

Communal Division and Down Trodden Social Issues: A Study of Marginalization in Mulk Raj Anand's Selected Novels.

Researcher Name:

C. Velusamy

Ph.D-Research Scholar

**Department of English
Annamalai University**

Research Guide:

Dr.M. Soundhararajan

Assistant Professor

**Department of English
Annamalai University**

Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand is a distinguished writer of Indian- English literature by whom Indian-English literature took a different turn. Because Anand is the only writer wrote about the outcastes and the poor mass. He is a novelist of international repute and first writer to have dispelled the myth built around the Indian characters. The Indian outcastes and poor mass have been clearly and intimately described with unflinching realism and deep understanding, and the exploiters, whether imperialists or feudalists are exposed with uncompromising truthfulness. Anand expresses his vehement protest against the tradition – bound Indian society which caused casteism. He also expresses his sympathy for the outcastes and poor mass who are being exploited and marginalized by the imperialists, feudalists and so-called caste-hindus. Being a reformist, Anand employs elements of Marxism, humanism and realism in almost all his writings. His characters feel themselves to be unique an marginalized in this tradition-bound, hostile and indifferent milieu. They consider that their existence is meaningless. Their struggle from birth to death is to mingle with the main stream of the society. It is this feeling of marginalization draws them from the rest of the world and confines them in their own marginalized milieu. Anand explored their milieu and their living condition

which is dark and gloomy there is no chance for enlightenment. This research presents Anand's autobiography, his academic pursuits and his place among the contemporary Indo-anglian novelists. It also sums up the selected novels in accordance with the theme of marginality under the light of casteism and poverty. Anand as a social Reformist deals with Anand's role as a novelist. It shows how his novels have been written with certain social purpose and his keen interest to reform the caste-ridden and poverty-stricken Indian society in which he lived. It provides the major problems brought forth by Anand.

The marginality and portrayal of down-trodden: with reference to 'untouchable' defines the sufferings and inner feelings of the outcastes and their struggle for identity. It also shows how and why they are marginalized from the main stream of the society. It also expresses how their mere existence, in the tradition-bound Indian soil, is questionable. It also shows their pitiable and wretched milieu and living condition. The Marginality and social milieu: with reference to 'Coolie' explores the root cause for poverty and how the poor-mass is exploited and marginalized by the cruel system of feudalism and imperialism. It also shows the portrayal of their social milieu and their living condition in a wretched environment. It shows how his characters are socially and economically exploited by urbanization and industrialization. It proves how the theme of marginality is explicitly revealed through his novels. It also expresses Anand's solutions and suggestions for those problems, prevailing in our nation. It also contains Anand's own myth of humanity 'Man is god and every problem is made by men and men can undo all those problems.'

Key Word: Marginality, Down Trodden Social issues, Feudalism, Imperialism, Social exploitation, Untouchability, Child labor, Outcast, Dalit Identity, Social injustice, Oppression deep-rooted casteist attitudes, Social hegemony, Caste discrimination)

Introduction

The present research is a modest attempt to analyse and evaluate the theme of exploitation in *Untouchable* and *Coolie*. In these novels, Mulk Raj Anand tries his best to free the working class from the inequities and inequalities, in a caste-ridden society. He presents the social, political and economic problems, which India faces today.

Mulk Raj Anand against superstition, feudalism and imperialism. He has committed himself to the welfare of the down-trodden. Moreover, he insists that all people must have education, economic equality which enable man to ameliorate from the clutches of poverty, violence, greed, jealousy, suppression and narrow mindedness. This research analyses Anand's portrayal of the suffering of the untouchables and their exploitation by the caste-Hindus with special reference to the *Untouchable*, the first novel of Mulk Raj Anand. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, portrayed as scavenger, suffers insults at the hands of the high cast Hindus in the cast-ridden Hindu society. In spite of insults, Bakha remains optimistic and his optimism is highly portrayed by Anand.

This research centers on an analysis of Anand's second novel *Coolie*. In which Munoo, the protagonist, experiences sufferings and undergoes onslaught at the hands of the haves. Anand tries to project a social reality of the time past, present and future as well. Ruthless treatment and merciless exploitation of the poor at the hands of self-complacent British planters. The power conflict exhibits the forced character of both cultural and socio-political adaptation and underscores the role of coercion, segregation and discrimination in the dominated group at the bottom rungs of the societal ladder. The plantation workers in the novel reveal a growing psychological stamina to survive in the face of exploitation. The novel portrays the abominable condition of social degradation, sub-human treatment, bureaucratic high handedness, imperialistic

and capitalistic design of wealth grabbing and exploitation of the unorganized labour which constitute the politics of poverty as portrayed by Anand in this novel.

The research investigates the two novels of Mulk Raj Anand *untouchable* and *coolie* to document the treatment of child rights by the dominant society. The protagonist of *untouchable* is a sweeper, who is denied his rights to education, sports and entertainment by his father Bakha who always forces him to labour but the dominant society who denies him sweets and any relationship with their children. In the novel *Coolie*, the plight of a fifteen year old boy, Munoo a child labourer is pictured.

Review of Literature

This study supplies review of literature Mulk Raj Anand's major critics deal with various issues. The eastern critic G.S. Balarama Gupta in his fiction in Humanist perspective establishes Anand as a humanist. The western critic F.M. Foster in his *Preface to Untouchable* where in Foster admires Anand and recognizes the wider gamut of emotions assimilated in the novel. The other Eastern critic K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar explores the perverted orthodoxy of the novel in Indian context. In this connection the critic Saros Cowasjee states the sufferings of Munoo. The Indian critic M.K. Naik observes the central theme of the novel and victim of exploitation. Another western critic Margaret Berry comments on the centre consciousness of the novel. The eastern critic C.D. Narasimhaih comments on the technique and the patterns of the novel.

In this connection, this research has got a survey of critical literature supplies an examination of the views of critics and how they have made a scrutiny of Anand's novels, and this has been done in order to establish that the present researcher deviates from other critics in the appraisal of the Anand's fiction. A single attempt at a scrutiny of the major social theme of Ananda has not been made, and this study fills in the gap, and it is on this

ground, the present study assumes an originating of analysis.

Eradication of Social Exploitation

This study focuses on Anand's positive approaches and his explicit and implicit suggestions for the eradication of exploitation. The exploitation of the poor caused by moral and social make them understand the meaning of life. Anand's heroes struggle, suffer and prove their worth. Man's feeling of nothingness leads him toward a quest for meaning of existence. After a long and tedious search, Anand's protagonists reach some sort of culmination of their efforts, and there appears a streak of hope in them. Reading Anand's novels will always be a rewarding experience, and indeed, he has found a niche for himself in the annals of Indo-English fiction.

Mulk Raj Anand Occupies one of the top most positions in Indo-Anglian Literature, and his rank among the novelist is very high indeed. Anand is famous chiefly as a writer of social novels. His novels deal with some of the most glaring social evils which include untouchability and the exploitation of labourers. His creative writings are no doubt, saturated with the element of protest, which is inseparably connected with his view of life. The novels *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud* are emphatically novels of protest, as are Anand's subsequent novels.

Mulk Raj Anand is a writer with an axe, and his fiction may appropriately called "a Literature of Protest". It is a kind of literature, which Anand holds in high esteem because it strikes hard at the roots of sectionalism, caste conflicts, snobbery, contempt. Anand frankly writes about the poor, the economically deprived and the down-trodden with whom he has close observation and contact. Anand tries to uproot the existing evil-distinctions of caste creed, class, status, outworn, outdated traditions, and conventions, specifically the exploitation of the poor, down-trodden people by the so called caste – Hindus and economically

well to do people. So, Anand straight forwardly works to eradicate the economic imbalance and class distinction from the society.

Anand, a committed humanist, finds fiction as the most suitable vehicle of his genuinely new ideas and realities. He rather writes of the "pariahs" and the bottom dogs than of the elite and sophisticated. He extends his fictional writing to the area that had been widely desolated till then by other. Among the Indian writers in English, Anand is the one who brings us the realistic picture of the working class people. He sees man's inhumanity to man, and about the atrocities, committed by the Hindus on the Harijans, the so called untouchables. There is no glimpse of the upliftment by the politicians. Political promises to ameliorate their suffering are just a lip service (i.e. empty promises), i.e., mechanical way of cleaning the latrines, on all the cities and villages of the country.

Anand's novels are poems of suffering portraying impassionate the pathetic life of the poor. His heroes are the victims of rebels. He introduced a sweeper as the hero of his first novel. The second novel presents a coolie, as the protagonist and a plantation labourer is the central character in the third novel. The underlying pattern of all the novels is uniform. The destruction of a human victim in India, inspite of his goodwill, innocence, and aspirations to a better life, is brutally carried out but the socio-economic system of the country.

The novel *Untouchable* was Anand's first attempt at novel-writing and it proved to be a great success in the long run. The theme of the novel is the evil of untouchability in India and the novel records the experience of an eighteen-year old sweeper boy in the course of a single day in a town to which Anand has given the name of Bulandshahr. This novel shows Anand's sympathy for the under-dogs in India, and his humanitarian and reformist zeal. Evidently, Anand wrote the novel to awaken the conscience of the upper castes in the country. The Indian critic Srinivasa Iyengar speaks of the novel's photographic fidelity that convinces us at once though it also overwhelms us by its cumulative

ferocity of detail.

The novel *Coolie* is much longer than *Untouchable* and its action extends over two years. The protagonist here is a boy called Munoo who goes through a series of experiences, most of which are of the depressing and disgusting kind. This novel brings us into the contact with many segments of the Indian society, and the general effect is panoramic. The evil in this novel manifests itself in the form of selfishness, greed and cruelty, through the root of the evil in poverty. Gangu begins to work as a labourer in the tea-estate and becomes a victim of the exploitation which is going on there. There is an exploitation of the laborers by their foreign masters, but there is also the exploitation by certain well-placed Indian among the laborers. This novel contains a larger number of dramatic and melodramatic situations.

Of the many novels of Mulk Raj Anand, two novels have been taken up for analysis in this research and they are *Untouchable and Coolie*. The protagonists in these novels are the underdogs of the Indian society. By showing the poor and miserable physical conditions, economic exploitation and social injustice of the poor, Mulk Raj Anand has condemned injustice and exploitation. He shows a sure grasp of the psychology of both cast Hindus and the untouchables. He has looked at the problem of exploitation in an objective and balanced manner. He shows both the good and bad sides of the caste Hindu. Anand realistically pictures the plight of poor and offer solutions to the *social* evil. Objectivity, tolerance, balance, and realism characterize Anand's treatment of theme of exploitation. It is this exploitation, which is focused upon in this study.

The Theme of the Novel

Mulk Raj anand ha painted untouchable and coolie with the colors of social realism. These two novels are hard core reality of the Indian society of early decades of twentieth century. These two novels describe the sufferings of

the protagonists, and record the miseries felt by them. These two pieces have together occupied a special place in Indian literature. *Untouchable* and *Coolie* give a voice to the predicament of the mute humanity in vicious circumstances. The suffering is not caused by fate but by fellow human and the social surroundings from which the suffering still have great and immortal hope for betterment of life. *Untouchable and Coolie* are the sagas of suffering of the protagonists – Bakha and Munoo.

Anand is consider a reformer; he does so because it is one of his aims to disturb his readers' complacency to shock them out of conventional attitudes, and encourage them to make a fresh approach to experience. In *untouchable* it is that of a progressive revolutionary of a humanist who is all compassion for the working, down trooden classes, and the social outcastes.

In the novel *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, Anand reveals the curse of *Untouchability*, exploitation, child labor, social governance, social set up of society, customs, religion belief, prejudices and the teme of the miserable masses is studied in a rural and urban setting where hunger and starvation are caused by the operation of natural forces. This is nothing but a reflection of the society. Both these novels deal with the theme of untouchability, exploitation, poverty, hunger and the suffering of the Indian masses. The theme of suffering caused by vicious circumstances in life has been realistically depicted and the heroic struggle of the central figure, against heavy odds raises the novels to the lofty heights of an epic. *Untouchable* and *Coolie* are called epics of social realism as they have all the qualities of great epics though in different ways. According to the ancient Greeks, the epic is a narrative poem, longer in scope and size, having a divine inspiration. The characters is in an epic poem can be partly human and partly divine. In epics, the action should be complete and grand. An epic hero is not an ordinary person. *Untouchable* and *coolie* have the same qualities of epics.

Social Exploitation

Mulk Raj Anand, the champion of the under-dogs, exposes social

hypocrisy, taboos, class exploitation, class struggle, social and economic injustices, and the inhuman atrocities of the erstwhile British rulers in his novels. He has learnt the technique of realistic portrayal from eminent masters of Indian fiction like Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Premchand, Sharat Chand, and European novelists like Chekhov, Flaubert, and Tolstoy, He is a minute observer of life, society and human character, and does not leave even the ugliest and most unpalatable situations aside. Everything - latrines, dirt, squalor, beggary, poverty, disease and prostitution is beautifully described both in his novels and short stories.

Anand actually succeeded in interpreting the heart of India, and the genuine Indian villages to the West in the form they could easily understand and appreciate. He was the son of a coppersmith turned soldier. He had moved with his father as his regiment was transferred from place to place. Thus he experienced great many sections of India life and European life the life of officers and the men of the army. Anand had seen and felt the rural life of the Punjab and North-West frontier provinces of those days. He had seen villages groaning under poverty: he had seen village's life sucked dry by parasites and religious priests. All these had cast a spell on the mind of Mulk Raj Anand. The sweeper, the peasant, plantation labourer, the city drudge, the sepoy, all emerges alive from his novels.

An attempt has been made in the novel of Anand's *Untouchable* and *Coolie* in the light of exploitation as a factor. The purpose of this research is to gather all the threads together and to find out how Anand's novels picture the plights of protagonist. Through the novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, we have seen the untouchables and coolies and poor peasants:

It was natural, after I had probed the soul of the sweeper Bakha in my novel *Untouchable*, and reproduced each wound on the heart and body of the hill boy Munoo in the folk epic *Coolie*, that I should record the journey of the Hillman Gangu through the

vicissitudes of his later life, after his eviction from the story half acre in the Punjab Himalayas and his enticement as an indentured labourer to the tea estates of Assam. All these heroes, as the other men and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me, because they were the reflections of the real people I had known during my childhood and youth.(1)

This clearly shows that, Anand has drawn many of his characters from the real people, he had known and met in his early days. In fact, Anand the angry man of today wants that old order must change yielding place to the new. he gives the impressionistic reconstruction of the type of man, who will do this. This is put forward from various angles in the novels of Anand.

From Suffering to Survival in the Novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie*

The novel *Untouchable* is perhaps Anand's best constructed novel in which Anand's artistic power is distinctly seen at its best. He has rarely touched that condensation of effect in any other novel. His method of storytelling is almost dramatic. He picks up a character and incident by incident, builds up a background and gradually the character becomes alive and begins to live and breathe under his expert handling. Anand's heroes are the down-trodden, sweepers, coolies, the unemployed coppersmiths, the debt-ridden farmers, and poor simple soldiers. He puts all his heroes and heroines as out-castes, pariahs, and as underdogs of the society. They give a true - realistic novel to Indo-Anglian fiction.

In the novel *Untouchable*, the subject is cleaning of latrines not a very pleasant subject for literature. But Anand in his novels blows the lid off these so-called hypocrisy and social taboos. No act, no circumstances however ugly is debarred from Anand's novels as long as it furthers his purpose of exposing the social shame and hoax. Latrines, dirt, cesspools poverty, beggary, prostitution, and disease everything is beautifully expressed. Anand leads this caravan of less miserales, and tells the West, the story of true India - not the India of

bejeweled “Maharajas” polo-playing European officers and clubs and drinks. But the real life of the majority of Indian. His purpose is not to draw sentimental tears but to show his readers the true dignity, that is hidden behind dirt, poverty and deacease.

In the novel *Coolie*, Anand shows us he hates the class bar so much that his hatred against the British rulers in India is also a fight against a particular from of class privileges. The author traces the life of a boy born as a peasant who leaves his village in the hills to become a domestic servant, to pass later on to a factory in a city, which though it has factories, still remains predominantly a feudal city with its squalid state, graft extreme class divisions and autocracy. He then moves the cotton industry of Bombay and finally to the slow death pulling rickshaws up and down the steep hills of simla.

The plot of the novel moves very slowly but the character is very effectively portrayed. The picture of poverty appears slightly exaggerated. Munoo the growing boy sees with the eye of wonder at Sham nagar, then Daulatpur then Bombay and then Simla. The psychology of the boy is realistically worked out. But the plot is episodic in character. It is a chain of incidents joined together, the central figure is Munoo. The descriptions of scenery and cities are vivid. Dr. P.P.Mehta says:

Coolie is not only Anand’s first novel but possibly the foremost folk epic of the Indo-Anglian fiction. In its epic sweep and the spatial vastness of society in which the hero restlessly exists it recalls Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*.(2)

Anand uses the hackneyed device of incident in which munoo meets with a car accident by which he is transported to a different world, where he gets a short spell of happiness but this final part gives the impression of being sketchy, hasty and slightly unconvincing. The artistic tension of the early starkly realistic episodes is slackened thereby. Mulk Raj Anand uses simple but effective style with good sprinkling words. He has described the sorrow and

pathos of the poor people in India.

Anand tackles the problem of the underdog, he has put in his pages the dirt and squalor that even the surrealist Weston novelists would rarely tackle. *Untouchable* deals with latrine cleaning the shag by, filthy, and dirty life of the untouchables. It is a story of crushed humanity of sighs and tears. It touches the inner depths in every civilized mind. The conflict is well worked out and characters barring slight bias against Brahmins are well portrayed.

Findings and Research Statements

The study of exploitation of poor in Anand's novels establishes the fact that he has exposed social evils in its myriad manifestations. He has evocatively presented different layers of human experience in his fiction. Of the India Anglian novelists, only Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan have shown anything like stamina and stern consistency of purpose.

Mulk Raj Anand's novels are stories not of one person or community, in fact they represent almost all sections of society whether in a rural area or in an urban area. He presents a faithful picture of man's miserable plight. Indians are fatalists, honest, and sincere. Therefore they accept; their miseries as the gift of God. It is this picture which is evolved in the readers after a careful scrutiny of the theme of exploitation of poor in *Untouchable* and *Coolie*.

Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattachaiya, and R.K.Narayan are humanist, believing in the betterment of man's life in general and social amelioration in particular. Anand also possess this quality. In his novels, he ably highlights those problems which are considered as evils which weaken the Indian Society. It goes to Anand's credit that he does not pass comments to make the readers recognize those evils. The readers themselves pick up the evils through a number of situations and incidents.

Conclusion

The major characters in the novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie* experience of suffering and pains, and these social, moral and personal afflictions make them understand the meaning of life, and achieve a consummation of human existence. Their sufferings assume a meaning and realization which dawn on them at the end. Mulk Raj Anand's treatment of poverty, social, and moral conflicts in his novels create a very powerful impact on the minds of readers. It is due to the mass appeal of his novels that Mulk Raj Anand occupies a prominent place in the Indian English fictional world with writers like R.K.Naryan, Bhabani Bhattachaiya, and Raja Rao. His popularity becomes clear from the fact that his novels have been translated into a number of languages. Indeed, his novels provide guidelines for the future novelists.

Anand is social reformist and scientific humanistic so in the novel he projects real theme, real problem and real solution. He has concern with downtrodden so he has raised the issues, realize the reader to have pity and compassion and finally Anand provides solution to remove untouchability.

Anand is a social reformist. He has concern for untouchables so he avoids all sorts of overt propaganda and sees that the novel develops along with the character in action His strict fidelity to the facts of life and a variety of the social mores makes the novel at once a significant social documents well a symbolic projection of the whole saga of human suffering. Bakha is put to a complex congeries of social realities, and the three incidents in which he finds himself unwittingly implicated, are keyed up to bring out the poignancy in the life of his protagonist.

Certainly Anand's novel *untouchable* is a masterly work because it evinces a happy harmony by between his silica preoccupations and artistic gifts. Thus, Anand has exposed social evil in its myriad manifestations and has evocatively presented different layers of human experience in the fiction. He enables to view humanity at large in a proper perspective. His close association with the underdogs and his passionate recordation of their woes has given his

novel a rare cogency and an intimate quality of felt life.

In *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, bakha and Munoo are epic heroes of suffering. The other characters in these novels face pathetic and miserable conditions because of their social background and economic dependence. The female characters in both the novels make a highly piteous reading. The novels of Anand present a fictional world peopled by a striking variety of characters, covering a wide area of Indian social and political science.

Work Cited

Primary Sources

Anand, Mulk Raj, *Untouchable*, New Delhi: Penguin 2001.

--- *Coolie*, New Delhi: Penguin, 1993.

Secondary Sources

Balarama Gupta, G.S. *Mulk Raj Anand: A study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective*, Bareilly: Prakash, 1974.

Foster, E.M. "Preface to *Untouchable*," Bombay: the Uniform kutub, 1935.

Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa, *Indian Writing in English*. Bombay: Asia publishing House, 1962.

Khan, Munir. *Indian English writing*. New Delhi: S.G. Publications, 1994

Naik, M.K. *Perspectives on Indian Fiction in English*, New Delhi: Abinav Publications, 1985.

Rajan, P.K. *Mulk Raj Anand: A Revolution*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates, 1995

Sinha, K.N. *Mulk Raj Anand*, New Delhi: kalyani Publications, 1998.

Williams, H.M., *Studies in Modern Indian Fiction in English*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962.

- Cowasjes, Saros. *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major fiction of Mulk Raj Anand*. Madras: OUP, 1977.
- Gupta, Balarama G.S. *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of his Fiction in Humanist Perspective*. Bareilly: prakash Book Depot, 1974.
- Klein, Viola. *The Feminine Characters*. London: Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1946.
- Naik, M.K. *Mulk Raj Anand*. Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, India, 1973.
- Niven, Alastair, *The Yoke of Pity*. Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann India, 1978.
- Riemenschneider, D. *An Ideal of Man in Mulk Raj Anand's Novels*. Bombay: Kutub-Popular, 1967.
- Sinha, Krishna Nandan. *Mulk Raj Anand*. How York: Twayne Publishers, 1972.
- Badal, R.K. *Indo-Anglian Literature*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1975.
- Beavoir De Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Alfred A. Knoop. 1971.
- Cowasjee, Saros. *Coolie: An Assesament*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Sharma, K.K. (Ed). *Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand*. Ghasiabed: Vimal Prakashan, 1978.