



Impact of Socio-Economic and Political Issues on the Psyche of the Characters of the 'Mother' By Maxim Gorky

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Abstract: *A Russian and Soviet writer, Revolutionist and the founder of the social Realism, Maxim Gorky was a socialist, political thinker and proponent. He is known as a writer of stories, novels, plays, autobiography and travelogue etc. He earned the name and fame by his Russian literary works – “Chelkash” (1895), with the romanticism and realism, it began Gorky’s celebrated “Tramp Period”, “Dvadtsat Shest iodna” 1899, “Twenty men and a girl” in which he depicted the sweated labour conditions in a bakery and it stood the Gorky equal of Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekov with some shortcomings of the inability to sustain a powerful narrative. He explored his experiences and sentiments through the following novels – “Foma Gordeyev” (1899), ‘Trye’ (1900), ‘Ispoved’ (1908) and ‘Zhiznan Matveya KozhemayaKina’ (1910). The year 1906 was a remarkable to Gorky with the publication of ‘Mother’. It was one of the successful novels. It is a depiction of Russian Revolution. Gorky was well known about the Russian working class background. The novel is divided into two parts. The credit of the first part goes to United State while second part had written in Italy. Being a part of the Russian Revolution Gorky presented a real picture of the contemporary society in the novel.*

Key Words: Revolutionist, social Realism, socialist, autobiography, depicted, labour conditions, divided .

In ‘Mother’ he poured his own sufferings and bitter experiences through the protagonist Pavel against the capitalists as quoted about him – “Frequently beaten by his employers, nearly always hungry and ill clothed, he come to know the seamy side Russian life as few other Russian authors before or since. The bitterness of these early experiences later led him to choose the word Gorky (bitter) as his Pseudonym”. (<https://www.britannica.com>) Due to active participation in Russian revolution he publicly opposed the Tsarist region. So he was arrested many times. In the same time he befriended many revolutionaries and in 1902 when he met Vlademir Lenin, become a personal friend. This paper tends to focus on the Impact of Socio-Economic Political issues on the Psyche of the Characters of the novel ‘Mother.’ Human being is not free to impact of socio-economic & Political issues. For living a proper happy & healthy life there is a need of the society & economy, which are inspired by the politics. The wheels of the society & economy are moved our life.

So the characters of the ‘Mother’ by Maxim Gorky are not untouched by these issues. Mother is the well-known successful novel by Maxim Gorky in which he depicted the real condition of the contemporary society. Gorky had a great influence of the Marxism. He was the witness of the Russian Revolution (1905). Being a socialist & political thinker he depicted the real state of the poverty, oppression and exploitation of the people, who were the victims of the capitalists. The men and women characters of the novel – Pavel, Nilovna, Fedya, Mazin, Andrusha, Michael Vlasoves, Somoylov, Nicolay, Veyasoshchikov, Denail, Nadrey, Natash, Yegor, Sasha, Sahenka, Marya, Korsunava are affected by the socio-economic & political issues. The present research paper has focused about the circumstances, activities, exploitation, sufferings, poverty, of the people.

Maxim Gorky, had followed the truth. He was anxiously about the sufferings and problems of the factory workers. He joined the socialists group.



Through the protagonist of the novel 'Mother' he depicted the role of the socialists and capitalist. There are some questions – what was the state of factory workers? Why did they want to do revolution? Who were the socialists? How did they oppose factory owners? What was the result of the revolution? Present research paper has the answers about all above mentioned questions. After working 6 days in the factory in a week, all working men are brock-down physically and mentally. The impact of revolution, work-load and poverty can be seen in the lives of the peasants. There was an ugly trend to drinking liquor & abusing. The women were tortured and oppressed at home by their husband and men were abused and oppressed in factory. As Gorky writes the schedule of the working men – “Meetings one another they spoke about the factory and the machines, had their fling against their foreman, conversed and thought only of matters closely and manifestly connected with their work. Only rarely, and then but faintly, did solitary sparks of impotent thought glimmer in the wearisome monotony of their talk. Returning home they quarreled with their wives, and often beat them, unsparing of their fists.” (Mother-10) All the people of the village were same & used to take the liquor. “The young people sat in the taverns, or enjoyed evening parties at one another’s houses, played the accordion, sang vulgar songs devoid of beauty, danced, talked ribaldry, and drank.”(Mother-10) The life of the people was miserable. Society was devioded into two sections – one is capitalists and other was workingmen. Capitalists had the interest to get more and more profit. In this way there was a difference between both sections. People did not want to tolerate any kind of opperassion. They were aware about their rights. Gradually the flame of the thoughts of the people changed in revolution. Socialists begins to gather in the house of the Pavel. Natasha, Ukrainian, Yegor, Nikolay, Byesvshchikov, Yakov, all they were frequently gathered in the house of the Pavel where they lived freely with his mother, Nilonva and planned about movement. The following paragraph presents

about the meeting of the socialists in the house of the Pavel – “Pavel sat at Natasha’s side. He was the handsomest of them all, Natasha bent down, very low over the book. At times she tossed back, the thin curls that kept running down over her forehead, and lowered her voice to say something not in the book, with a kind look at the faces of her auditors. The Ukrainian bent his broad chest over a corner of the table, and squinted his eyes in the effort to see the worn ends of his moustache, which he constantly twirled. Vyesovshchikov sat on chair straight as a pole, his palms resting on his knees, and his pockmarked face, browless and thin-lipped, immobile as a mask. He kept his narrow-eyes gaze stubbornly fixed upon the reflection of his face in the glittering brass of the samovar. He seemed not even to breathe. Little Somov moved his lips mutely, as if repeating to himself the words in the books; and his curly-haired companion, with bent body, elbows on knees, his face supported on his hands, smiled abstractedly.

One of the men who had entered at the same time as Pavel, a slender young chap with red, curly hair and merry green eyes, apparently wanted to say something; for he kept turning around impatiently. The other, light-haired and closely cropped, stroked his head with his hand and looked down on the floor so that his face remained invisible.” (Mother-32)

The impact of the revolution can be seen in all socialists, they all had same spirit for the workingmen. They all bound with the chain of revolution. Even when samoylove is to go to see the Pavel in prison, mother conveyed her inner feelings towards the Pavel as a son as a leader of socialists – “The mother grasped his hand and said earnestly: Tell him that I do everything, everything necessary. I want him to know it.” (Mother-82) They all were one. They did not feel any kind of suffer to do anything for participation in revolution. Even they felt easy and good in prison also. Yegor said- “That’s natural!” exclaimed Yegor. “And so to Pavel, you need not worry about him. He’ll come out of prison a still better man. The prison is our place of rest and study—things we have no time for when we are at



large. I was in prison three times, and each time, although I got scant pleasure, I certainly derived benefit for my heart and mind." (Mother-82) There was an atmosphere among the society. People had a thought that "The police, the soldiers, the spies—they are all our enemies, and yet they are all such people as we are. Their blood is sucked out of them just as ours is, and they are no more regarded as human beings than we are. That's the way it is. But they have set one part of the people against the other, blinded them with fear, bound them all hand and foot, squeezed them, and drained their blood, and used some as clubs against the others. They've turned men into weapons, into sticks and stones, and called it civilisation, government." (Mother-151) The impact of society can be seen that workingmen were oppressed by the factory and wanted the freedom & their rights. The socialists, under the leadership of Pavel, were doing efforts. Even women Nilovna, Yegor, Sashenka, Marya, Korsunava, Sasha, Natasha were also participating in movement.

A Ukrainian was one of the socialists. He depicted the reality of the society – "Because, mark you, Mother dear, a new heart is coming into existence, a new heart is growing up in life. All hearts are smitten in the conflict of interests, all are consumed with a blind greed, eaten up with envy, stricken, wounded, and dripping with filth, falsehood, and cowardice. All people are sick; they are afraid to live; they wander about as in a mist. Everyone feels only his own toothache. (Mother-141) The novel presents the portrayal of the capitalists & the workingmen. By the conversation between Grany & Yegor the role of the capitalists is clear. Yegor says about the capitalists – "It is these very little, pot-bellied creatures who are the chief sinners and deceivers and the most poisonous insects that harass the human race.

The Frenchmen call them 'bourgeois'. Remember that word, dear Granny—bourgeois! Brr! How they chew us and grind us and such the life out of us!" (Mother-134) Gorky himself suffered in his life. He had seen the reality of the village and town

of Russia. So he depicted the poverty of the people— "So, so. Fairly well. I settled at Edilgeyev. Have you ever heard of Edilgeyev? It's fine village. There are two fairs a year there; over two thousand inhabitants. The people are an evil pack. There's no land. It's leased out in lots. Poor soil!" (Mother-153) The protagonist of the novel had the bitter experience of poor life. The Rybin, one of the socialists, said to the mother about the gap of gentleman and muzhik – "Their calculation are different, and their deserts are different," said Rybin. "The muzhik grown rich turns into a gentleman, and the gentleman grown poor goes to the muzhik. Will-nilly, he must have a pure soul, if his purse is empty. (Mother-156)

Rybin also told- "You live here, you don't know hunger, you don't see such outrages. There hunger stalks after a man all his life like a shadow, and he has no hope for bread... no hope! Hunger destroys the soul of the people; the very image of man is effaced from their countenances. They do not live, they rot in dire unavoidable want. And around them the government authorities watch like ravens to see if a crumb is not left over. And if they do find a crumb, they snatch that away, too, and give you a punch in the face besides." (Mother-157) There was an economical gap among the society. Following lines points out about the economical gap & societal states when Ukrainian narrated about Pavel- "The boy is doing his best," said the Ukrainian. "I'll go help him." He bent low and before Pavel had time to stop, him he twisted his tall flexible body into the crowd like a corkscrew into a cork, and soon his singing voice rang out: "Comrades! They say there are various races on the earth—Jews and Germans, English and Tartars. But I don't believe it. There are only two nations, two irreconcilable tribes—the rich and the poor. People dress differently and speak differently; but look at the rich Frenchman, the rich German, or the rich Englishman, you'll see that they are all Tartars in the way they treat their workingman—a plague on them!" (Mother-171) The novel is full packed of politics as well as social & economical



issues. It is known for revolution. Because of poverty, torturement, oppression, exploitation people were in pain & misery. They were unhealthy & wanted to get rid of their miseries. So a movement took place & people became united together. Every where the air of politics was blowing. As following lines of the novel gives a proof- "People gathered them—there was something peculiar in their greetings. She caught whispered, broken remarks: "Here they are, the leaders!" "We don't know who the leaders are!" "Why, I didn't say anything wrong." AT another place someone in a yard shouted excitedly: "The police will get them, and that'll be the end them!" "What if they do?" retorted another voice. Further on, a crying woman's voice leaped frightened from the window to the street: "Consider! Are you a single man, are you? They are bachelors and don't care!"(Mother-169) The protagonist Pelagueya Nilovna was an uneducated and uncultured woman who worked in a factory as well as the other people of her village. In the comparison of the work she got a small amount. So her life was neither happy nor healthy. As Gorky narrated her poor state – "The house stood at the edge of the village, by a low but steep and muddy declivity. A third of the house was occupied by the kitchen and a small room used for the mother's bedroom, separated from the kitchen by a partition reaching partially to the ceiling. The other two-thirds formed a square room with two windows. In one corner stood Pavel's bed, in front a table and two benches. Some chairs, a washstand with a small looking-glass over it, a trunk with clothes, a clock on the wall, and two icons—this was the entire outfit of the household." (Mother-17) The other character of the novel had the some effect like Nilovna. There was an unhappy and unhealthy miserable atmosphere of the village. People were passing very tiresome life. Pavel the son of Pelgueya Nilovna led a socialists group against the factory's

administration to impose a one- kopek tax on the workmen to fund the drainage of the mosquito-infested dwamp. Socialists revolted against it. They wanted to free the people from the grip of the factory owners. Workingmen worked hard in factory. There was a routine after doing toil, they returned the home. Their faces were covered with the black smoke and shining the sticky odous of machine oil. Their teeth seemed to say their hunger. "The day was swallowed up by the factory; the machine sucked out of men's muscles as much vigour as it needed. The day was blotted out from life, not a trace of it left. Man made another imperceptible step towards his grave, but he saw close before him the delights of rest, the joys of the odorous tavern, and he was satisfied." (Mother-10) This research paper is based on the qualitative method. Matter is collected from several research papers, book review, qualities method is primarily exploratory. In this paper socio-economic and political issues presents as a realistic consciousness, memory and revolution in the novel 'Mother'. (academia.edu) In this way the impact of the socio-economic & political issues can be seen on the Psyche of the character of the novel.

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