

UNTOUCHABLE: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND STRUGGLING SITUATION BY MULK RAJ ANAND

¹Shantha Latha Tamaraparani, ²Dr Illiyakumar, ³Kavitha Punugu, ⁴Dr Vijayanand
^{2,4}Professor, ^{1,3}Assistant Professor, ^{1,2,3}Department of English, Rishi MS Institute of Engineering and
Technology for Women, Kukatpally, Hyderabad.

ABSTRACT

Mulk Raj Anand was a prolific writer who was also socially conscious. His works gained him a great lot of recognition. This essay aims to highlight the social and real-world lives that were leading up to India's freedom fight in the early 19th century. It painted an image of the untouchable sweeper, known in the literature as Bakha, in his typical day. The brutal and bare facts of civilization are frequently shown in the story. The evil of un touch ability and the necessity of radical empathy are the topics of this essay. The novel will make the reader aware of the untouchables' physical and emotional suffering, as well as their humiliation and physical abuse.

Key Words: Alienation, humiliation, social discrimination, human dignity, suppression.

INTRODUCTION

Mulk Raj Anand's debut book and masterpiece is *Untouchable*. It is a sociological fiction with the depravity of untouchability as its central topic. The narrative chronicles the actions of Bakha, an 18-year-old sweeper kid, over the course of one day in order to powerfully expose evil. Bakha, the town's sweeper kid, is responsible for maintaining cleanliness in the public restrooms. It is incredibly time-consuming, hard, and disrespectful. *Untouchable* demonstrates Anand's empathy for the underdog or weaker segment of Indian society. With untouchability, the social alienation is crucial. In essence, bhaka's life is characterised by social estrangement. It presents Bakha as having a lot of hopes and goals for the future. In other words, Bakha is no different than any other human being. This is the condition that allows his social alienation to continue. Social alienation exists in the form of a caste system relegates people to fixed roles. This is the reality in which Bakha lives and against which struggle is inevitable. Anand's condemnation of the caste system is made on the grounds that a system that labels people like Bakha as "Untouchable" is rooted in social alienation.

BAKHA AS SYMBOL OF EXPLOITATION

The primary theme of „*Untouchable*“ is thus exploitation of the young adult. Bakha is denied their fundamental right to grow into respectable citizen of society. Bakha's life is condemned from the beginning to be a sweeper irrespective of his dream to transcend his miserable existence. E.M. Forster points this out in preface *untouchable*.

Boys of Bakha, their age should be for attending school is obliged to work fora living. He longs to go to school but bakha knows that he cannot. His admiration for the school going boys brings out this longing in him. If he has protected Childhood,he would have gone to school and studied like other children.

Bakha noticed the ardent, enthusiastic look that lip up the little one's face. The anxiety of going to school ! How beautiful it felt! How nice it must be too able to readand write!

“Once bakha had wept and cried to be allowed to go to school” but he was toldby his father that “Schools were meant for the babus, and not for the bhangis; He had not understood the reason for that then The reason is, the education would have made them revolt against injustice. The ignorance of the exploited is bliss for the exploiters.

STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL EXISTENCE

Anand, as has been suggested by Prof. H.M. Williams, example the problem of „untouchability“, the treatment of the latrine cleaning class condemned to isolation and deprivation as handlers of excrement; he exposes this is a social evil and suggests its remedy.

There are many occasions in the novel which reveal the stark and naked realities in the society. One such occasion is when the untouchables are victimized, ravished and their morale shattered into pieces. The well incident in the novel poignantly describes how these ill-fated people are usurped by the so called high class touchable. Bakha's sister once goes to the village well for fetching water. She waits to be given a little water from the well, as she is not allowed, being untouchable, to touch anything there. Ultimately, the village priest does not needful and asks her to come to his house for cleaning. But, seeing nobody around, when she goes to house, he tries to molest her. The priest tries to fish in the troubled waters. The cruller think is when people gather, the priest impenitently indicts the innocent girl that she has defiled his religion. He returns home desperately and tells his father Lakha about his insult and Sohini's molestation by the pandit he says: "They think we are mere dirt, because we clean their dirt".

If we view the incident from humanitarian perspective, we must say that might is right. The untouchables; being weak, have no justice, we can see from the beginning of the novel the lives of bakha and his sister were struggling for financial, identity and social, existence in the novel.

TOUCHING EPISODE

On the fateful day the story of Untouchable takes place Bakha has a series of disturbing and even „edifying“ experiences. The first of them is „touchable“ episode. He feels panic-stricken when, enjoying the taste of jelebi; he accidentally touches a caste Hindu man who is on his way to work. This „defiled“ man slaps and roundly abuses him. The people who gather there too fault only Bakha. His protestations fall on deaf ears. After this, as he moves ahead, he is conscious of his presence in a public place and takes care to announce his approach. The disturbing experience of the man's unkindness to him and crowd's cruelty repeatedly come back to his mind. He painfully realizes his unenviable position of a sweeper boy. He does not have a step-mother but society itself seem to act as punishing step-mother as for as he is concerned.

All of them abuses, abused. Why are we always abused? Because we are sweepers. Because we are touch dung they [Muhammadans] don't mind touching us. It is only the Hindus, and the outcastes who are not sweepers. For them I am asweeper, sweeper-untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable.

E.M. FORSTER RIGHTLY HOLDS THE VIEW :

The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he can't escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolation of his religion. Unclean himself he pollutes other when he touches them

CONCLUSION

The story therefore depicts the brutal truth of life and the burden of being untouchable. The novel's fundamental argument is that Untouchability should be completely abolished. With Untouchable, Mulk Raj Anand created a story that, in the conventional realism novel style, articulates the mistreatment of an oppressed class with simple sympathy. Anand is comparable to Charles Dickens in terms of his skill as a writer. There is a real chance that India may one day be free from prejudice, callousness, and disparity-based discrimination. In the near future, our nation may experience the timeless beauty of equality and unity!

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