. *Rewriting the Jew. Assimilation Narratives in the Russian Empire*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000. Print.
- Sailaja, A. "Problems of Translation of Hindi Novel into English: with Special Reference to 'Nirmala' of Premchand." Diss. University of Hyderabad, India, 2002. Print.
- Schmidt, Paul. *7 Short Farces*. A new translation by Paul Schmidt. N.Y.: Dramatists Play Services, 1999. Print.
- Schneider, Rebecca; Cody, Gabrielle. 'Three Sisters at the Millennium's End.' *Re-Direction. A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. Edited and introduced by Rebecca Schneider and Gabrielle Cody. N.Y., L.: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Sekirin, Peter. *The Complete Early Short Stories of Anton Chekhov*. "He and She" and other stories, translated by Peter Sekirin. Vol. I. 1880-1882. Toronto: Megapolis Publishers, 2011. Print.
- Seltzer, Thomas. *The Best Russian Short Stories. Compiled and edited by Thomas Seltzer*. Amsterdam: Fredonia Books, 2001. Print.
- Shakh-Azizova, Tatiana. "Chekhov on the Russian Stage." *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000. Print.
- Sharma G. N. *Premchand: Novelist and Thinker*. Delhi: Pragati Publications. 1999.
- Sharma, J. *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism*. New Delhi: Penguin

- Sheehy, Helen; Stainton, Leslie. *On Writers and Writing. A Thousand Years of Great Writers*. East Hartford, CT: Tide-Mark, 1999. Print.
- Steinfeld, J. J. *Anton Chekhov Was Never in Charlottetown. Stories*. Wolfville, NS: Gaspereau Press, 2000. Print.
- Sternberg, Robert J. *Wisdom, Intelligence, and Creativity Synthesized*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.
- Swan, Robert O. "Review: *The Gift of a Cow: A Translation of the Hindi Novel, Godaan by Premchand*." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30.1 (1970): 218-20. JSTOR. Web. 3 May 2009. Print.
- Talwar, Amrita. "From Culture to Culture." *The Hindu* 12 Apr. 2007. *The Hindu: Archive*. Web. 8 Feb. 2011. Print.
- Trivedi, Harish. "The Power of Premchand." *The Hindu* 2 May 2004. *The Hindu: Archive*. Web. 8 Sept. 2010. Print.
- Vickers, Sylvia. 'Space, Genre, and Methodology in Max Stafford-Clark's Touring Production of Chekhov's Three Sisters.' *New Theatre Quarterly* 15:1 (57), February 1999. Print.
- Volokhonsky, Larissa; Pevear, Richard. *The Complete Short Novels by Anton Chekhov*. Translated from the Russian by Larissa Volokhonsky. Introduction by Richard Pevear. N.Y.: Bantam Books, 2008. Print.
- Wilks, Ronald; Clayton, J. Douglas. "Ward No. 6" and Other Stories, 1892-1895. Translated with notes by Ronald Wilks. Introduced by J. Douglas Clayton. L.: Penguin Classics, 2002. Print.

- Wilson, Edmund. "Peasants" and Other Stories. *Selected and with an introduction by Edmund Wilson*. N.Y.: New York Review of Books, 1999. Print.
- Wood, James. *The Broken Estate. Essays On Literature and Belief*. L.: Jonathan Cape, 1999. Print.
- Woods, Joanna. Katerina. *The Russian World of Katherine Mansfield*. Auckland, N.Z.; N.Y.: Penguin Books (N.Z.), 2001. Print.
- Yadav, Anurag, trans. *Munshi Premchand's Godan: Masterpiece of Hindi Literature*. Delhi: Cedar Books, 2010. Print.
- Zinkin, Taya. "Book Reviews: *The Gift of a Cow* and *Pather Panchali*." *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 56.2 (1969): 190-91. Print.