CHAPTER-III

GAGANENDRANATH TAGORE: REPRESENTING MODERN INDIAN ART

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In our search for the origin or beginning of satirical art we have to revert back to Gaganendranath Tagore. In this chapter, Gaganendranath's individuality has been discussed. What was the status of pictorial satirization before Gaganendranath? The satirical art had already been initiated by the Kalighat painters. Kalighat painters could easily adopt facets of Contemporary life simultaneously with religious icons, but naive folk painters did not realize that the style of their language did not have the expressiveness for the imageries of the comic. Beside the wellknown scandal of that time, the philandering of the Bengali *Vaishnava* males, character of *Babu* and henpecked husband were all expressed. Drawing typical caricatures and regularly printing them in newspaper and magazines had become a regular feature during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (Parimoo: 2011) Gaganendranath is one of the most unique modern artists of the 20th century. Varied features characterize his paintings. He was the first to understand and incorporate the idea of European modernism in our country. Chintamani Kar mentions, "It was Gaganendranath's unique perception of art, conceived in oblivion to all that marked the beginning of the conception of the idea of modern art in India. It is indeed not an exaggeration if one says that his works reflected ideas that ushered in the idea of modern art in 20th century India."(Chatterjee: 2012)

The chapter has been discussed as according to some sub chapters. Kolkata and its atmosphere has often been the subject matter of his paintings. He was never obsessed with the past! Through his paintings he has always raised a voice against the various social incongruities and disorientations. His satirical works are particularly important in case of this. He has criticised the society through these caricatures. This has led to the evolution of a new

language of art. He had extended the boundaries of then neo-India and taken the concept of modernity even further. It will be incorrect to characterize Gaganendranath's caricature-style paintings merely as cartoons. Sumit Ghosh in the introduction to his work has touched upon this particular topic- The theories of Indian Classical Fine Arts do not assert a position of respect to cartoons. Benode Behari Mukhopadhya in his book "Chitrakatha", in the context of Gaganendranath's cartoons, mentions that satire or mockery has never been considered as an important part of Fine Arts. In spite of this, the more politically aware people have from the very beginning accepted politically satirical cartoons as a trusted medium of entertainment. Sumit Ghosh further mentions that, No matter however fine a satirical piece of art maybe, the moment it becomes old it loses its power to attract. Then, in order to comprehend the entire essence of the cartoon, an in-depth knowledge about the political situation as well as the context (along with the date and year) during the time of composition of the cartoon becomes absolutely necessary. Along with it the artist should also make clear what he is trying to say. Herein lies the limitations of cartoon as an art form. This precisely the reason why the appeals of a cartoon is very short lived and this also the area from which stems the basic difference between fine arts and cartoon as an art form. (Ghosh: 2013) In order to comprehend a Fine Arts creation, i.e a painting or a sculpture, no contextual references are required a need which is there in case of cartoons. However, Gaganendranath's caricatures were free from this particular fault. More than cartoons, his creations went on to be identified more as satirical or humorous in nature. This is a point that we will further explore through our discussion later on regarding the artist's three volumes of work- *'Naba hullor'*, *'Adbhutlok'* and *'Birup bajra'*. Instead of the term cartoons, we will refer to Gaganendranath's works as caricature style paintings or humorous art, in our discussions.

On this topic Baridboron Ghosh has written- It may be said that Gaganendranath was the first Bengali artist to venture into satire as an art form and at the same time he also successfully indulged into modern art. It

was he who effectively combined and incorporated the dual nature of Fine Arts and caricature into his works.(Chatterjee:2012)

To elevate caricature to the status of Fine Arts was not an easy task. Actually Gaganendranath had both a clear idea about the history of art as well as the skill required, as a result of which he was able to experiment with the art form in various capacities. His caricature style works was a result of one of his many experiments- compositions which need no contextual knowledge in order to be comprehended. Compositions which hold equal relevance even today. Partha Chatterjee writes, Gaganendranath composed his two volumes *'Naba hullor'* and '*Birup Bajra'* as an attempt to eliminate corruption and superstitions prevalent in our country. Not just as powerful caricatures but compositions using fine lithographic techniques deserve equal praise as any other composition of the world. (Chatterjee: 2012) Gaganendranath's coloured and black and white lithographs are without doubt unique. Another feature of Gagandranath's works were that he preferred compositions portraying the social conditions rather than caricatures focussing merely on political events, which brought out the picture of the social structure prevalent back then. In case of cartoons we see that character that, is being mocked at in the compositions, show a distortion in their facial expressions. However, Gaganedranath's works show no such trait. This is why an essence of the Fine Arts is percolated to the viewer through his works. His caricatures create the same feeling of joy or depth that any piece of painting does.

Kamal Sarkar writes, Gaganendranath's earliest satirical works are not that fine as expected. Very naturally this is what happens, perhaps with every other artist. Gradually with time however his paintings became more and more profound. Many of his original satirical works are still preserved and exhibited in the Rabindrabharati University, Rabindrabharati Society, Indian Museum and the Academy of Fine Arts. These exhibits bear testimony to the effort that Gaganendranath put in to elevate his works to the level of Fine Arts. Very few equipments are required for caricature paintings. Brush, pen, ink (Indian or Chinese) and paper- that is all you need for this form of painting. This is so since caricatures are generally printed in the black and white colour code. The

artist tries to put forward his views and expressions in his drawing with only the help of the colour black. Yet, many of Gaganendranath's works prove that he loved to play with colours. He finds a place in preparing the background for infusing colour in case of satirical caricatures as well as in fine arts. As a result of this he experimented with colours in his satirical works. Some of his coloured satirical drawings were published in 'Prabashi', 'Modern Review', 'Bharati', 'Narayan', 'Agamani' and 'Barshik Bashumati'. He is the pioneer of publishing satirical drawings in Bengal. No traces of such kind of drawings are observed before Gaganendranath, making him a true pioneer in this field. During his lifetime, his this type of drawings found place in three volumes. After his death, another compilation of his satirical works was published. Ardhendukumar Gangopadhyay informs us that Gaganendranath drew close to five hundred satirical drawings and caricatures. However Kamal Sarkar believes that the figure stated by Gangopadhyay is not correct. He believes that the number in any case cannot exceed two hundred. His caricature paintings can be roughly divided into three categories- societal problems, works and actions of various individuals and politically oriented works. All the three volumes of compilation that were published during Gaganendranath's lifetime are rare. (Sarkar: 1986)

3.2 A BACKGROUND STUDY ON GAGANENDRANATH

Dwarakanath Tagore's sons were true patrons of art, just like him. The maharshi's son Jyotirindranath was drawn towards the field of art, thanks to the strong influence of his father and grandfather. Both Jyotirindronath and Gunendranath derived their training in art from Kolkata's Goverment Art School. Gaganendranath was Gunendranath's son. Gaganendranath inherited this love for art which ran in his family. Gunendranath and Saudamini Debi's first son, Gaganendranath was born on the 18th of September, 1867 at Jorasanko. Samarendranath, Abanindranath, Binoyini and Sunayini Debi are their other children. Gaganendranath was influenced by the love of art that prevailed in his family atmosphere. He first started drawing when he was studying in St. Xavier's School. Apart from studying various other subjects that were taught in school, he also trained himself in

art. He even won prizes for his drawings in his childhood. However, his interest in art seemed to have suffered a setback as he began to grow up. At that time Jyotirindranath's practise was continuing smoothly. Drawing portraits of people whom he knew was a thing that he was particularly fond of. He even made Gaganedranath pose for him. Hitendranath Thhakur (1867-1908) drew many paintings in Jyotirindranath's style. Hitendranath, who was Hemendranath Thakur's son, was of the same age as Gaganendranath. He began his training and education in art at the Government Art School when E.B. Havell was a teacher there. Hitendranath's mother Nipamayi Debi was also trained in painting. She used to learn painting at home under the tutelage of Annadaprasad Bagchi. His younger brother Abanindranath Tagore began his art practise during the end of the nineteenth century. Gaganendranath and Abanindranath's nephew, Jaminiprakash Gangopadhyay also started painting during this time. As an elder brother, Gaganendranath presided over the art lessons of his younger brother. Yet, it was as if he was still in a dormant state. It was as if the awakening of his artistic skills were something that was unimaginable and unthinkable. On the other hand renowned artists regularly came to their residence at Jorasanko, of whom Shashikumar Hess was perhaps the best. After returning from Europe (1900), he drew an oil-painting of the maharshi at Jorasanko. Shashikumar drew a huge portrait of Dijendranath. It was at this point of time that he drew the portrait of Rabindranath and his daughter Bela Devi. Rabindranath's eldest nephew Satyaprasad Gangopadhyay learnt drawing under the tutelage of Art School's teacher Harinarayan Basu, at home. Harinarayanbabu's association with the *Jorasanko Thakurbari* was since the 19th century. Possibly it was during the watershed period between the 19th and 20th century that Gaganendranath began to practise the art of drawing under his supervision. Gaganendranath again entered the world of drawing and painting after a long period of gap, since his school days. His affinity towards art and painting blossomed during the years 1902-03. It was during this time that Japanese personality Okakura Kakuzo (1862-1913) came to the Jorasanko Thakurbari. Japanese artists Tai Kan and Hishida had also accompanied Okakura during this visit. (Sarkar: 1986)

It was from these artists that Gaganendranath and Abanindranath first witnessed the technique or Japanese style of painting. Their particular style or concept of painting (portray or delineate) appealed to both of them. It can be assumed that it was from this point of time that Gaganendranath's practise truly began which continued unabated throughout his life. His table was situated right beside Abanindranath's, in their Southern (*Dakshiner Verandah*), where the two brothers used to sit and practise on their own. Even though the distance between their sitting places were only two to three feet, their style and technique were completely different. Abanindranath could exert no form of influence on Gaganendranath. He was unique in his own way, his art being free of any form of influence or guidance. Gehendranath was Gaganendranath's eldest daughter. His death was a big blow to all the family members. Gaganendranath too broke down with grief and sorrow. In order to come out of this depression, Gaganendranath took the advice of their family friend Dr Dineshchandra Sen which led to the arrival of a *kathak thakur*(a professional narrator of scriptural and mythological stories or a speaker)in the Jorasanko household. On hearing the stories of this *kathak thakur*, Gaganendranath felt the desire to draw a portrait of him. On referring to this point of time, Dineshchandra Sen mentions, "Even though Gaganendranath enjoyed the stories of the *kathak* as much as the rest of us, a pencil and a piece of paper was always there ready at his hand. The image of the pot bellied *thakur*, intensely narrating a particular event, did not escape the artist's eye. He used to rapidly capture through his sketches the various stances of this *kathak thakur*.... The artist's eye was always prying on everyone for more and more subjects of painting. He used to keenly observe how someone talked, how someone smiled and how some expressed her or his disgust." In this context, Dineshchandra Sen mentions another important point, "...it was Gaganendranath's residence where modern Indian art was born and the first name that comes to mind in this connection is that of Abanindranath's. However, in no way can Gaganendranath's contribution can be denied. Gaganbabu had no particular craving for fame. He used to draw because he could not live without drawing, not with the intention of earning a name for

himself. I have never seen him sitting idle. There is no count of the number of lay-outs of paintings that he has made with me."(Lahiri: 2004)

After this, began a new chapter of his art practise. During this phase he began to use Chinese ink for his drawings, just like the Japanese did. He produced some very fine paintings of a few crows at this point of time, some of which were compiled into a book called the 'Ten Indian Studies'. However author Kamal Sarkar has expressed certain doubts as to whether the real name of the book was 'Ten Indian Studies' or 'Twelve Ink Sketches'. Sarkar, in his book has cited some quotations of Ardhendukumar Gangopadhyay where he Gangopadhyay says, "The elder brother had created his own independent style within a few days. His drawings of the crows created with the help of Chinese ink and his skilful use of the brush had left as all awed. We had compiled and published his style of line drawings from the Indian Society of Oriental Art, in a book titled 'Twelve Ink Sketches' in 1910." In this context Kamal Sarkar writes – it is difficult to exactly pin point the exact name of the book and the year in which it was published. It is also not possible to state the exact number of paintings that the book contained. This edition is now a rare one. (Sarkar: 1986)

After this, Gaganendranath concentrated on producing book illustrations. Rabindranath Tagore entrusted Gaganendranath with the task of illustrating for his book '*Jeevansmriti*'. It is mentioned in the book that the year in which these illustrations were produced around the year 1911. Japanese style and technique are quite profound in the above mentioned illustrations. After his 'Jeevansmriti', his next noteworthy compositions were the paintings of Puri and on *Chaitanyaleela*. The artist had developed a keen interest in the life and works of Chaitanya, during his visit to Puri. He used water colours for his *Chaitanyaleela* paintings. These series of paintings on Chaitanya show apathy towards worldly interests. To put forward the *rasa* of compassion is the aim of these paintings. The artist through his works brought to life the birth of Nemai, his childhood, his married life, his subsequent abstinence of worldly pleasures which forced him to leave home, his undertaking of the vow of asceticism and even his presence in *Nilachal*. The use of pale colours,

particularly ocher shades in order to bring forward the stoicism of Chaitanya, is particularly worth mentioning in this case. (Parimoo: 2011) However, research finds this very artist in a completely different form through his other works in his later years. The focus had shifted from the portrayal of the *rasa* of compassion and had instead given away to satire and humour. He used these two tools in order to jibe at some important social issues. The artist had drawn many a portraits after the end of the Chaitanya phase. The subjects of his portraits ranged from his wife Pramodkumari Debi to Rabindranath Tagore in one hand and from Ananda Kumarswami to Jagadishchandra Basu. The artist had a tremendous inclination towards creating silhouette of the subjects in his paintings with the help of Chinese ink. No records have been found which suggests that this style of silhouette paintings had been practised by any other artist before Gaganendranath.

Next, Gaganendranath shifted his attention to the depiction of mythical tales through his works. Paintings on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata form a substantial part of this series. The painting 'Krishna', of Lord Krishna with the help of colours like green, blue and black is a notable one in this series. However, the Krishna in the picture does not seem to be a native of this land, mainly because of the fact that his figure is largely like that of an Egyptian. His head gear and dress is similar to that which we find in Egyptian sculpture or painting. The use of this mixed gesture adds an interesting twist to the entire picture. Maybe, later artists who have embarked on a search of art practise had found new paths of creation in this manner only. (Sarkar: 1986)

Landscape painting was another phase in Gaganendranath's artistic career. He took upon painting landscapes during his visits to Ranchi, Puri and Darjeeling. The scenic beauty of Bengal has been captured beautifully in these paintings. It is absolutely essential to understand nature by himself and then express it accordingly. He has expressed monsoon as an inseparable part of the village scene of Bengal. Apart from this the life of the local people in the hills, fog, the crests and troughs of the mountains etc have all been captured in his paintings. The life of the *nuliyas* and the scenic beauty of the

beaches have also been captured in the work of the artist. Thus it becomes apparent that the artist did not solely glorify nature through his works but also the lives that are indivisibly related to it. (Parimoo: 2011) There was another type of work with which Gaganendranath experimented and that was he painted on golden coloured papers or boards. Writer Kamal Sarkar mentions in his book, “The golden hue that we find in copious amounts in Gaganendranath’s paintings is not really paint. These paintings were actually done on some kind of imported golden coloured papers or boards. This experimentation of Gaganendranath was inspired by the Japanese idea of screen painting.” (Sarkar: 1986)

There was yet another style that the artist had adapted. Influenced by the Chinese and Japanese black and white style of paintings, Gaganendranath developed a new form altogether which focused on the abstraction of forms and this is turn gave a mystic touch to his works. We must mention Benode Behari Mukhopadhya’s words at this juncture. He says that these paintings serve as reflections of the interiors of the *Jorasanko Thakurbari*. The light filtering in through the windows and in the rooms created a mysterious play of light and darkness which, Benode Behari says served as his inspiration for this style of painting. (Sarkar: 1986) The mixture of imagination, colour, form and line add a different dimension to these paintings. A deft use of the ‘magical’ helps in creating a world of fantasy in these works. It can be said without a shade of doubt that these paintings which can be classified under the form “Cubism”, combined geometric forms and fantasy with such dexterity that it brings about a whole new element to them. (Mitra: 1996)

Though never formally trained in art education, the language of art nevertheless came very naturally to him. His ideals and aims were that of a liberal and open minded individual. He never propagated any particular belief or style of art. This is perhaps the main reason that Gaganendranath finds a distinguished position in Modern Indian Art history. Along with being an idealistic artist he was also a patron of various art related social activities. Right from collecting funds for the construction of a statue for the

beautification of the city, collecting grants for the publication of a news weekly to assuming the role of a patron for different literary activities, collecting diverse forms of painting from both his country and foreign lands and collecting money for copying the Ajanta Cave Paintings, Gaganendranath kept himself busy in all such activities. Right from the inception of the "Swadeshi" days, Gaganendranath had been deeply influenced by it. This is precisely the reason for which he became a patron of indigenous art and crafts. There are examples that even site that he secretly used to help the then revolutionaries; such was his drive for the "Swadeshi" idea. However Gaganendranath never openly played any significant role in the political struggle. He was a member of the 'Indian Society of Oriental Art'. During his membership period, he organized many exhibitions here. Once when Gaganendranath was the secretary of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, an exhibition of the works by various "Expressionist" European artists was organized in Kolkata. As far as it is known this was perhaps the first time that India witnessed the exhibits of the modern experiments that Europe was conducting at that point of time in the realm of art. The 14th exhibition of the Indian Society, arranged in the 'Samabaya Mansion', showed works of both Indian artists as well as German artists from the 'Blaue Reiter' school like Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee etc. In fact Gaganendranath played an important role in the background for the introduction of Ardhendukumar Gangopadhyay's memorable tri-monthly journal "Rupam". In reality, "Rupam" was finally published thanks to the efforts of Gaganendranath.

Gaganendranath's idea of art was not restricted to the experimentation with forms. His aim was to develop and enrich the indigenous cultural awareness through assuming the role of a patron for various art, literature and theatre activities. As a result he was extremely curious about the then social incidents and social figures. He wanted these curiosities, observations and resultant conclusions to be reflected through the mediums of art, literature and theatre. He never let go of his indigenous ways and tradition, even though he interacted frequently with the British colonizers. As a matter of fact he tried very hard to enrich the national tradition and to instil this feeling amongst all

by patronizing various art and literature endeavours being undertaken in Bengal, back then. This feeling was coupled with his intellectual being and a charming personality to make the individual himself and this drew many and yet many more to him.

Lord Ronaldshay was one of them. After Gaganendranath's death in 1938, he wrote, '*From the first, I fell a willing victim to the spell which Gaganendranath laid, not of intention but of necessity, upon all who came within the orbit of his personality*.' (Memoirs of Gaganendranath Tagore: Marquess of Zetland: The Visva-Bharati Quarterly, May-July.1938) Sir William Rothenstein was also deeply influenced by Gaganendranath's cultural practises and charismatic personality. He had visited Calcutta in 1911. He has recorded the moments when he met Gaganendranath during this visit in his memoirs. Gaganendranath's wide knowledge base attracted Rothenstein's attention and thus he has compared him to the British academician Charles Ricketts (1866-1931). Rothenstein writes, "*Gaganendranath, a man of singular charm and culture, was a kind of Indian Ricketts, who seemed to have seen and read about everything*." (Men and Memories- Recollections of William Rothenstein,Vol II,London:1934) (Sarkar: 1986)

We must mention Benode Behari Mukhopadhya's words at this juncture. He says that, Gaganendranath's artistic creation is as individualistic as was his personal life. He is supreme in the field which glows with the light of his genius. At the moment, various experiments in the sphere of art have assumed great importance. That is probably the reason why, even though Gaganendranath's modern outlook has been accepted, there is no question of following him. If we judge him against the background of international art, we shall have no difficulty in seeing the originality of his art and in appreciating his historical importance. (Mukhopadhya: 1972)

3.3 SATIRE A SOCIAL CRITIQUE IN THE WORKS OF GAGANENDRANATH

Practice and query were the two main outlooks of Gaganendranath's life. During one point of his life he was drawn towards a new form of art. Right

at the very beginning of the 20th century, this pivotal figure of the New Bengal School Art, broke away from the traditional norms of painting and with great ease adapted himself to a new style of painting- cubistic painting. With help of the play of light and shade and through the use of multiple colours, the artist moved from depicting reality to the realm of fantasy. Just like, with great ease, Gaganendranath had added a new meaning to the New Bengal School through his satirical paintings, he also created a revolutionary upsurge in the contemporary practises of art and its criticism through his newly adapted style of painting. It was through his skill and talent that Gaganendranath could step out successfully from the New Bengal School style of painting. He brought painting to the real world, which later became a representation of reality. This also helped in making Bengal's art truly modern. (Bhattacharya: 1991)

Gaganendranath's paintings, with one single colour or more emerged as a mirror of the contemporary Bengali society. The discrepancies and the fallacies of the society were all captured in his works. He ridiculed the blatant Anglicization of the society, faults in the education system, deceit and appropriation in the name of religion, the so-called modernization of women in imitation of the West and the dowry system, through his works. Political satire or caricature also found a huge space in Gaganendranath's paintings. His caricatures were mainly a reflection of the then Non-cooperation movement. Ramananda Chatopadhyay's name immediately comes up in any discussion regarding Gaganendranath's caricatures. Ramananda was a true patron of Gaganendranath's satirical paintings. Ramananda diligently published paintings with satirical humour in 'Prabashi' and 'Modern Review'. He took up the entire responsibility of familiarizing the then Bengali society with Gaganendranath's satirical paintings. He also felt the need to provide some footnotes to some of the paintings for the benefit of the reader. In some cases he himself provided those explanations. Charuchandra Bandopadhyay, his most trusted companion, too wrote the footnotes to Gaganendranath's works for the magazine 'Prabashi'. (Sarkar: 1986)

But amidst these usual practices of art, what was it that drew Gaganendranath to draw caricature like painting? Alokendranatha,

Abanindranath's son elaborates on this. He writes- *Gaganendranath was drawn towards the caricature form while his stint as a jury in the High Court. On request of the government, he quite often had to frequent the High court. The ambience of the court, the tight lipped judges, highbrowed lawyers, the convicts, witnesses all presented an unnatural, overtly serious environment. This appeared to be extremely farcical to Gaganendranath, raising curiosity in his mind. In between taking notes, his notebook became filled with sketches of the varied people present within the court room. Their activities, expressions and gestures were hurriedly transformed into lively sketches*. Noted writer Akhil Niyogi, who was a frequent visitor to the Tagores' residence talks about this from his own experience- Gaganedranth had a Persian cat. He would make lively cartoons of the cat's movements. The three brothers- Gaganendranath, Samarendranath and Abanindranath – all were frequented by visitors at their home. Gagnendranath readily in between such meetings would make caricature of the visitors with brushes or pencil. The people in their most mundane activities, talking, sitting or just smoking became the subjects of his work. During his stint as a jury member in the High Court, Gaganendranath would make fantastic caricature of the judges hammering for making a point, the argumentative lawyers, the clamour within the court room etc. Studying and sketching such varied characters prepared Gaganendranath to draw caricatures and finally extending it into composing satirical images. (Gangopadhya: 1420)

Gaganendranath's work has a timeless appeal. A form such as this fills the mind of a true connoisseur of art with a pristine imagination that resonate a wholesome, speechless pleasure; whereas through the style of Gaganendranath's caricature like paintings, the shortcomings and the wrongdoings of social and political events are reflected. Bound by the limits of time and space, his works were a form of art that reflected upon the arguments and the counter arguments that a current event initiates where it fills a humorist's mind with a sense of bitter-sarcastic happiness. Despite this as the poet Bishnu Dey puts it, Gaganendranath ultimately ended up with "an art form driven by the socially sensitive". This was because he wanted to bring

to front the dishonesty-treachery-opportunism of those whom he knew in the social and political circuits. He had also observed the pseudo/quasi-religious from really close. All these experiences had driven him to take recourse in the satirical art form. Through his hands, caricature painting found a new form. He used the wash technique in his works. (Ghosh:2013)

Amit Mukhopadhyay writes, according to O.C.Ganguly Gaganendranath painted about five hundred cartoons. Art historians O.C.Ganguly, Kamal Sarkar and Sovon Som agree that Gaganendranath played a pioneering role in this particular category which in the context of his own time and today is valid and relevant and of course it deserves serious attention and discussion which is unfortunately very scarce. Gaganendranath's satirical works can be divided into four categories- Social, Political, Religious, and Educational. (Mukhopadhyay: 1994) During his own lifetime, the various published and unpublished drawings of Gaganendranath were collectively published in three volumes – *Birup Bajra, Adhbhut lok,* and *Naba hullor.*

Birup Bajra or Strange Thunderbolts-

Birup Bajra is Gaganendranath's first of the three compilations of satirical drawings. This was first published in 1917 from The Indian Publishing House, under the care of Priyanath Dasgupta. It was printed by U.Roy and Sons, under the care of Kartikchandra Basu. The price was fixed at one and a half rupee. The foreword of this edition was written by eminent scientist Prof. Jagadishchandra Basu and it contained 13 coloured and other black and white drawings. Each work was accompanied by a caption, both in English and in Bengali as well. None of the drawings were politically motivated or charged in nature. (Mukhopadhyay: 1994)

Adbhut Lok or Realm of the Absurd-

The second compilation of Gaganendranath's works is titled 'Adbhut Lok' also translated into English as 'Realm of Absurd'. Both the two names have been used in the title page of the book. Priced at rupees four, it was

published in 1917 by the Kolkata based publishing house- Indian Publishing House. The black and white and coloured drawings of this edition ridicule the discrepancies and short comings of the society. This collection which comprises of fifteen pieces of work is all lithographic in nature. Harichand Mandal completed the lithographic work. The 'Bichitra Press' which had been established as a part of the Joransanko 'Bichitra Sabha', is the place from where the satirical drawings of the 'Adbhut Lok' had been printed. Rathindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore's son, in his book 'Prittismriti' writes, "*Gaganendranath had an innate sense of humour, which found shape through his satirical drawings. The one or two pictures that were published in newspapers and magazines became immensely popular instantly. A large section of the public showed great interest in collecting these pictures. As a result of this a new cell was added to the Bichitra club. An old litho press was bought and an aged and experienced Muslim gentleman was hired to operate it. Gaganendranath drew pictures in the morning and they were immediately laid out on the stone for the lithograph press. The work began and continued under the guidance of the artist himself. Two albums of lithographic works were printed in this manner. It did well in the market as well*." Right at the beginning of this collection, two quotes, one that of Rabindranath's-"To be foolish is human. To laugh at it is more so."and the other that of Mark Twain-"Instead of feeling complimented when we are called an ass, we are left in doubt." were used. (Sarkar: 1986)

Naba Hullor or Reform Screams-

This collection which also consisted of fifteen pieces of work was published by the Thacker Spinks and Company in the year 1921. Two quotes from this collection are particularly important. The first one is a portion from Ray Gunakar Bharat chandra's poem-

'*Dekhibare mitra, korilam chitro*
E boro bichitra hoilo taye."

Accompanying this was a quote of Mark Twain-'Everything human is pathetic; the secret source of humour is not joy but sorrow. There is no

humour in heaven.' This collection consists of caricatures of some very well known personalities of Gaganendranath's times, like Anne Besant, Surendranath Bandhopadhyay, Maharaja Manindra chandra Nandi, Lord Satyendra prasanna Sinha, Governor Liton, Sir Ashutosh, Acharya Jagadishchandra Bose, Rabindranath, Acharya Prafullachandra Ray, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, C.F. Andrews and many more. (Sarkar: 1986)

Abhay Sardesai writes in this regard- Gaganendranath's images took a swipe at the convenient moralities of figures in power. Satirically presenting socio-political issues, he drew on diverse traditions, some of them performative like the *Jatra* and the *Swang* and other more painterly like the work of the Kalighat *patuas*. The graphic-caricatural mode was employed by him to expose the deformities of spirit so rampant in society: among others, the over-fed, salivating, lascivious *Brahmin* (Plate 3.7), the rapacious *zamindar* and the westernised Indian gentleman were the main personages who became a part of his gallery of rogues. Derided for his complete self-absorption, his lack of social conscience and his lack of political will, the Bengali *Babu* came in for a sustained falying, especially as the epitome of the so-called 'modern and westernised' graces of manner, dress and speech. Complementing Gaganendranath's angry rebukes of these 'mimic men' were his critiques of *bhadralok* Bengali society's blind acceptance of Western-style education which negatively influenced middle-class attitudes to indigenous traditions as well as to political initiatives that were anti-establishment like the nationalist movement. Gaganendranath's later caricatures which came out in the volume *Reform Screams* (1921) were even more self-consciously political in their scope, targeting new political projects and specific public figures like the Maharaja of Burdhaman, Chelmsford, the Governor-General, Montague, the Secretary of State and even Rabindranath Tagore himself. (Sardesai: 2003)

One of the Gaganendranath's image was accompanied by a title 'Bidyar Karkhana' or 'the Cramming Machine' (Plate 3.14). At that point of time Calcutta University had the responsibility of looking after the education systems of West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha and Assam. The drawing depicts

many students wearing *dhoti-panjabi* (a traditional Bengali attire), with books in their hands, all queued up and are entering a huge machine through its main door. The main door harbours a huge clock on its head. Smoke is bellowing from the chimneys that are located in the exit, on the left hand side of the main door. Two persons, each wearing a cap, are standing on the top of two chimneys. They are supervising the entry and exit of the students. The entrance is marked by an "IN" sign while the exit way bears the sign "OUT". Gigantic sized books are kept near the exit, from where the students are coming out. In fact, the drawing depicts that the students are coming out, all hackled, from those gigantic books. The pressure and weight of the books have left most of the students flat in shape. Some of them have managed to survive the onslaught and retain their original shape. At the exit pathway of the factory has been placed a *topor* or a crown. A picture of the moon and the star has been drawn below it. On the star, the words B.A or graduate is inscribed. Those star students who have been able to survive the onslaught will be looked at as the ideal candidates in the job market. Critic Hemendra kumar Ray, comments on this particular satirical picture in the 'Bharati' magazine. He says, "The main gate of the university is open. A retinue of students, who are Bengal's future, are entering into the university. There is the factory of education inside with the strict eye of the authorities on the outside. The machines in the shape of the books, when they are done with Bengal's future, leave all students flattened and in a terrible shape. The education machine has transformed a human of flesh and blood into a fragile and flattened tin soldier. Some of them don a *dhoti* and a shawl- most probably signifying a clerk, while others wear pants and shirts, who must be lawyers. Some of them lie sprawled on the ground, possibly dead." (Sarkar: 1986)

The then English daily, "Englishman" highly praised two imagess namely "Cramming Machine" and "The Auto Speechola" from this edition (Plate 3.15). The 17th August, 1917 issue of the Englishman says, "*Birup Bajra is the title of a portfolio of cartoons by Gaganendranath Tagore which are merciless satire, not altogether under-served, on some of the modern*

tendencies of the artist's countrymen... 'The Cramming Machine' is a hard knock at the university system and the 'Auto Speechola' is a suggestive which members of the legislative councils might take to heart." (Sarkar: 1986) Suvendu Dasgupta writes on 'Auto Speechola' that- Now a day in Vote campaigns, everybody has a point to make either on podium in open fields, gatherings or via television. Ministers, MLAs,MPs, everybody has something to say. Every speech is pre-planned. Written by the party and the topics- elections, manifestos, Central Committee vary as and when needed. Gaganendranath's "*Bak jantra*", "The Autospeechola" is based on this. This was part of his first satirical volume "Birup bajra." Kamal Sarkar has discussed about this caricature in his book *"Rupdaksha Gaganendranath"* The caricature shows a machine structured on the model of some *maharaja*. Made of wooden blocks and screw, the robot wears a turban on his head and a dagger tied to its waist. It holds a loud speaker to its mouth. He holds papers containing false eulogies in his hand. Since the speaker is a machine, a funnel to pour oil into it has been placed on the top of his head. In the artist's words- "Invented by some Edison of Bengal". Since it is like a clockwork doll it will be operated by something called the Auto speechola. This has been connected to the machine with help of electric wires. There is a switchboard on the auto speechola, which the artist calls a speech board. Within it there are recorded speeches in Bengali and English which the robot would start to utter once the buttons are pressed against the proper labels. In the list of speeches in Bengali the topics are galore ranging from self congratulatory speeches to lessons in self control, to note of thanks to the *pandal* decorators, speeches customised for addressing literary society meets to inane meetings etc. We have changed the labels into development, threat, slandering, forgiveness, change etc in today's context. Instead of the figure of a *maharaja* there will be the face of contemporary politicians, the would-be-politicians, and all those who work and speak for them. Read in daily newspapers, heard in televised news, the new generation auto speechola. (Dasgupta: 2012)

On the other hand, it has been noticed that Gaganendranath did not shy away from ridiculing himself through his works. For example in the picture

titled ‘Courtsey to countrymen’, we find a middle aged, good looking man alighting the first class compartment of a train. This person is none other than the artist himself! He is very easily identifiable over here. In spite of that, to more prominently establish his identity, the bag that this person carries has the initials G.T. on them. The artist has made a satire of the king of Bardhaman, Maharaja Bijaychand Mehtab, in this collection (Plate 3.13). The image of the Maharaja has been painted in a rather larger than life light. He has been shown wearing a typical British evening dress with an imported cigar in his hand. Bijaychand was truly had a well built structure had was rather healthy. This is why the artist has painted him in a larger than life light. He is shown flicking the ash from his cigar and proclaiming, “My love of my country is as big as I am.” A typical Bengali is shown sitting in front and listening to this speech of Bijaychand. Dressed in *dhoti* and *Panjabi*, this son of Bengal appears to be exactly the opposite of Bijaychand. His *dhoti* has been pulled up above his knees and he is wearing sandals. This handsome son of Bengal is listening to the Bijaychand’s proclamations while he smokes a *hookah*. A soft smile on his face suggests that he is curious about Bijaychand’s speech. This person is none other than Gaganendranath who is depicted expressing doubt and curiosity about Bijaychand’s patriotism. Ardhendukumar Gangopadhyay explaining this work says, The Maharaja of Bardhaman had given a patriotic speech at the Bengal Literary Conference. He had said in his speech that he has loved Bengal with all his heart, right since childhood. A man delivering a patriotic speech on one hand and yet by mannerism and clothing preferences represents the British culture, strikes particularly funny to Gaganendranath for which he makes this work. (Sarkar: 1986)

Another satirical drawing, ‘A noble man’ again is based on the Raja of Bardhaman, Bijaychand (Plate 3.16). Contrary to the previously mentioned composition, the Maharaja is seen wearing a neatly pleated *dhoti* and freshly starched *Panjabi*. He is shown brandishing the cane in his hand in order to chase away what are possibly feeble and worn out hands of farmers. The image of the Maharaja is akin to a godly one in this composition. It was a

popular belief that this well to do Maharaja gave away a lot of valuable materials for charity. The artist ridicules this precise godly and giving image of the Maharaja. He believed that the king only donated to earn praise and popularity and that these donations did not help the needy villagers in any way. These donations were added benefits to the already affluent few. The feeble hands represent the needy, who are all driven away from the Maharaja's door.

The artist has attempted to ridicule the entire social structure through satire. He has successfully reminded us of the deprived commoners of the country who are being crushed under the effects of famine, scarcity of water and an outbreak of malaria. 'Jatasur' or 'Millstone of caste' is another creation (Plate 3.12). This work is almost like a painting, serves as a mirror of the caste divisions and prejudices prevalent in the society. The artist through this work reminds us that because of some orthodox and stubborn beliefs of those of the so called higher caste, the sense of unity in a society is facing obliteration. This work shows a hefty bald man sitting on a *janta*(a round circular shaped manually operated instrument which is used for grinding) and performing a ritual worship. He seems to be orthodox in his ways. The *janta* on which he is sitting is being turned by a skeleton which stands as a symbol for death and destruction. (Parimoo: 2011) The artist has tried to satirize the social practises through this work. Innumerable numbers of lower class/caste people are being grinded under the weight of the huge *janta* on which the hefty bald man is seated. This satirical piece of work mainly aims at emphasizing the oppression that the lower caste/class in our society faces today.

Another notable works appointment of Lord Sinha as the joint governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (Plate 3.4). Lord Sinha was the only Indian, who was appointed a governor in British India. Lord Sinha was well accustomed to the British mannerisms and ways of living. This caricature shows many governors all dressed in a coat, pair of trousers and hat, standing. All the governors look more or less the same, as a result of which it is almost impossible to ascertain who is a Bengali and who is a British. So numerous

binoculars have been placed on all sides to try and find out where is the Indian governor Lord Satyaendra prasanna Sinha. This caricature was published in the 'Modern Review', accompanied by a caption- The Appearance of an India Governor-Where is H.E? One cannot help but notice the pun in the caption. The British followed a tradition of using 'His Excellency' before the name of any viceroy or governor, which in those days was abbreviated as H.E. The entire pun in the caption lies in the fact that the artist writes the 'he' of 'where is he' as 'H.E'. This gives us an insight into the subtle sense of wit and humour that Gaganendranath possessed. (Sarkar: 1986) 'State Funeral of H.H. Old Bengal' is another caricature which features in this volume. The social backdrop for this caricature is that- As a result of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (India Governance Act, 1919), dual governance had been introduced into provincial governance as a result of which the existing council of Bengal had to be discarded. Surendranath Bandhopadhyay, Prabhashchandra Mitra and Nawab Ali Choudhury had been appointed as the new ministers of Bengal. Gaganendranath's caricature shows a dead body, wrapped heavily in white cloth, being carried on the shoulders of the council members. The dead body of the council is being carried out of the Town Hall on a path which has been decorated by a red carpet. The artist names the now dead council as His Highness Old Bengal. The old Bengal council's last rites will be performed with due national solemnity. A lot of onlookers have gathered to witness this procession. Akin to his nature, the artist has painted a picture of then well known social personalities with jest. He has documented a historical event in a humorous way. Author Kamal Sarkar believes that there was possibly another version of this caricature. He believes that the artist had later removed a lot of characters from this picture and given a more refined view of the ones that he had kept. (Sarkar: 1986)

Another work of Gaganendranath throws light on the then prevalent social system. This caricature is titled as 'Subho-Parinaya'(Plate 3.3). This was first published in Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's magazine 'Narayan' (jaishthya, 1328). This caricature was made keeping in mind the suicide of a

young girl Snehalata. A background and image which undoubtedly still holds a lot of relevance today.The caricature shows a young girl, whose eyes are covered by a cloth, being married off to a tin of kerosene. A lone matchstick lies beside the girl. The priest who is performing the rituals is actually a skeleton. He is consulting a book to recite the wedding vows. The kerosene tin is like a sun, a form which was rather popular at that time. The words 'Rising Son' are written on the tin container. Since both son and sun share the same pronunciation in English, the artist uses this similarity in pronunciation to put forward his point by naming the kerosene tin as the 'Rising Son'. A *topor*, a type of wedding hat that grooms have to wear, has been drawn on the top of the kerosene tin, as if a person is wearing it. The father of the groom is watching the entire wedding ceremony holding a rope tied to the neck of the bride's father and mother. This rope acts as a signifier of the dowry system. Snehalata's suicide, back in those days, had created uproar in the society and it is precisely this incident that the artist has satirized in his work. A few words dedicated to this piece, which were published in the 'Narayan' magazine, go like this – 'The artist has satirized the death of Snehalata in his work which also acts as a reflection of the current society. It is as if amidst all the humour, a sharp knife is piercing a hole through one's heart. Here the kerosene tin is the groom and the tin's funnel is the *topor*. The priest is the God of Death, *Yama* himself; it is as if the girl has tied the knot with the flames of the sacrificial fire, beside which lies a match box.' This piece goes on to say that, 'All the social volunteers of today, please prints thousands and thousands of copies of this image and spread them throughout the country. And all those who wish for dowry for their son's marriage, may they also be sent a copy of this image.' (Sarkar: 1986)

Another work titled "Terribly Sympathetic", this satirical drawing has been procured from the volume "The Humorous Art of Gaganendranth Tagore" published by the Birla Academy of Art and Culture (Plate 3.11). The accompanying text of this caricature describes it as –The oppression meted out by the British state against the freedom fighters. The figure of the British ruler in the image is in all probability of the then governor of Bengal, Balmfield

Fuller, who holds a cane in his hand. The gigantic figure of the ruler and the liliputian size of the oppressed, depict the power of the oppressors. This picture has also been published in Chandi Lahiri's book "*Gaganendranath: Cartoon O Sketch*" (2004). The book mentions that the picture was first published in the annual edition of *"Basumati" (*1334). This book however gives a different explanation of this caricature. Bamfield Fuller served as a magistrate in Medinipur where his stint was notorious. He was infamous for the atrocities and torture he perpetrated on the prison inmates. The revolutionaries planned to kill Fuller. Fuller stated that his intention was to save the revolutionaries who were behind bars. (Dasgupta: 2012)

Gaganendranath drew caricature images of his uncle "*Rabika"* (Plate 3.17)*.* In fact he probably was the first one to draw a caricature of Rabindranath, depicting his flight on a plane. This caricature had a political background, as Kamal Sarkar explains in his book "*Rupadaksha Gaganendranath".* The country was at that point of time simmering with the Civil Disobedience Movement (*Ashojog Andolan*). Tagore was away from his country at that time. The countrymen could not get to know his opinion about the Civil Disobedience Movement. Everybody was eager to know whether he supported the movement or not. On 16th April 1921, Rabindranth boarded a flight for the first time in London to travel to Paris. Just before he was about to board, a journalist Sant Nihal Singh asked the poet whether this was his first flight. To this the Poet responded that he has been flying since a long time, but this was surely his first flight on a plane. Nihal Singh's feature was published in "Liberty," a Calcutta based paper before independence.

The caricature depicted Rabindranth resting in an arm chair which is floating in the sky. Above him is the star capped sky and the moon. Pen, books, scripts, glasses all are fluttering around him. The poet holds a *dotara* in his hand and is wearing a cap. The caricature was first published in Ramananda Chattopadhyay's *Probasi(1328 bengali year)* in the monsoon issue. The caption was *Kabir sunnya bihar* (Poet's flight in space). The artist drew again the caricature for his own collection "*Nobohullor*". It was titled in English "Latest Flight of the Poet." On a later occasion, a French poet

projected some images of the poet that he had taken in his movie camera, in presence of the entire Tagore family. Gaganendranath asked one of the servants of the household, “What did you make out of this?” He replied, “*Babu* (Master) is flying!” The word “flying” implies both flying in the sky as well as going wayward. It was in good humour that Gaganendra took a dig at his uncle. (Dasgupta: 2012)

There was one particular satirical drawing which took a dig at Acharya Prafulla Chandra which was published in the 1921 issue of “*Nabahullor*” (Plate 3.9). The caricature showed Acharya trying to wash off a drop of black “Indian Ink” under running tap water. Indian ink was manufactured by Prafulla Chandra’s company Bengal Chemicals. The Indian ink in the caricature symbolised the national shame which Acharya was trying to remove ardently. In the caricature it was written- “Indian ink: the ink cannot be washed out.” The caricature was a reaction against the existing practise of untouchability. The picture had the caption- “Hindrances to national unity- even the most ardent efforts cannot wash away the nuisance of most.” The idea behind the caricature was to highlight the caste distinctions that had scarred the country and was the greatest hindrance in its way of becoming a nation. Being inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Prafulla Chandra took the initiative to work towards the removal of untouchability from the face of the country. This caricature was drawn to portray Acharya’s efforts. In the summer volume of *Probasi* (1329 bengali year), this caricature was published. It carried an explanatory note that said-“the idea of untouchability is so pervasive a belief amongst the countrymen that even the efforts of Gandhi had failed to uproot this deep seated social evil. This is the greatest obstacle for the country. This evil has been seen by the artist as the indelible ink, which Acharya Prafulla Chandra is fruitlessly trying hard to rinse off.” Along with the caricature and the accompanying discussion *Prabasi* published a well known Sanskrit saying – “ *angar shatadhouten malintwang n munchati.*” Caste distinction still prevails in various corners of our country. Untouchability exists in various households. This indelible mark of ink has still not been rinsed off. (Dasgupta: 2012)

In another work the artist drew Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das as the lead character. In his mouth he has a cigar (Plate 3.6). The cigar is related to the context of the work. Deshbandhu instigates a young student to light up a pile of books kept on the table in front of him, the same lighted match stick that he uses to light his cigar. The context behind this work is that he had called out to the students to boycott classes and join the ongoing Non-Cooperation Movement. In Bengal, fifty thousand students had boycotted their classes and taken part in the movement. Ashutosh Mukherjee was disheartened by such an action. He tried a lot to convince the students to come back and take their classes. According to him such an act was a national disaster. The message hidden behind in the composition is that just like smoking, to spread disorder in the country is an offence that Chittaranjan enjoys. (Ghosh: 2013)

Gaganendranath's number of political caricature is less than his number of socially satirical drawings. This is not because he preferred to stay away from politics. Actually, he was not related to any daily newspaper directly. Hence the number of pun and satirical caricatures about the British rulers was also less in his stock. However we do know that the British shared a cordial and friendly relationship with the *Thakurbari*. That however did not mute their protests against the unjust and unfair policies of the British. I will mention a famous work of Gaganendranath about the British rulers here. The context of the work goes like this- in 1926, a particular demand of the then Governor General Lord Linlithgow had caused some excitement amongst a section of educated Indians. In order to develop the under developed state of agriculture in the country a Commission of Agriculture was set up under the patronage of the then Governor General. Of the many proposals put forward by the commission one was to bring oxen from Europe and created a mixed or hybrid variety of cow in this country. On hearing this news some of the pro-British Indians were very happy. However the learned people of the *Thakurbari* had realized that none of the proposals would actually benefit the Indian agricultural scene. Upon this idea was based Gaganendranath's composition which shows the imported European ox (with great artistic skill

the face of the Governor General has been superimposed on the ox's face) resting in the courtyard of a Hindu household (Plate 3.8). (Meaning, in the household of ones who favour the British)The owner of the house is busy pressing the European ox's dung on the walls of his courtyard. This devoted *bramhin* has the ideal short pony tail and has sandalwood marks on his forehead. He knows that a religious ox's cow dung is of no use; but whatever, this is after all a European ox. (Ghosh: 2013)

One of another image (Plate 3.2), maybe the wife of the ascetic is arranging food for him back at home in a bell-metal plate. The ascetic is not at all aware of all that. In fact he is not even aware what conditions his religious books are in the hands of the sex worker. That sings the "praise" of these ascetics. The ascetic is blessing some women. Side by side he is also counting whether the offerings of the women are enough or not. The composition is titled: 'Blessing for sale'. Many pictures like this stand as a satirical documentation of ascetics vis men's selfishness- treachery-recklessness and their torture of women. Apart from this there is yet another type of satirical painting drawn upon another social class of then Bengal. By that class we point towards the then *Babus* of Bengal. During the time of Muslim Rule this particular class had always tried to stay in the good books of the rulers with their *babuani*. During the British rule these *Babus* adapted the British ways of life. Their weird attitude, their stupidity of a definite ignorance towards their own traditional attire and mother tongue perplexed Gaganendranath. This had led to the creation of many satirically humorous drawings.

In another work (Plate 3.1) we find that a *Babu* has been made to stand in a porcelain pot. His attire is weird. We find that in the lower part of his body he is wearing a *dhoti-chapkan* (typical Bengali attire) with a stick in his hand while a European attire vis his attitude adorns his left side. Just like an identity label is attached to a pot containing a rare species of plant, this pot too is labelled as 'Hybrid Bengalessis'- the word Lessee is legal term; meaning a well off man. A similar hybrid Bengali is seen present in an occasion that is being celebrated. Bengalis celebrate Janmashtami (Birth of

Christ) on the 25th of December. A *mangalghat* (a holy vessel or pot that is used for religious ceremonies) adorns the door; lights decorate the entire house. However instead of fruits and sweet meats, which are generally offered in Hindu households during religious festivals, a cake brought from the Great Eastern Hotel has been put up as an offering. That it is winter time has been depicted by showing that the head male member of the household has a shawl wrapped around him. Gaganendranath had a keen eye for detailing. (Ghosh: 2013)

It was during the lifetime of the artist that the notorious massacre at Jallianwalah Bagh had occurred. As a protest against this heinous act, Gaganendranath drew a field of dead corpses and fallen bodies with a vulture perched in the middle of it. At a corner of the field was the primary instigator behind the killing- Michael'o Dyer. This was exhibited also in presence of the then viceroy Lord Chelmsford. In the same exhibition, one could witness one of the most famous political satirical drawings that Gaganendranath had created "Piece Declared in Punjab." The caricature showed an Indian lying on his face, while a British soldier stamped him to the ground by pressing on his back with his boots. The 1324(Bengali year) summer volume of the *"Probashi*" published Gaganendranath's satirical image titled "The Thirsty Fast of Ekadoshi" (*Nirjala Ekadoshi*) (Plate 3.5). The same periodical also had published a satirical image about a thief that has been mentioned here. In the same year two other caricatures titled "*Patidevata"* and *"Sahityer Paka Sadak*" were also a important work. The pioneer protest painting against the prevailing social injustice *"Nirjala Ekadoshi"* inspired poet Satyendranath Dutt to compose a poem "*Dorkha Ekadoshi*"-

'*Uria luchi arai dista der kuri aam soho*
Ekadoshir bidhandata koren ekadoshi...'

The caricature about the thief depicted two voluptuous policemen taking away an emaciated man as thief who has stolen only two mangoes(Plate 3.10). The cartoon was a response to the ongoing farce in the society where trivial crimes were being addressed more while the actual

concerns were being left in oblivion, without being addressed since the real criminals were beyond their reach. What amuses us is that even though we have passed ages, made progress in terms of scientific development, but all these instances of plight and depravity, which Gaganendranth had depicted, still stands to be true. (Gangopadhya: 1420)

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

The third chapter analyzes Gaganendranath Tagore as a modern Indian artist. He had experimented with various styles and techniques. The caricatures are on full sheets with simplified drawing in tones of black, grey and white. Some of these were printed as lithographs. However it was not easy for him to adapt the style of caricature in early twentieth century. During this time his elder brother Abanindranth Tagore was a devoted painter. But Gaganendranath did not belong to the school of painting that is associated with Abanindranth. He tried to assimilate various trends and traditions in art. Painting has a timeless appeal. A form such as this fills the mind of a true connoisseur of art with a pristine imagination that resonate a wholesome, speechless pleasure; whereas through the style of Gaganendranath's caricature like paintings, the shortcomings and the wrongdoings of social and political events are reflected. Bound by the limits of time and space, his works were a form of art that reflected upon the arguments and the counter arguments that a current event initiates where it fills a humorist's mind with a sense of bitter-sarcastic happiness. This was because he wanted to bring to front the dishonesty-treachery-opportunism of those whom he knew in the social and political circuits. He had also observed the pseudo/quasi-religious from really close. All these experiences had driven him to take recourse in the satirical art form. Wit is active, always ready to engage in battle. Every new content and form is born out of a new social necessity negating the previous out of date values, the insufficiency of the earlier form and content. A change corresponding to the general intellectual crisis occurs in the theory of art. The art of the nationalistic bourgeois remained stagnant for quite some time. Because of their mythological roots, they were unable to grasp the true reality and beauty, their content and form was indefinite in itself, in contrast to the

naive nationalism of the bourgeoisie style. Gaganendranath for the first time raised the problem that the mythological past to which art was rooted was no longer sufficient in the changing socio-political conditions of Bengal. That a different set of relational value between art and society, between art and people.

The chapter studies the satirical works by the artist. Gaganendranath's number of political caricature is less than his number of socially satirical drawings. This is not because he preferred to stay away from politics. Actually, he was not related to any daily newspaper directly. Hence the number of pun and satirical caricatures about the British rulers was also less in his stock. However we do know that the British shared a cordial and friendly relationship with the *Thakurbari*. That however did not mute their protests against the unjust and unfair policies of the British. What is so striking about his caricatures is the complete absence of bitterness, pessimism and scruffy sarcasm in them. Not a single one of them has degraded itself by indulging in scandalous digs and innuendos. There is an omnipresent sadness and tender humanism in the caricatures. They express a deep social awareness and genuine desire to rid the society of these evils. What Daumier's works had done in west in the period of a social unrest, Gaganendranath's caricatures served the same purpose in the period of Bengal's social and political disorder. These caricatures are not so much exaggerated or grotesque drawings as comments on the social scene, a form of satire that would move men to realise the absurdity of their behaviour. The artist attempts in this way to create a more humane world.

Plate-3.1 : Gaganendranath Tagore , Hybrid Bengalessis, Satirical drawing.

Plate-3.2 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Blessing for sale, Satirical drawing.

Plate-3.3 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Marriage Reform, Satirical drawing

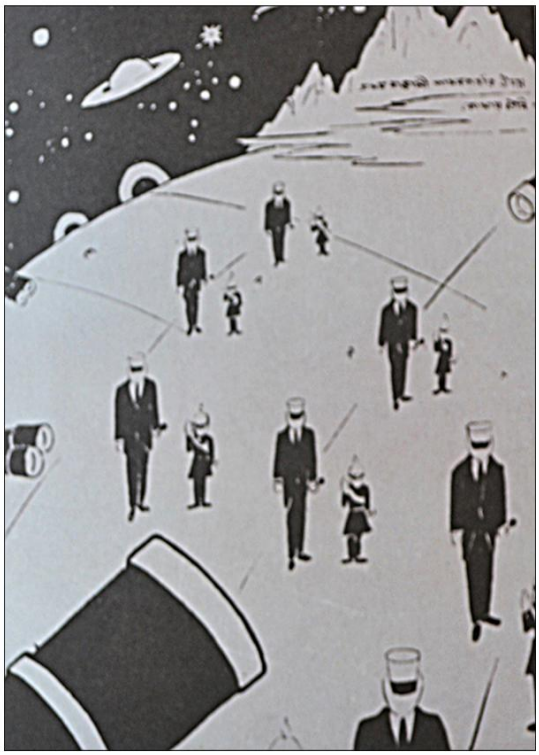

Plate-3.4 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Where is H.E ? , Satirical drawing

Plate-3.5 : Gaganendranath Tagore , Nirjala Ekadashi , Satirical drawing .

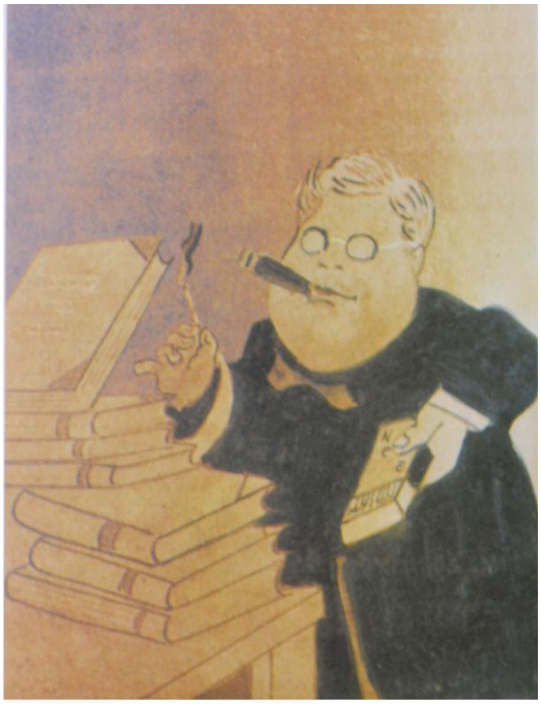

Plate-3.6 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Satirical drawing .

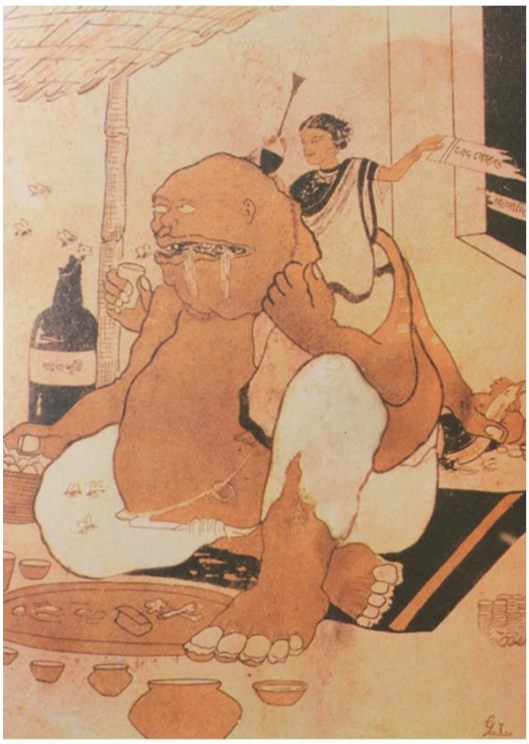

Plate-3.7 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Imperishable Sacredness of a Brahmin, Satirical drawing .

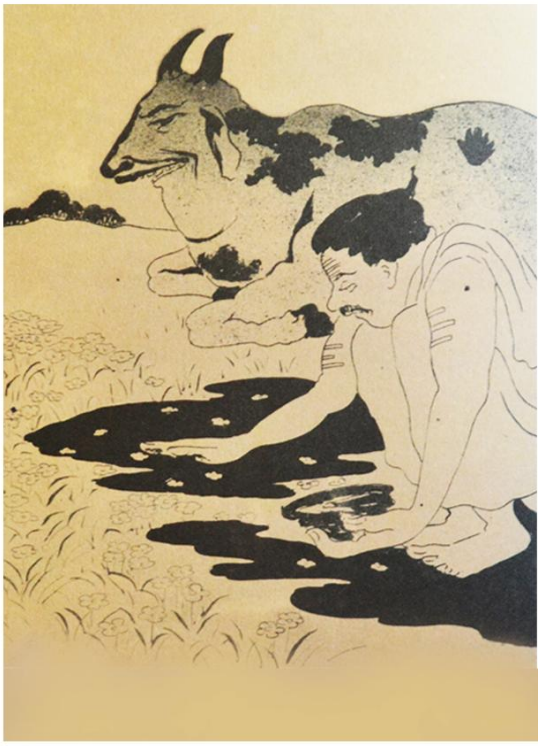

Plate-3.8 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Satirical drawing .

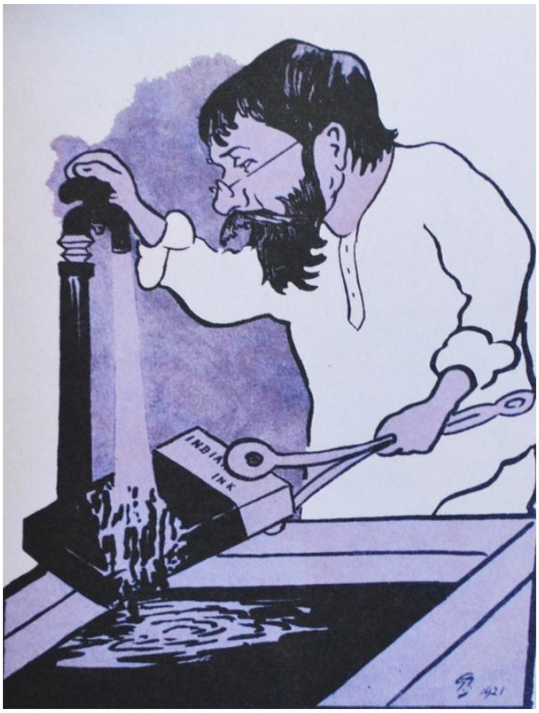

Plate-3.9 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Chemical Scream, Satirical drawing .

Plate-3.10 : Gaganendranath Tagore, The Thief , Satirical drawing .

Plate-3.11 , Gaganendranath Tagore, Terribly Sympathetic, Satirical drawing .

Plate-3.12 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Millstone of Caste, Satirical drawing

Plate-3.13 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Self-Portrait with Maharaja of Burdwan, Satirical drawing

Plate-3.14 : Gaganendranath Tagore, The Cramming Machine, Satirical drawing

Plate-3.15 : Gaganendranath Tagore, The Auto Speechola, Satirical drawing .

Plate-3.16 : Gaganendranath Tagore, A Noble-man, Satirical drawing

Plate-3.17 : Gaganendranath Tagore, Latest Flight of the Poet, Satirical drawing