

# **A Critical Study of the Elements of Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in the Selected Novels of Mulk Raj Anand**

**A Thesis  
Submitted to  
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University  
For the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in English**



**By  
Pranjyoti Deka**

**Padmanath Gohain Baruah School of Humanities  
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University  
Patgaon, Rani Gate, Guwahati-781017**

**2017**



# Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University

Permanent Campus: Patgaon, Rani Gate, Guwahati - 781017, Assam, India  
City Office: Housefed Complex, Last Gate, Guwahati - 781006, Assam, India  
Phone: +91 361 2234964 / +91 361 2235971 / +91 88110 16666. Fax: +91 361 2235398.  
Email: info@kkhsou.in. Website: www.kkhsou.in

**Dr. Prasenjit Das**  
*Associate Professor in English*

**Email:** prasenjitgu@gmail.com  
**Phone:** +91 9435146596

## Certificate from the Guide

This is to certify that Sri Pranjyoti Deka has carried out his research work entitled “A Critical Study of the Elements of Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in the Selected Novels of Mulk Raj Anand” for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in the Department of English under Padmanath Gohainbaruah School of Humanities at Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, under my guidance and supervision.

I certify that Pranjyoti Deka has fulfilled the conditions of the Regulation for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D), 2009 of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, and he has done all necessary corrections in the thesis. He is therefore qualified to submit this thesis.

Date: 9/01/2019

  
(Prasenjit Das)

## Declaration by the Candidate

I, Pranjyoti Deka, solemnly declare that the research work presented in this thesis entitled “A Critical Study of the Elements of Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in the Selected Novels of Mulk Raj Anand” has been completed under the supervision of Dr. Prasenjit Das, Department of English, KKHSOU. I have fulfilled all the requirements laid down in the Regulation for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D), 2009 of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University. I also have made all the necessary corrections in the thesis. This thesis is my own original investigation, work and understanding except where due acknowledgements have been made. No part of the research work has been submitted anywhere in part or whole for any degree.

Date: 09.01.2019

Pranjyoti Deka  
Signature

## Acknowledgement

Writing an acknowledgement is indeed a difficult work because it entails the duty of acknowledging all those people who has offered their valuable assistance and help during the whole course of the research. Here, I would like to make a humble attempt to acknowledge all those people whose help and support was involved in the completion of this research enterprise. At the very outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Supervisor Dr. Prasenjit Das for his whole hearted guidance and support throughout the course of this research work. This research endeavour would not have been possible without his constructive criticism and encouragement. He guided me to be hard working and to keep my faith intact.

I am grateful to Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University authority for making all the necessary provisions to make the conduct of this research work possible. I offer my sincere gratitude to Prof. Arupjyoti Choudhury, the Dean (Academic) and Registrar i/c, for his kindness, support, and guidance throughout this research work. I am grateful to all the faculty members of K. K. Handiqui State Open University for their valuable comments and suggestions. I offer my thanks to Dr. Gautam Kumar Sarma, Assistant Librarian, Central Library, KKHSOU for providing me his invaluable assistance and support. I thankfully acknowledge the co-operation I received from all other staff of K. K. Handiqui State Open University. I also offer my special thanks to all the staff of the National Library, Kolkata for their help and assistance in locating the study materials for this research work.

On the personal note, I would like to mention the name of my father Narakanta Deka for his constant reminding me of the duty of completing this research work. It is my father, who has been inspiring me to pursue the path of knowledge from my childhood. I also take this opportunity to mention my profound indebtedness to the love and care of my mother

Purnima Deka. Without the support of my parents, it would not have been possible to complete this research work. I am extremely thankful to the whole hearted support and co-operation of my brother Dhrubajyoti Deka throughout the course of this research. My wife Bhupali has been the constant source of inspiration and support during this research work. She stood by me during the time I lost all hope. I am indebted to her for her invaluable support and inspiration. I would like to offer my thanks to my father-in-law Prabhat Mazumdar and mother-in-law Gita Mazumdar for their encouragement and love. I am thankful to my sister-in-law Biju Mazumdar for her continuous support and help.

I offer my sincere thanks to all the faculty members of the Dept. of English, Baosi Banikanta Kakati College, Nagaon, Barpeta for their advice and support in carrying out this research work.

I would like to offer my thanks and gratitude to all those persons who helped me directly and indirectly in making this research work possible.

I also would like to offer my sincere thanks to the editors of *Anweshan* (ISSN:03222-0880- Annual Research Journal of ACTA, Barpeta Zone Volume-III & IV for the years 2015 & 2016) and *Assam College Teachers' Association Journal* (ISSN:2229-693X, Volume-XXXVIII, 2016) for accepting to publish three papers which were basically drawn upon this present research work. A separate "list of publication" for these three papers is attached at the end of this thesis.

**Date:**.....

**Place:**.....

**Pranjyoti Deka**

**Research Scholar**

## **List of Abbreviations Used**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <i>Across the Black Waters</i>            | : <i>ATBW</i>  |
| All India Progressive Writers Association | : <i>AIPWA</i> |
| <i>Coolie</i>                             | : <i>C</i>     |
| <i>The Sword and the Sickle</i>           | : <i>TSATS</i> |
| <i>The Village</i>                        | : <i>TV</i>    |
| <i>The Big Heart</i>                      | : <i>TBH</i>   |
| <i>Two Leaves and A Bud</i>               | : <i>TLAB</i>  |
| <i>Untouchable</i>                        | : <i>U</i>     |

## List of Contents:

|   | Page No |
|---|---------|
| Contents  |         |
| Certificate   | i       |
| Declaration by the Candidate  | ii      |
| Acknowledgement   | iii     |
| List of Abbreviations Used  | v       |
| Chapter 1: Introduction   | 1-47    |
| Chapter 2: Contextualising Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of<br>Rebellion | 48-89   |
| Chapter 3: <i>Untouchable: The Ruthlessness of the Caste System</i>             | 90-112  |
| Chapter 4: <i>Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud: The 'Saga' of the Coolies</i>    | 113-138 |
| Chapter 5: <i>The Lal Singh Trilogy: The Loss of Peasantry</i>                  | 139-162 |
| Chapter 6: <i>The Big Heart: The Onslaught of Industrialisation</i>             | 163-183 |
| Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusion   | 184-201 |
| Bibliography  | 202-211 |
| Publication Details   | 212     |

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This present thesis is intended on the novels of Mulk Raj Anand who has been one of the most prolific of the Pre Independence Indian novelists writing in English. Mulk Raj Anand began his novelistic career with *Untouchable* (1935) and revolutionised Indian novel in English by making an untouchable the protagonist in this novel. Anand dedicated his literary career in representing the exploited and the oppressed. He dared to do so against the current milieu of fiction writing where a well-recognised protagonist had been a marked phenomenon. Anand's love for the suffering masses of India was unprecedented and it was unique in the domain of fiction writing of his time. For Anand, literature was "a weapon for attacking social, political and economic institutions injurious to human freedom and equality of opportunity" (Berry, 1971, p. 27). This spoke of Anand's immense compassion for those impoverished human beings whose position in the social hierarchy was a debased one. Anand (1986) remarked that his love for man was based on his "faith in the creative imagination of man, in his capacity to transform himself" (p. 96). Looking at the poverty, misery and ignorance of the Indian masses, he commented:

I am conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and the other suppressed members of the society, to human dignity and self-awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair to which they have been condemned. (Anand, 1986, p. 137)

Anand considered novel writing as a self-imposed duty through which he could change the world. It is conspicuous that for Anand novel writing was neither a tool for earning



fame nor it was a channel for making money. Writing was a response to his inner call. At the very beginning of his writing career, he faced a serious set back when nineteen publishers refused to publish his first novel *U*. It was his belief in his decision of becoming a writer, which helped him to continue his pursuit as a writer. Anand believed that art is for life and it should always be integrated with the life of community. According to Anand (1986), the role of an artist was very important because: “modern commercial society had forced the writer into isolation, it was necessary for him to link with the disinherited, the weak and the dispossessed, as a human being and as an artist with special talents, to help transform society” (p. 122). He stated that the creative artist was suited to change the society. At the same time, he also opined that a creative artist should be sincere about himself because such an artist could:

Exalt men to the full heights of their dignity, to equip them with the necessary spirit to tackle the tasks before them. By giving vent to their inmost desires, by revealing to them the true nature of men and by informing their will, the writer thus helps one to take part in the drama of revolt from which emerges the new society (Anand, 1986, p. 135).

He regarded the creative artist as the prophet of the age rather than an entertainer. When Anand decided to become a creative writer, he understood that his primary duty would be to show the society the necessary ways to change. He believed that it was necessary to leave the decadent and then to strive for the valuable. He was certain that such an ideal must be followed but at the same time, he was also aware that it would be very difficult to achieve success by following it. He was aware that it would be a difficult task to remove all the dark prejudices and habits from the Indian society. His observation was that the basic requirement of a writer was freedom of speech and

expression. However, he knew that it was not possible under the British rule. This understanding led him to say: “We would have to interest ourselves to some extent in the struggle for liberation from British imperialism...it was the only way in which we could achieve the liberty to read and write at all freely” (Anand, 1986, p. 82).

Anand wanted to keep himself away from politics. However, it was not possible to do so for any Indian of the period because India was a mere colony of Britain, under the tyrannical rule of British government. The thirties was an explosive period, and his first three novels were based on explosive themes. In this regard, the remark of Iyenger (2001) is worth quoting:

The novels were ‘explosive’ only because truth is explosive at time, and the open expression of the truth can be an incitement and a rebellion. Probing the hidden nucleus of exploitation, Anand released chain reactions of terrific urgency. And for a time he came to be identified in literature with the same spirit that in politics, in the person of Jawaharlal Nehru had thundered in 1929 at the Lahore Congress: Long Live the Revolution. (p. 335)

Anand created an impulse in Indian English novel against injustice. This trend spread to other Indian languages too. He took the novel form to speak against injustice, because it was more human and it could produce different emotions and feelings. He experimented with the technique, content and language of novel writing to modify his novels. He considered novel writing easy in comparison to other genres of literature:

The form of creative writing, which is the novel came to me such more naturally than any other form, because through this I could live through the experiences of other people and realise what silent passions burst in their hearts, what

immediate and ultimate sorrows possess them, where they want to go and how they grapple, in their own ways, with their destinies. (Anand, 1986, pp. 197-198)

On the basis of his remark on the form of the novel, he can be regarded as the harbinger of social realism in Indian English fiction because he wrote about the contemporary problems of the poor and the exploited in India. Anand (1973) expressed his concept of realism in this way: “My realism is only superficially like that of the West-European. Deep underneath, all the characters search for their human destiny in the manner of the heroes of our forest books” (p.31). Therefore, Anand believed that novel could become the important medium through which the serious issues of life were discussed to alter the social order so that satisfying human relations could be established. He made novel writing a potent means of protest through which he tried to make the world a better place for the unfortunate and the underprivileged people of India. It is against this background that the present research study is undertaken, and attempts have been made in the various chapters of this thesis to discuss the elements of social discontents and the subdued spirit of rebellion in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand. This attempt, on the other hand, will also help to situate Anand as one of the most significant Indian English novelist in the history of Pre-Independence India.

### **A Brief Outline of Indian English Novels before Independence:**

In the Indian literary history, novel was a new entry during the middle part of the nineteenth century. Though this literary phenomenon was directly related to the beginning of English education in India, the earliest novel that was written in India was not in English. The first novel to be written in an Indian vernacular language was in

Bengali. It was *Alaler Gharer Dulal* written by Peary Chand Mitra in 1858. He was immediately followed by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya who wrote many well-known Bengali novels amongst which *Anandamath* and *Devi Chaudhurani* were most notables. Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya were two other important Bengali novelists of that time. Novelists who tried their hands in novel writing in English were Raj Lakshmi Devi, Toru Dutt, Kali Krishna Lahiri, H. Dutt and Khetrapal Chakravarti. Iyengar (2001) remarked that novels written by these novelists in English had only “antiquarian or historical interests” for the present day period (p. 315).

It was indeed very difficult for the early Indian novelists in English to decide upon the selection of subject, style and technique, and most importantly their audience. Novelists who decided to write in English were suffered from the doubt of getting a sizeable readership. Mukherjee (2014) remarked that for the early Indian novelist in English the “implicit target must have been the British reader, if not in England, at least the colonial administrator in India” (p. 94). Of course, various works in pre-novel forms written in English were extant in India at that time. In this regard, Kylas Chunder Dutt’s imaginary historical tract “A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours 1945” can be mentioned. It was published in 1835 in *Calcutta Literary Gazette*. The tract was about a patriotic Indian army, led by Bhoobun Mohan, who confronted the British army. At the initial stage, they got upper hand, but gradually the British army decimated their progress. The year of confrontation was almost prophetic as it was only two years later that India got the much-awaited independence (Mukherjee, 2014).

Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s “The Republic of Orissa: A Page from the Annals of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” was another imaginary historical tract published in the *Saturday Evening*

*Harakuru* in the year 1845 (Mukherjee, 2014). The narrative was set in 1916 when the British passed a Slavery Act. The rebellion was led by Bheekoo Barik—a leader of the Kingaris. The British was routed in the confrontation, and Orissa became an independent province. Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s two other novels *The Young Zamindar* (1883) and *Shunkur* (1885) were delineation of difficult relationship between the ruler and the ruled i.e., the British and the Indians. K. K. Sinha, in his *Sanjogita* or *The Princess of Aryavarta* (1930), delineated the tragic defeat of Prithvi Raj Chauhan at the hands of Mohammad Ghori. This historical novel is a brilliant exposition of the gradual decline of Hindu rule in India. Sarath Kumar Ghosh wrote *Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (1909) where the English culture was shown victorious against the Indian culture.

These early novelists of Indian writing in English had a predilection for showing their familiarity with the best of the English writers like Shakespeare, Cooper, Coleridge, Byron, Scott etc. Whenever they found an occasion, they referred to them or quoted passages from their texts. The possible reason of such exhibition was to parade their felicity with the best-known western classics in the eyes of British readers. Along with such direct influences, indirect influence of English literature was also noticeable in the early Indian novels written in English as Mukherjee (2014) observed: “Echoes of canonical English novels are often perceptible in the texts” (p. 98).

The first novel in Indian writing in English was Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya’s *Rajmohan’s Wife*, which was published in 1864 in serialised mode in a weekly journal named *The Indian Field*. The novel was about Matangini and Rajmohan and their middle class life in a Bengal village. P. Gopal (2009) made a pertinent comment about it: “a tragic romance and a study of an unhappy marriage” (p. 29). Bankimchandra

evoked the trauma and passion of Matangini in lyrical prose, which was not readily comprehensible for the English readers because domestic life of the Indian village was much a covert affair at that time. Next to Chattopadhyaya, Lal Behari Day made an ethnographic attempt of documenting the nineteenth century village life in Bengal in his *Govinda Samanta*, or *The History of a Bengal Raiyat* (1874). The novel encompassed the difficulties of Govinda Samanta's life in between the years of 1820 to 1870. Mukherjee (2014) remarked that there was "no precedent for such a novel in Indian fiction" (p. 100). Krupabai Sathianadhan wrote two novels—*Kamala, A story of Hindu Life* (1894), and *Saguna, A Story of Native Christian life* which was published posthumously in 1895. Both the novels represented the progressive women of the period through the eponymous protagonists Kamala and Saguna. Sathianadhan was concerned with some of the important issues that emerged in later periods such as caste, gender and socio-cultural existence. The struggle of Kamala and Saguna for a dignified life in a period when life of woman was subjugated was truly noteworthy.

The works of other writers like Kylas Chunder, Lal Behari Day were not regarded novels proper. However, at the same time, it is also interesting to note that these writers went on writing novel like texts in a period when there was sparse readership as the number of English educated Indians were really few. In fact, Mukherjee (2014) remarked that readership was indeed a remarkable factor in Indian writing in English towards the end of nineteenth century.

The period that followed this earliest attempt of novel writing was one of turbulence. That was the period of the growth of Indian nationalism, which encompassed the social fabric of India. Almost all the novelists who tried their hands in writing novels in English contributed to this aspect directly or indirectly. While dealing with Indian

nationalism, they also took up some of the other important issues prevalent in the period such as poverty, caste and class, industrialisation, problems of the peasants etc. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, Ahmed Ali, K. A. Abbas, Bhabani Bhattacharya were some of the important novelists of this period. Apart from Narayan, they had the experience of living abroad, which contributed to their broad cosmopolitan outlook (Gandhi, 2014). As the purpose of this thesis is to examine the social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion through the study of Mulk Raj Anand's fictional works, here emphasis will be given on the consideration of novel written during the period before Independence.

The nationalistic fervour in Indian novels in English was mostly expressed through what may be called the "Gandhi" theme. Gandhi's immense contribution to Indian National movement against the British made him a living legend. Beginning with the Non-Co-Operation movement to the Civil disobedience movement leading to India's independence in 1947, Gandhi emerged as a pivotal figure around whom almost all the activities of India's nationalistic movement and freedom movements were moving. In this regard, Leela Gandhi's (2014) words are worth quoting: "Mahatma theme was announced within the nationalist agitation as a uniquely imaginative, carefully symbolic, and irresistibly fictionalisable way of doing politics" (p. 169). These novels were termed as "Mahatma novels", "Gandhian novels" or "novels with Mahatma-Magic", they served the purpose of exploring the contemporary colonial India with Gandhi or the philosophy of Gandhi as the dominating motif, as can be summed up in the following deliberations.

Kaveripatnam Siddhanatha Venkataramani's two novels *Murugan*, *The Tiller* (1927), and *Kandan the Patriot* (1932) were devoted to the themes of Gandhian economics and

politics. Ramu, one of the protagonists of *Murugan, The Tiller* did his best to acquire success through the implementation of village-based economy of Gandhi. Kedari, the other protagonist of the novel also associated himself with Ramu in this endeavour. *Kandan the Patriot* was published serially in a daily paper *Swarajya*. It projected a comprehensive picture of a mass movement in national perspective. In this regard, Iyengar (2001) remarked, “Personal and domestic problems mix and fuse with the larger political problem, and in the result a fascinating pattern of motive and character and action emerges in the novel” (p. 282). Both these novels were testament to the fact that past and present could be bridged for a beautiful future.

K. Nagarajan’s *Athawar House* (1939) was the delineation of a family chronicle with Gandhian national movement as its background. The portrayal of an inter-caste marriage between a Brahmin girl and a Smartha man was revolutionary at that time. Nagarajan’s second novel *Chronicle of Kedaram* (1961) had Gandhi as a character whose arrival was necessary to defuse the feud between the two sects of Iyengars—the tengalai and the vadakalai (Iyengar, 2001). This intervention was necessary to strengthen the Congress as a political entity. Nagarajan was successful in his attempt at portraying the most important event of the period—the vocational movement for liberation with other social issues of the time in convincing detail.

Similarly, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas’ *Inquilab* (1949) was a comprehensive portrayal of Gandhian revolutionary age starting from Rowlatt Bill and the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh. Along with Gandhi, many other notable leaders of the period were portrayed in the novel. The events of the novel were threaded with the protagonist Anwar who was only eight years old when the action of the novel began. Though an illegitimate son of a Hindu businessman, Anwar was brought up in the household of a Muslim. After his



expulsion from the university and subsequent disappointment in love, Anwar participated in the political action of the period and travelled extensively across the country looking at the enthusiasm of people for liberation. The novel ended with the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

Bhabani Bhattacharya, another important novelist of the period, realistically portrayed the tragedy and trauma of 1942-43 famine in Bengal as well as the impact of Quit India Movement in *So Many Hungers* (1947). The novelist poignantly painted the sufferings of men, women and children due to famine in Bengal. However, the hoarders and black marketeers amassed immense wealth out of such a tragedy. Amidst cruelty and corruption, two characters Kajol and Rahoul could show courage and conviction to live a life of dignity and respect. Rahoul's grandfather Devesh Basu was addressed as 'Devta' in the novel who used to practise the tenets of truth, love and non-violence— he was wholeheartedly a Gandhian character. Gandhi was not a character in the novel but Gandhi's presence was felt in the novel through the character of Devesh Basu (Gupta, 1999).

Raja Rao, one of the triumvirates of the novelists of the period along with R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, is best known for his novel *Kanthapura* (1938). In the 'forward' to this novel which is generally acknowledged as the manifesto of Indian writing in English, Raja Rao stressed the importance of the "systematic indigenisation of English" (Gandhi, 2014, p.180). Indianisation could be done by incorporating epic narrative techniques prevalent in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In this novel, the activities of Indian national movement under the leadership of Gandhi became a fascinating subject. The protagonist of the novel Moorthy skilfully introduced Gandhi to his village Kanthapura through the organisation of Harikatha. Gandhi was elevated to

the stature of an epic hero, and the village women took part in non-violent Satyagraha following his teachings. The women of Kanthapura were guided by Ratna, a young widow who had keen interest in India's movement for liberation led by Gandhi. Another important aspect of the novel was its presentation of the social fabric of Kanthapura, which was based on caste as the village quarters were segregated on the basis of caste, and appropriate names Brahmin quarter, Sudra quarter, Potters quarter, Pariah quarter etc. were also given to them. In *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao delineated a truthful account of a village community with all its details ranging from participation in Indian freedom movement to village economy, polity and class structure.

R. K. Narayan began his illustrious literary journey with *Swami and Friends*- a novel with a child protagonist in the famously fictitious district town of Malgudi. Before Independence, he wrote three other novels *Bachelor of Arts* (1963), *The Dark Room* (1938), and *The English Teacher* (1945) where he presented the society of Malgudi from the perspective of a detached observer. Iyengar (2001) remarked that Narayan's art "resolved limitation and conscientious exploration: he is content, like Jane Austen, with his little bit of ivory" (p. 360). Narayan was aware of the political nature of the period due to the nationalist agitation, but he avoid touching some of the major events of the period like struggle for independence, exploitation and oppression of the colonial Government, famines, partition etc. Only in *Waiting for Mahatma* published after Independence in 1955, Narayan took the Indian Freedom Movement as the background. Narayan's upbringing, his dependence on the support of British readers and the patronage of British publishers for his writing career might be the reasons for his ambivalent attitude towards the Indian National Movement against the British (Mishra, 2014). However, in *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955), Narayan occasionally strayed away

from the secure setting of Malgudi and engaged both the central characters- Sriram and Bharati in politics. Bharati and Sriram had devotion towards Gandhi, and this served as the background to their romance. Sriram participated in the Quit India Movement, but later, he drifted himself away from the Gandhian non-violence to extremism for which he was imprisoned. In this case, Gandhi as a national leader was everyone's inspiration but his principles and ideologies were not imbibed actively. Mishra (2014) remarked:

Gandhi alone emerges as the active self-aware Indian in the novel, struggling and failing to awaken an intellectually and emotionally torpid colonial society, a society made up overwhelmingly of people who have surrendered all individual and conscious choice, and are led instead by decayed custom and the herd impulse, in whose dull marginal lives Gandhi comes as yet another kind of periodic distraction (p. 203).

Other novels of Narayan—*Mr. Sampath* (1948), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-eater of Malgudi* (1961) and *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) were portrayal of an exotic world located in Malgudi (Iyengar, 2001). Though contemporary to Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan took a different path and went on portraying the Indian society with all its idiosyncrasies in the exotic and fabulous Malgudi setting.

Nearly all the novels by Mulk Raj Anand are testament to his uncompromising love for the lowest dregs of the society. Anand began his novel writing with *U* (1935). Then, he wrote two novels one after another about the sufferings of the coolies in *Coolie* (1936) and in *TLAB* (1937). *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1941) and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) are the poignant tales of the condition of the Indian peasants with Lal Singh as the protagonist of all these three novels. Anand's last novel

before the Independence was *TBH* (1945). After Independence also, Anand continued writing fiction one after another. *Seven Summers* (1951), *The Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953), *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960), *The Road* (1963), *The Death of a Hero* (1964), *Morning Face* (1970), and *Confession of a Lover* (1976) were the novels that he wrote after the Independence.

Along with his love for the exploited compatriots, Anand portrayed burning social issues of his time through his novels. Like Raja Rao, Anand portrayed the character of Gandhi in two of his early novels—in *U* and in *TSATS*. In both the novels, Gandhi was portrayed as one of the most influential leaders of India. In *TSATS*, there was even a discussion between Gandhi and the protagonist Lal Singh in which the latter was trying to get the support of Gandhi for the sake of the landless peasants and the tenants of Rajgarh. Anand's portrayal of Gandhi and Nehru in this novel could be termed as realistic.

The rise of Indian National Movement under the leadership of M. K. Gandhi was historically a very important occurrence as it brought a cultural unity to the Indian society. Such a unity was instrumental in raising the feelings of patriotism among the Indian people, which helped the proliferation of novel during that period. It is very important to note that Iyengar considered “the period between 1920-1947 as the era of the Gandhian Revolution and the modern heroic age” (as cited in Asnani, 1985, p.3). Of course, the novels of this period, as has been discussed above, were direct renderings of the social, political, economical and cultural developments of the time. Along with the Indian National Movement, these themes were also adequately dealt with by the novelists of the period. Mulk Raj Anand, on whose novels this research is intended, shall be discussed next. For this, at the beginning, various influences on Mulk Raj

Anand will be looked at and will also be analysed. Such an attempt will help to the better understanding of Anand as a novelist of the marginalised people of Pre-independence India.

### **Formative Influences on Mulk Raj Anand:**

Social awakening and political turmoil marked the formative years of Anand. In terms of political activity, Anand's hometown Amritsar was the centre of it. Due to deportation of leaders like Ajit Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai, there was Kisan Agitation in Punjab in 1907. During the First World War (1914-18), Ghadar party was formed by the Punjabis of United States of America to fight against the British. Then, after World War I, there occurred the Agitation against the Rowlett Act under the leadership of Gandhiji. In connection with this Agitation, on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1919, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place, and hundreds of people lost their lives and thousands were wounded. Then, there began the Civil Disobedience Movement (1920-22). Against the Government control of Gurudwaras, there was a Sikh Political Agitation (1920-25) by the name of Akali Morcha in Amritsar. At the same time, a socio-religious organisation Arya Samaj inspired young people to take part in reformatory works.

Young Anand was aware of the political climate of India of his time. In 1919, when the martial law was imposed in Amritsar, Anand came out to the streets along with others to show the dissent. He was arrested for violating the curfew, and by the order of the police superintendent, he was punished with seven stripes on the back. This incident created deep impression on his young mind regarding the servitude of the Indian masses. Then he also took part in Gurudwara Reform Movement when he was studying in Khalsa College and he was imprisoned for this. His father was from the coppersmith

community who received western education and enrolled himself as a clerk in British army. Like many other educated Hindus of the time, his father was also one of the followers of Arya Samaj. According to Anand (1979), his father “considered the Arya Samaj to be the respectable outer cover for their pecuniary interests and happiness” (p. 57). However, when there was a message from the Army headquarters asking all the army personnel to sever the ties with Arya Samaj, Anand’s father obeyed the order without making much delay. This was an incident, which influenced Anand very much.

Anand understood that his father was devoid of any moral scruples and he was practising only hypocrisy and opportunism. In this regard, he stated about his impression of his father, “seemed to abide by no faith except his position in the British-Indian regiment, his future prospects as a loyal servant of the Sarkar, to ensure his pension on retirement and good prospects in service of the British for all his sons, and some form of recognition for his loyalty” (Anand, 1979, p. 57).

He was bewildered because of the apparent discrepancy between precept and practice of his father, which forced him to remark: “I remember him reading the *Gita*, but I don’t remember him practising any of the ideas laid down in this prayer book” (Anand, 1986, p. 32). The money mindedness of his father was also a matter of profound dislike for him for which he expressed that his father was: “paying lip service to the tenets of Hinduism while he sought to amass a fortune through efficient service, as well as through various sidelines in money-lending, buying and selling houses, accepting mortgages of property and bribes” (Anand, 1986, p. 33). Anand became conscious of his sanity and self-respect because of he disliked his father’s meanness, greediness, duplicity, lack of moral scruple and also his servility towards the British. All such habits and ideals were intolerable for Anand and so he rejected the values cherished by

his father. Thus, he was forced to take one final decision regarding his future due to the differences with his father. So, he was forced to state:

After a long tussle with my father during which I learnt to hate all the compromises which he had accepted, all his ideas of flourishing in the world, of obeying the Government, of my marrying a girl of his choice and settling down like a respectable person....after realizing that I should die or disintegrate if I could not satisfy my curiosity for truth I left India at last in the autumn of 1925. (Anand, 1986, pp. 44-45)

Anand's mother was different from his father. When Anand was in jail for breaking curfew in 1919, his mother went to the jail for seeking his release. But his father reacted in a different manner. Anand referred to the reaction of his father: "I will have to turn him out of the house and disown him! I will not allow a rebel in my house" (Anand, 1976, p.170). Anand mentioned another incident of his student life when he was studying in Khalsa College:

The suppression with bloody violence of a students' strike in Khalsa College by the police when we demanded purification of the holy shrines through a movement led by Professor Teja Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh, brought conflicts between my accepting father and my rebel mother. (Anand,1977, p. 58)

Anand's father could not accept his behaviour but his mother went to receive him when he was released. Anand stated that she embraced him with these encouraging words, "You have proved a worthy grandson of your grandfather-a true Sikh" (Anand, 1976, p. 275).

In this way, Anand grew into manhood in a very difficult situation because of the confluence of two opposing forces i.e., the influence of his father and mother. He got the spirit of rebellion and patriotism from his mother. However, his father attempted to instil into his mind the respect for authority and loyalty to the British.

His maternal grandfather Nihal Singh was a Sikh peasant who fought for the Khalsa army against the British in various Sikh wars. He was an inhabitant of Daska village of Sialkot district. Whenever young Anand went to the household of Nihal Singh, he used to listen to the glory of Khalsa Raj from his grandfather. Anand's grandfather told him that the British army defeated the Sikh soldiers because of the treachery of a few Khalsa Generals. He inspired Anand to continue his fight against the foreign rulers. In his autobiographical novel *Seven Summers* one gets to read about what Anand's grandfather told him about it:

I know your mother is a rebel like me, for I filled her with hatred for the ferungis, who bought us off through the traitors rather than beat us into submission....I have fought for the Khalsa, and I hope when you grow up you will be like me and your mother, rebels against the ferungis. You must not become their servants like your father. (Anand, 1951, p. 214)

Anand's adopted uncle Dev Dutt also influenced him very much. He was a Sanskrit scholar and prominent leader of Arya Samaj. Through him, Anand became aware of the blind superstition and meaningless rituals practised by the coppersmith community. Those practises were intolerable for Anand. The Urdu poet Mohammad Iqbal's great poem *Asrar-i-Khudi or The Secrets of the Self* (1915) attracted him so much that he even went to Lahore to meet Iqbal. Iqbal supported him when he told his sense of



despair and disgust due to the atmosphere of slavery and falsehood in India. Regarding the influence of *Asrar-i- Khudi* on him, he remarked:

If I can recall any one book which may have meant to me more than others, I would like to say that *Asrar-i-Khudi* (which I always kept in my bag wherever I went for years), is a treasure into which I have dug deep. In fact, all through my philosophical studies, specially into the sceptical thought of David Hume and Bertrand Russell, and the scientists Heisenberg, Einstein and Schrödinger, I returned to the *Asrar* to integrate myself. (Anand, 1978, p. 115)

The philosophy of Iqbal was a new concept in which a man could become a perfect human being with the help of his self-effort. It was not necessary to have God's will in the growth of man. Such a confident man could create a new world by imposing his will, and his presence in the contemporary decadent India. Such a philosophy was revolutionary in the social context. Iqbal's influence made Anand confident to face the world.

Guru Nanak's fight against inequality and injustice also shaped Anand's moral understanding. He stated the influence of Guru Nanak on his life in this way:

Whenever I saw cruelty, I thought of Baba Nanak, looking tenderly at men and women of all faiths. Inside me, without telling anyone, I decided to look at everything with fresh eyes, without the bias of all the dasturs and the ritual of Brahmins and the injunctions of the Maulvis. (Anand, 1977, p. 57)

Inspired by the preaching of Guru Nanak, Anand decided to fight against the cruelty prevalent in India of his time. It was Guru Nanak's attempt of finding truth, which

inspired him to take the decision of going to England in search of his identity at the age of twenty. In India, at that time, there were many restrictions on individual sensibility and so it was not possible for Anand to get the desired identity he was searching for. Therefore, he felt the need to search for the truth because one “must be freed from social restraint if it were to be truly free” (Covasjee, 1977, p. 10).

In 1925, Anand went to London and enrolled himself in University College. There he became one of the members of ‘Bloomsbury group’. Other prominent members of the group were E. M. Forster, T. S. Eliot, John Strachey, Leonard and Virginia Woolf etc. He was hopeful of getting support from these writers in his anti-colonial liberal values. However, he was shocked to learn that an eminent writer and literary critic T. S. Eliot regarded freedom movement leader M. K. Gandhi an “anarchist”. He also referred to other writers in this regard: “Spender told me, in Orwell’s presence, that he was not in favour of India’s freedom” (Anand, 1973, p. 83). He found that many English writers of the period were not in favour of the freedom of India from the British rule. In this regard, Anand remarked:

Some intellectuals asserted that it was a good thing for Indians to remain under British rule, as the executive business of Government being relegated to others, the natives could occupy themselves more usefully in cultivating their ancient genius in the arts and the humanities. (Anand, 1986, pp. 81-82)

Such attitude on the part of British intellectuals forced him to look at them critically as they did not have the moral courage to support India’s liberation. Therefore, he considered it his duty to take the cudgel on himself, and began his mission through writing. He opined that in such a time of hopelessness, E.M.Forster’s *A Passage to*

*India* (1924) and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) were the two books, which influenced him very much. In 1927, he went to Ireland and got immensely influenced by W. B. Yeats after meeting him. With utmost attention, he noticed Yeats' adequate representation of the village life of Irish common people in his writing. It was as if he received the much-needed guidance for deciding his goal.

Amongst the European thinkers John Locke, T E Hume and Bertrand Russell were the prominent literary personalities who might have influenced Anand. They were great thinkers with liberal as well as sceptical values. Anand's admiration for Locke was due to his opposition to the authority of the king, his emphasis on the value of tolerance, rights of equitable share for the labourers, and his plea for education for all. Then in Hume, Anand found a rebel because he did not give any privilege to religion, but emphasised on the dignity of individual. However, the impact of Russell was more visible on Anand because of his personal contact with this great thinker. Russell's questioning of authority influenced him. He shared Russell's rationalism and his faith on man's ability to bring change. He considered that Russell's influence and friendship moulded his thinking.

Then, it was the General strike of England, in 1926, which had a great impact on Anand. He was shocked to observe that in England like in India, class-consciousness was very much intense. During the strike, upper class people were against the workers who were fighting for better wages. He supported the strike, and for this, he had to face physical assault. He realised that in the matters of exploiting the poor, the situations in England and India were alike. His observation in this regard was like this: "the problem of India seemed to me to be connected with the problem which I had seen fought out with such bitterness in England before my eyes" (Anand, 1986, p.62). However, the

failure of the general strike was a baffling incident for him. He discussed with his Marxist friends about the possibilities of communism in eradicating the social problems. In 1932, he got the opportunity to read the writings of Karl Marx on India, and he was very much influenced by it. Regarding his experience of reading Marx, Anand remarked:

By one of those coincidences, which happen to those who are habituated to discursive reading, a series of letters on India- written by Marx to the New York Herald Tribune in 1853 fell into my hands at this time...And a whole new world was opened to me. All the threads of my past reading, which had got tied up into knots, seemed suddenly to straighten out, and I began to see not only the history of India but the whole history of human society in some sort of interconnection. (Anand, 1986, p. 105)

After his perusal of *Communist Manifesto* (1848), he began to take part in the discussion of Marxism with the famous trade unionist and pamphleteer Allen Hall. Anand said that after this, he began to look at the world with different perspectives. He was charged as a communist propagandist, which pained him much, and to clarify such a charge he said that he got the idea of socialism from Tolstoy, Ruskin and Mahatma Gandhi. Anand (1986) regarded himself as a humanist, and also believed in Protagoras' utterance: "Man is measure of all things" (p. 140). Therefore, he (1986) stated, "I accepted Marxism as a fairly good historical yardstick but considered humanism, the view of the whole man, as the more comprehensive ideology" (p. 185). Inspired by Marx's writing, he published his *Letters on India* (1942). The ruthless exploitation of British government on the Indian masses was the subject matter of this book.

In 1927, when he visited India, he spent a few months in Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. Anand read Gandhi's banned book *Hind Swaraj* (1909) when he was a school student. From that time onwards, he was influenced by Gandhi. While living in his Ashram, Anand had a consultation with Gandhi regarding the first draft of his novel *U*. Gandhi did not consider it favourably, because according to him, the draft carried the touch of 'Bloomsbury' spirit in it. Therefore, Anand revised the draft of *U*. Later, he said that Gandhi made an indelible impression on him. He said:

In retrospect, I feel that, under the tutelage of the Mahatma, who did not pretend to be an artist, I was able to exorcise all those self-conscious literary elements, which I had woven into the narrative in anticipation of what the critics might approve. (Anand, 1986, p. 180)

In 1938, Anand extensively travelled across India. He spent a few months with communist leader Kanwar Brajesh Singh of Kalakankar, and helped him in organising Kisan Sabhas. Then, he returned to London. He planned to return to India soon, but in the mean time, World War II started. Therefore, he decided to contribute his share of participation in India's freedom struggle while living in London. There he collaborated with V. K. Krishna Menon, the great Indian nationalist, diplomat, and politician, in raising the awareness of the Englishmen and the Indians living in England. Anand (1986) commented in this regard: "I met V. K. Krishna Menon, a follower of Mrs Besant, and began to work within his office in the Strand" (p. 66). Cowasjee (1977) commented significantly about this relationship: "the two did more to influence British public opinion in India's favour than any other Indian residing in Britain" (p. 21). While doing so, he was also aware that the British were not the only entity to exploit the poor Indian masses. Anand envisioned a huge panorama of native exploitative

forces in India and he decided to fight against them, so that he could liberate the exploited. In Anand's words:

My hatred of Imperialism was bound up also with my disgust for the cruelty and hypocrisy of Indian feudal life, with its castes, creeds, dead habits and customs, and its restrictive religious rites and practices. I was one of many groping young men of my generation who had... set our hearts on our liberation and those of other oppressed people, whoever they were, wherever they were and whatever shape, size and colour. (Anand, 1986, pp. 86-87)

Anand believed that in the Indian society there were many social evils due to the blind faith of the Indian masses on God and god-men. Anand lost his faith in God when he was a child. His playmate and cousin Kaushalya's death came at the tender age of nine. Anand's mother explained to him that Kaushalya died because her parents were evil and sinful. Anand could not accept such an inhuman explanation as he considered it an injustice to punish one for the crime or sin of another. Anand remarked:

I revolted against the very idea that a cruel God could punish children for the alleged bad deeds of their parents. And I wrote a letter to the Almighty protesting against His Godship's unjust misuse of His power. If He was anywhere about, I said, He should answer my charges. And if He was nowhere in sight, then He did not exist at all and His name was just a scarecrow to frighten children with. Needless to say, no answer came. So I decided at this stage, that there was no such person as God and people had just made up a lie to appease their bad conscience. (Anand, 1979, p. 58)

Anand understood that religion would be inadequate when it came to solve the real problems of mankind. The ignorant Indian masses believed in Karma for their misfortunes. He was aware that this belief in Karma ultimately made the Indian masses fatalist. Therefore, it was necessary to change this attitude. He said that the concept of Maya, Rebirth etc. made men fatalist and led to believe in a predestined lot leading to acceptance of his miserable state. His belief was that man could ameliorate his life without any divine intervention. Anand (1986) remarked: “man who docilely accepted his position within the framework of traditional Hindu caste society, however, low and humiliating that position, was a good citizen, whereas those who consciously questioned tradition and suffered unwillingly were moral lepers” (pp.69-70). Even the concept of Heaven and Hell was negated by Anand and he stated: “there are not two worlds, heaven above and the earth below. There is no ‘spiritual’ world separate from the ‘material’ world. The soul is body and the body is soul” (Anand, 1977, p.16). But, at the same time, he readily accepted Buddha’s doctrine of love and empathy, and Guru Nanak’s honest living messages.

As a creative artist, Anand wanted to liberate the Indians from religious orthodoxy, social restraint and from the servility towards the British. He also decided to tell the fear-gripped marginalised people of India about the difficult possibility of getting freedom and happiness. He identified himself with the socially disadvantaged and the downtrodden. For centuries, they were exploited and so they lost the courage to ask the wages of their services. He got real joy out of discovering a new way of life for the disadvantaged and downtrodden.

Due to different types of oppression in the society—economic, political, social, cultural and religious etc. individual growth of man often suffered, and individual could not

have a life of self-fulfilment and self-respect. He wanted to raise the consciousness of men by improving their relations amongst them. Anand (1973) remarked, “My aim is not negative, merely to shock, but to stimulate consciousness at all levels” (p. 116).

Then, in the thirties, Anand became a founder member of All India Progressive Writers’ Association. The Association was formally formed in the month of April 1936 in Lucknow. The initial sittings for the formation of the association were held in Bloomsbury. In the fortnightly meetings held in London, lectures were delivered along with activities like reading of stories, essays and poems. Stalwarts of Indian literature—Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, and Munshi Prem Chand blessed the AIPWA’s foundation conference in Lucknow. Prem Chand was the President of the foundation conference of AIPWA. In his presidential address, Prem Chand remarked that the purpose of language was to mould thoughts and emotions and then to endow them with appropriate direction. As their purpose had already been served, the main purpose of the conference was to find out meaning of things for which language had been constructed (Namboodiripad, n.d.). In the same speech, Prem Chand also said that there was a rapid transformation of the literary taste of Indian people. At the same time, literature of the period was also going through transformation. Prem Chand stated in his address:

It is coming more and more in grips with the realities of life; it interests itself with society or man as a social unit. It is not satisfied now with the singing of frustrated love, or with writing to satisfy only our sense of wonder; it concerns itself with the problems of our life and such themes as have a social value. The literature which does not arouse in us a critical spirit, or satisfy our spiritual needs, which is not ‘force-giving’ and dynamic, which does not awaken our sense of beauty, which does not make us face the grim realities of life in a spirit



of determination, has no use for us today. It cannot even be termed as literature (as cited in Namboodiripad, 1986).

Prem Chand also pointed out towards a new task of literature where the writer's sense of beauty was its instrument. When a writer could develop this sense of beauty within himself his writing would be more effective. Prem Chand said that such a writer would not be able to tolerate ugliness and inhumanity. He remarked:

He becomes the standard bearer of humanity, of moral uprightness, of nobility. It becomes his duty to help all those who are downtrodden, oppressed and exploited-individuals or groups-and to advocate their cause.... He knows that the more realistic his story is, the more full of expression and movement his picture, the more intimate his observation of human nature, psychology, the greater the effect he will produce. (as cited in Namboodiripad, 1986)

Commenting on the presidential address of Prem Chand to the inaugural session of AIPWA, Namboodiripad (1986) stated that his speech was a remarkable piece of literary criticism, which was the amalgamation of "the best in the Indian and world culture, Indian patriotism with international humanism". AIPWA did not accept the fashionable trend of the period that creative writer should put himself away from politics. It was acknowledged that every creative writer must be concerned with the happiness around him. The manifesto of AIPWA was drafted in London by Mulk Raj Anand and Sajjad Zaheer. In the manifesto, it was clearly stated, "the new literature of India must deal with the basic problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness and political subjection. All that drags us down to passivity, inaction and un-reason, we reject as reactionary" ("1<sup>st</sup> Manifesto...", n.d.).

It was very natural that Mulk Raj Anand, as a founder member of AIPWA, had similar view regarding the duty of the literary artists. So, Anand (1973) decided:

...to be with the people, with the rabble, who had done all the work, built the monuments but remained anonymous...No writer in India before me, except Prem Chand, had loved the people, even for their failures. So, at the risk of being called a propagandist, I was determined to devote myself to them. (p. 52)

According to him, the writer had to fulfil the dual duty of the citizen and the artist. Anand opined that the artist needed to link himself with the lowest strata of the society (1986). Then, he should act as an interpreter and should communicate his vision to his fellow beings. Such an act on the part of the writer was necessary to forge bonds of sympathy between one man and another. At the same time, the writer could also become the spokesman of man's inner desire. He could reveal man's true nature and will. When the writer could perform all these tasks, he would be able to help man to raise their voices against the atrocities and exploitation. In this way, man could become self-sufficient and would be guided by his conscience to such an extent that he would not surrender to a tyrant. Like Anand, there were other writers in English such as Ahmed Ali and Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, in Urdu Sardar Jafri, Krishan Chander and Sajjad Zaheer, in Punjabi Sant Singh Sekhon and Jaswant Singh Kanwar and in Hindi Yash Pal. They went on writing like Anand. They were also members of AIPWA.

It is against this background that Mulk Raj Anand became a novelist with high ideals of liberating the downtrodden. In this regard, Cowasjee (1977) remarked, "Anand took up this fight for liberation in his novels in the early thirties, and it is continuing to this day in his work" (p.12). Therefore, it was quite natural on the part of Anand to show his

non-compromising attitude towards the social evils like poverty and exploitation of the poor through his novels.

### **Review of Relevant Literature on Mulk Raj Anand:**

While carrying out this research, the following related works were taken into account. These works helped this researcher to gain a comprehensive idea on the fictional works of Mulk Raj Anand, besides providing new ways of conducting research on the works of Anand.

In her book *Mulk Raj Anand: The Man and the Novelist* (1971), Margaret Berry tried to prove that Anand was a propagandist. In her attempt to prove this, she disregarded the opinions of some important critics of the period like V. S. Pritchett, C. D. Lewis, Stephen Spender, R. A. Scott-James, Walter Allen, Bonamy Dobree, E. M. Forster etc. She considered Munoo, the central character of *Coolie*, as imperceptive, static and dull. According to Berry, such a portrayal only facilitated the Marxist pattern of showing the evils of the rich and wealthy. In her book, Berry tried to show that Marxist influence on Anand was radical which also changed Anand's outlook on literature.

In the book *Mulk Raj Anand* (1972), K. N. Sinha stated that the dearth of critical material on Anand prompted him to write on Anand. According to him, the main driving force behind Anand's novels was his mellow and creative humanism. He stated that Anand's novels were "novels of responsibility, of involvement, of creative tension and its resolution, of profound moral beauty" (Sinha, 1972, p.13). Along with the Appendix, there were ten chapters in the book. The first chapter was devoted to the discussion of Anand as a man and the influences on him. Then in the following five chapters, Sinha discussed the novels of Anand. In chapter seven, he discussed the short

stories of Anand. Imagery and art of characterisation in the novels of Anand were discussed in chapter eight. A detailed discussion on Anand's use of English language was done in chapter nine. In the concluding chapter, Sinha (1972) made a fair evaluation of Anand and found him "the foremost and most significant novelist" (Sinha, 1972, p. 135).

In the book *Mulk Raj Anand* (1973), M. K. Naik acknowledged Anand as a committed writer devoted to the philosophy of humanism. According to Naik, as a creative writer Anand was able to maintain a harmonious balance between his ideas and his novelistic art. The book contained ten chapters, which were devoted to discuss most of his novels, shorter fiction, his technique of novel writing and artistic achievements. Naik remarked that amongst all the novels of Anand, his first novel *U* was the best. The Village trilogy with Lal Singh as the protagonist was the most ambitious fictional attempt of Anand. Naik's book on Anand is a special attempt because of the simplicity and clarity of his expression.

As the title of the book suggested, in *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective* (1974), G.S. Balarama Gupta examined the humanist element in Mulk Raj Anand's novels and short stories. He wanted to show that in his novels there was a clear fusion of Anand the novelist and Anand the humanist. He discussed extensively about Anand's humanism and finds out that it was Anand's unparalleled love for man, which led him to become a humanist. Therefore, all kinds of atrocities, exploitation, and oppression were repugnant to him. In this connection, Gupta found out as many as sixteen tenets of humanism observed in Anand. In his concluding chapter of this book, Gupta commented that Anand had a mission for fighting against falsity, hypocrisy, insensitivity and cruelty. Anand's novels were only a part of this

mission. This critical evaluation of Anand as a humanist on the basis of his novels and short stories is a commendable achievement.

Saros Cowasjee, in the book on Anand, entitled *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fictions of Mulk Raj Anand* (1977), unfolded Anand's life and the social environment in which he wrote. Cowasjee probed deep into Anand's life and scrutinised the influence of various social, political, cultural, aesthetic and traditional values on him. He examined all the major fictions written by Anand upto 1976. Cowasjee's evaluation of Anand on the basis of his artistic abilities as a novelist and his achievements is lively and sympathetic. According to Cowasjee, Anand had necessary insight and sensitivity of mind to look into his characters, which make him a formidable Indian English novelist. Cowasjee made a close textual analysis of his novels, which is enlightening. The bibliography included in the book is comprehensive and helpful.

In her book *Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study* (1983), Premila Paul identified several themes of Anand—caste system, class system, religion, education and the problems of woman. She discussed all these themes in detail. While talking about the caste system, Paul remarked that *U* was a significant novel because it referred to colonial experience, and at the same time concerned with the pitiable condition of the untouchables. Talking about religion as portrayed in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, she referred to his portrayal of evil in organised religion. Paul opined that Mulk Raj Anand had immense faith in the goodness of man because he was a humanist. Her book is illuminating and thought provoking.

Marlene Fisher in her book *The Wisdom of the Heart: A Study of the Works of Mulk Raj Anand* (1985) peeped at the life of Anand comprehensively. Anand's relationship with

the Bloomsbury group, with two of the foremost leaders of Indian national movement Gandhi and Nehru and how he was involved with All-India progressive Writers' Association—all these were closely looked at by Fisher. She considered Anand's commitment to fight against the exploitation of the poor and underprivileged as exposition to his humanism. In this book, Fisher incorporated many personal anecdotes and reminiscences of Anand. It is observed that the scholarly criticism of Fisher revealed Anand the novelist and the man comprehensively.

P. K. Rajan in his study *Mulk Raj Anand: A Revaluation* (1994) looked at humanism of Anand. His standpoint was that in the novels of Anand, duality was observed in his humanistic treatment the characters. In the first chapter, Rajan discussed the concept of ambivalent humanism. Then in the next chapter, he proceeded to discuss *U* and *The Road* in the light of ambivalence. In case of *U*, such ambivalence increased the inner tension, while in *The Road* it failed to bring unity to the narrative. In *Coolie*, Anand's duality enhanced the internal harmony but in *TLAB*, same duality negatively affected the fusion of the theme and the form. *TV*, *ATBW*, *TSATS*, *TBH*—these novels, according to Rajan, were strengthened by Anand's ambivalent humanism. Rajan's book offered new avenues to look at Anand's humanism, which had been focus of attention in most of the earlier novels.

In his book *The Insulted and the Injured: Untouchables, Coolies and Peasants in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (1997), Shaileshwar Sati Prasad probed deep into Anand's humanism and regarded it as the “result of an East-west encounter” (p.22). According to him, Anand used his humanism as a weapon. In his study, Prasad found that *C*, *TLAB* and *TBH* were interlinked. In *C*, the destruction of labour is portrayed whereas in *TBH* the novelist tries to offer a solution to the problems of labour. Similarly, in *TLAB*, the

readers were made aware of about the major shortcoming in the tea gardens—lack of labour organisation. Talking about the Lal Singh trilogy, Prasad remarked that use of history in the Trilogy was very much discernible in characterisation and in social, political and economic condition of the time. Lal Singh trilogy received a detailed critical evaluation from the writer. Prasad concluded his book by referring to Anand's optimistic vision of the bright future for the peasants.

Though Anand refused it repeatedly that he was a Marxist, in his book *Mulk Raj Anand: The Novels of Commitment* (2000), S. A. Khan attempted to find out Anand's Marxist orientation in his novels. He approved of Anand's belief in "an ambrosial future for mankind" (Khan, 2000, p.17). By referring to Anand, he stated that Anand was influenced by great vernacular writers like Prem Chand, Yashpal and Tagore. He also said that like Faulkner's characters, Anand's protagonists were also alienated from the society as well as from their self. Of course, such a comment is contentious. Khan's (2000) critique of Anand's characters is pertinent when he remarked that they basically struggle for their survival (p. 139). However, it is hard to accept Khan's statement that after the Independence, Anand's ideological commitments have lost the relevance.

C. J. George's book *Mulk Raj Anand: His Art and Concerns* (2000) was a reproduction of his doctoral thesis "The Artist as a Social Critic: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Major Novels". In this book, George analysed all the major novels of Anand in a comprehensive manner. His analysis of Anand's novel is steady and critical which provides new insights and fresh interpretations. He considered Anand to be a social critic who could understand the root cause of all the evils in the society. Though fair in his critique of Anand, he commented that the last volume of Lal Singh trilogy *TSATS* was inferior to the preceding two. George reasoned that in this novel, Anand was unable

to distance himself from his characters. In his concluding remark, he said that in the strict sense Anand was not a propagandist.

*The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Critical Study* (2000) edited by M.K. Bhatnagar and M. Rajeshwar, is an anthology of critical essays on various aspects of Mulk Raj Anand's novels and his style. The essays in the anthology offered fresh perspectives to the various novels of Anand. The essay devoted to the literary style of Anand is a comprehensive discussion on the different styles adopted by Anand in his novels. 'An Interview with Mulk Raj Anand' is a very helpful one in the understanding of Anand's concept of humanism of Gandhi.

T.M.J. Indra Mohan's anthology *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (2005) comprises of twelve insightful essays written on Mulk Raj Anand's literary output. In the essays, various issues like dejection and delight in Anand's novels, his narrative technique, his humanism, his creativeness in the use of English language, his portrayal of individual amidst testing social conditions etc. were dealt with in comprehensive detail. The anthology provided new vistas to the study of Anand as a prominent literary artist of India.

Jyotsna Kulkarni in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (2006) focussed her attention on the influences on Anand, which moulded his novelistic career. While talking about the influence of Marxism on Anand, she opined that "Anand's Marxism was informed by a lively humanism which put men before dogma" (Kulkarni, 2006, p. 41). Despite various obstacles, Anand's characters – Kanwar Rampal Singh, Ananta, Maqbool, Lal Singh etc. understood the need of unrelenting struggle against injustice and oppression. Kulkarni's viewpoint was that Anand believed in the capacity of man, and man must



work for his own destiny. In this regard, she also highlighted Anand's humanistic zeal to work for the betterment of other.

The anthology *Mulk Raj Anand* (2006) edited by B. R. Agarwal is a collection of twenty-one critical essays on the socio-economic vision of Anand. His social vision, humanitarian approach, concern for the poor and downtrodden, use of English, technique and style of novel writing, impact of Gandhi on his novels were some of the important issues dealt with in this anthology. In one of the essays, a critic commented that almost all the protagonists of Anand came from the lower class of the society because of the impact of Gandhi.

Ketaki Goswami's book *Mulk Raj Anand: Early Novels* (2009) is devoted to the discussion of three early novels of Anand—*U, C*, and *TLAB*. The book is divided into nine chapters. In the anthology, some of the important issues related to Anand like the themes and applications, combination of rage and humour his use of language, assessment of gender, colonialism etc. were discussed. Goswami also discussed some of the short stories written by Anand. She considered Anand a humanist of the highest order. According to her, Anand's belief was grounded on those human beings who live a life with dignity.

K. Pooma in the introductory chapter of her book *The Mind and Art of Mulk Raj Anand* (2009) extensively discussed the difficulties and problems of Indo-Anglian writing. Use of English language, national and regional prejudices against English, influence of English writers, indifference of the publishers, paucity of literary criticism etc. were some of the problems that she discussed. Along with it, the formative influences on Anand were also discussed comprehensively. Pooma's concluding remark was that it

was Anand who imparted social realism, naturalism and proletarian themes and characters to Indian novels in English.

In her book *Mulk Raj Anand: From Literary Naturalism to Hopeful Humanism* (2010), Jova C. Marak made a comprehensive discussion of naturalism in European, American and Indian context. In her analysis, she found the novels of Anand as the legacy of Indo-Anglian literary naturalism. She also gave emphasis on the nature of Anand's humanism. Her observation of Anand's humanism is like this: "He strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon the underprivileged by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse love and tenderness into the hearts of all men" (Marak, 2010, p. 241). While commenting on Anand's humanism, she said that tolerance and universal compassion were the driving force behind his humanism.

In his book *Mulk Raj Anand: His Vision and Work* (2010), Dr. Rajvir Singh explored the reason of poor villager's migration to big industrial towns and cities in the novels of Anand. Due to their poverty, illiteracy and ignorance, poor village folks migrated to the towns and cities with the dreams of having happy and peaceful life. However, such hopes and dreams led them to different sorts of problems and hazards. Dr. Singh's study attempted to foreground Anand's endeavour to bring the plights of untouchables, coolies, peasants, labourers into prominence. It was humanism, which inspired Anand to raise his voice against the exploitation and oppression of the helpless people. The book concluded with the remark that Anand's fictions were expression of a fine fusion between the idyllic and the urban (Singh, 2010, p. 176).

Shruti Nath in her book *Delineation of the Disadvantaged* (2011) analysed and interpreted the sad plight of the downtrodden and disadvantaged multitudes portrayed in various novels of Mulk Raj Anand. She made an exhaustive effort to investigate the causes of social, political, economical and psychological problems of the downtrodden of the society. She attempted to foreground the important role played by Anand's novels in ameliorating the fate of the disadvantaged multitudes of India. For her study, she took the pre and post-independent novels of Anand and made a comparative study of them with other contemporary Indo-Anglian novelists of the period.

On the basis of the review on different works of Anand as part of this study, it has been found that most of the authors and critics have tried to examine Mulk Raj Anand as a novelist with a definite objective of writing for the disadvantaged and dispossessed. In this regard, Anand can also be regarded as a humanist who constantly fought against the exploitation, oppression and atrocities on the poor. His humanism is instrumental in his portrayal of the lowest dregs of the society. Although various important aspects of Anand's oeuvre have been undertaken for discussion in these works, none of these writers and critics is seen to have provided a detailed discussion of the elements of social discontents and the subdued spirit of rebellion in the novels of Anand. Therefore, although Mulk Raj Anand is an overworked Indian English Writer, the present study is very significant as it is an attempt tried to provide important analysis of the novels selected for study on the basis of the elements chosen for discussion.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

This study proposes to investigate the causes of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion on the part of Anand's protagonists. It encompasses the following objectives.

1. To look into the elements of social discontent in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand.
2. To study Anand's character delineation in finding out how his characters try to find justice in a hostile environment.
3. To appraise the nature of the role of the characters in his novels against oppression and injustice.

### **Methodology:**

This study will undertake an objective interpretation of the elements of social discontent and the subdued spirit of rebellion in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand. Descriptive analytical method is adopted to discuss the novels. Looking at the social importance of the issues, a sociological viewpoint has also been adopted when necessary. To do so, the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand are taken as the primary source. The novels are selected on the basis of the period they are written and the issues discussed. All the novels selected for this study, belong to the Pre-Independence period. Various critical studies ranging from magazine and newspaper articles, articles published in journals and books, critique of different critics on Anand's works are also taken as the secondary sources.

### **Outlines of the Chapters:**

This present study is an attempt to critically study the prevailing elements of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand. The novels that are selected for this research endeavour are—*U, C, TLAB, TV, ATBW*,

*TSATS*, and *TBH*. These novels were written before the Independence of India, and they belonged to the early phase of Anand's writing career. Again, they also represent that period of Indian society, which was socially and politically very volatile due to the freedom struggle against the British. Hence, the motivation for selecting these novels for this research attempt comes from the similarity of social, cultural, and political atmosphere of the society in which they were written or which they represent.

**Chapter 1**, which is an "Introductory" chapter, is devoted to the discussion of Indian English novels with regard to the myriad socio-political aspects of the Pre-Independence period, particularly the impact of Gandhi on the early novelists including Mulk Raj Anand. Then, an in-depth discussion has been made on the formative influences on Anand, and how he became a creative writer with the purpose of serving the humanity. Various critical works on Anand are also discussed to have a better grasp of the scholarship on Anand so that this present research endeavour can contribute to the existing literary output on Anand.

**Chapter 2** entitled "Contextualising Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion" is devoted to the analysis the elements of the social discontent and the subdued spirit of rebellion in Anand's novels selected for the study. Caste, exploitation of the labour, destruction of the peasantry and effects of Industrialisation are some of the elements that caused social discontent in the minds of the characters. Caste began with the division of labour, but later on, with the passage of time, it changed into an exploitative inhuman system. In the caste system, the lower caste people suffered at the hands of upper caste members of the society. Then, in the subheading 'Exploitation of Labour' analysis has been made about the ways in which the poverty-ridden people were abused and ill-treated. The helpless poor peasants and children were exploited of

their labour by the cruel authority and its agents without any sympathy. Here attempt has been made to analyse such exploitation of labour. Then, it has been studied how the poor peasants were exploited by the agents of the British Government. The British Government implemented new laws in India which helped the landlords and the moneylenders in their ruthless exploitation of the peasants. The helpless peasants lost their land to the landlord or to the moneylender, as they were unable to repay their debts. The last element of the social discontent has been seen through Industrialisation. Here, it has been analysed how Industrialisation became a curse to the cottage industries of India. Before the arrival of the British, the Indian masses earned their livelihood by working in the cottage industries. However, the British introduced machines and established various industries in India, which handicapped the cottage industries of India. Consequently, the workers in cottage industries suffered from unemployment and low wages.

Then, there is discussion about the concept of 'Rebellion and the Rebel'. The discussion is focused on how rebellion occurs and the essential requirements to be a rebel. After this, the concept of 'subdued spirit of rebellion' is discussed. The elements, which are responsible for the subdued spirit of rebellion, include—the maze of caste system, the influence of Karma, and the problem of illiteracy. Caste is so deep rooted in the Indian society that almost all Indians are influenced by it. The upper caste people used it to dominate the lower caste members of the society. On the other hand, the lower caste people are forced to accept their relegated position. Generation after generation this system went on and thus, thousand years of continuous subjugation and oppression created a psychological barrier in the minds of these people which became unbreakable. These low caste people lost all hopes and could not dare to protest. Belief

in Karma is another hindrance before the exploited Indian people as it creates a submissive mind against all sorts of atrocities. The belief in Karma made men fatalists, which ultimately created a feeling of helplessness. The Karma philosophy led to the doctrine of rebirth. Everything is related to one's own action good or bad committed in the previous births or in this birth. The belief in such a philosophy would definitely weaken man's determination and the necessary resolve to fight against any form of exploitation. Caste and Karma would not have been able to harm Indian people so much, had there been proper education system in India. The Pre-British education in whatever form it might have existed, definitely contributed to the perpetuation of injustice and exploitation. Instead of eradicating prejudice and dead habits, in actuality, such an education system tend to perpetuate it. These elements of subdued spirit of rebellion are vital in making the characters feeble in responding to the exploitation, particularly in *U*, *C* and *TLAB*.

**Chapter 3** entitled "*Untouchable: The Ruthlessness of the Caste System*" is devoted to the study of the novel *U*. Here, Anand's portrayal of the untouchables has been analysed. The untouchables were subjected to different atrocities at the hands of the upper caste people. The untouchables were discontented due to such atrocities and exploitations, but they were unable to express it. Analysis has been made as to why the untouchables could not express their discontent. The finding shows that the untouchables were mostly illiterate and they lacked necessary awareness to understand the exploitation they had been subjected to since time immemorial. They believed in Karma and had the propensity to attribute their sufferings and misery to the sins they might have committed in their previous births. Therefore, the untouchables remained in their backward position without having any alteration to their status.

**Chapter 4** is titled “*Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud: The ‘Saga’ of the Coolies*”. These two novels are discussed together as both of them deal with the exploitation of the labour in extreme ruthlessness. The poor labourers were exploited of their physical works by the wealthy employers and industrialists. Even their children also became the target of exploitation. The parents often disregarded the well-being of their wards and forcefully employed the children in return of financial benefit. While working in the factory, the children were exposed to hazardous situation, and sometimes accidents also occurred. The labourers employed in the factories and plantations were exploited by the foremen and the sardars. They were also exposed to the ruthless behaviour of the plantation managers. The women and teenage girls often became the victim of sexual exploitation at the hands of plantation managers. Therefore, the coolies, factory workers and plantation labourers were full of discontent and dissatisfaction. However, unfortunately, they could not express their discontent for fear of punishment. They were illiterate, and did not know how to unite themselves to fight against the exploitation. The authorities also did not let them any opportunity to organise protests under a union. In fact, they were subdued from all quarters and there was no scope for them to protest vehemently against the exploitation and atrocities perpetrated on them. Sometimes, there were attempts of showing discontent through physical expressions like strike and boycott, but these attempts were also nipped in the bud by the plantation authority wielding coercive measures.

**Chapter 5** is titled “The Lal Singh Trilogy: The Loss of Peasantry.” Here, three novels —*TV*, *ATBW*, and *TSATS* are discussed together because these novels have the same protagonist Lal Singh, and at the same time, the novels also contain Lal Singh’s development from a naïve teenager to a member of the British Indian army, and then to



a peasant revolutionary. In the novels, the deplorable condition of the peasants is delineated with all the pathos. The landlords and moneylenders exploited the peasants and made their life extremely miserable. The peasants were full of discontent and wanted to fight against the exploitation. They organised themselves through Kisan Sabhas. However, their fight was not successful as the British government ruthlessly subdued them through police atrocities. These novels portrayed the discontent of the landless peasants and the tenants and their attempt of fighting against the injustices done to them. The study divulged that though the peasants were suppressed and subdued, they did not shrink away from staging protests against the exploitation.

**Chapter 6** titled “*The Big Heart: The Onslaught of Industrialisation*” is the study of the conflict which arose due to the establishment of an industry for the production of utensils. The thathiars made their livelihood through making utensils in their cottage smithies. All of a sudden, the wealthy Thathiars and Kesaras decided to establish an industry to produce utensils through machine. However, only a selected few thathiars got employment there. The unemployed thathiars grew agitated and decided to fight against such injustice. Some of them wanted to destroy the industry as they regarded it the reason behind their sufferings. However, some thathiars supported the industry, as according to them there was no alternative to machine in the modern age. They believed that the judicious use of the machine could bring about a complete change to the destiny of the thathiars. The discontent of the thathiars was justified because they found it very difficult to survive without their occupation. They expressed their discontent through violent means by destroying the industry. Based on the analysis, it was observed that the thathiars staged a destructive protest against the industrialisation because they suffered from it.

**Chapter 7** is the “concluding” chapter. Here, a summary of the entire research thesis has been provided. Though Anand’s novels under discussion for the research were written before the Independence, the issues that Anand raised in these novels are relevant even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the society is struggling with lots of problems resulting out of the politics of caste, hatred and exploitation of the poor. This aspect is discussed in this chapter in some detail. Besides, attempts have also been made to identify the various other aspects of Mulk Raj Anand’s fictions on which further research can be conducted on various other aspects.

If seen against the backdrop of the socio-political aspects of Indian English Literature before the Independence of India, an understanding of how and why ideas like social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion are formed may help in examining the works of a novelist like Mulk Raj Anand from new perspectives. Basing the assumptions on Anand’s life and writings, it is interesting to examine how he discussed the notions of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in a broader context of Indian English Literature. Subsequently, an attempt in the thesis has been made to discuss and understand the concepts of discontents and subdued rebellion, and how the writers like Anand had so beautifully adapted these concepts, and made them the most dominant themes in his fictional works. Considered in terms of the various contexts in which his fictional works are conceived, nurtured, and developed, Anand’s handling of social discontent and the subdued spirit of rebellion has not only helped in examining the literary worth of fiction written during Pre-Independence India, but has also helped in providing a critique of how novel writing became a tool for protesting against social injustices during his time. Mulk Raj Anand, with his unique orientation on the Indian society of his time, not only emerged as one of the most prolific of Indian writers in

English, but also succeeded in providing ample resources for examining the artistic problems faced by other Anglo Indian novelists of his time. This thesis, it is assumed, shall further add to the existing critical literatures available on his fictional works.

At the end of the each chapter of this research work, References are included. APA (American Psychological Association) 6<sup>th</sup> edition citation style is followed in References and in the Bibliography.

### **References:**

*1st manifesto of progressive writers association, adopted in the foundation conference*

1936. (n. d.). Retrieved from: <http://pwa75.sapfonline.org/gpage4.html>

Agarwal, B. R. (Ed.). (2006). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

Anand, M. R. (1951). *Seven summers*. London: Hutchinson International Authors.

Anand, M. R. (1973). *Author to critic: The letters of Mulk Raj Anand to Saros Coowasjee*. Saros Cowasjee (Ed.). Calcutta: Writers Workshop.

Anand, M. R. (1976). *Confession of a lover*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

Anand, M. R. (1977). Cross roads in my life. *Art of Living*.

Anand, M. R. (1977). Remembrance of some imperceptible feelings about Amritsar. *Art of Living*.

Anand, M. R. (1977). Why I write. In *Indo-English Literature: A collection of critical essays*. Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan.

Anand, M. R. (1978). 'Afterward' to Mohammad Iqbal's *Secrets of the self*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

- Anand, M. R. (1979). *The living and the dead: Experiments of a humanist with the faiths (A new religion for a new world series)*. *New Delhi* 2. Issue 12.
- Anand, M. R. (1986). *Apology for heroism*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Asnani, S. M. (1985). *Critical response to Indian English fiction*. Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Berry, M. (1971). *Mulk Raj Anand: The man and the novelist*. Amsterdam: Oriental Press.
- Bhatnagar, M. K. & Rajeshwar, M. (Eds.). (2000). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A critical study*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Cowasjee, S. (1977). *So many freedoms: A study of the major fiction of Mulk Raj Anand*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, M. (1985). *The wisdom of the heart: A study of the works of Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Gandhi, L. (2014). Novelists of the 1930s and 1940s. In A. R. Mehrotra (Ed.), *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English* (pp.168-192). Delhi: permanent black.
- George, C. J. (2000). *Mulk Raj Anand: His art and concerns*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Gopal, P. (2009). *The Indian English novel: Nation, history and narration*, Oxford University Press: New York.
- Goswami, K. (2009) *Mulk Raj Anand: Early novels*. New Delhi: PHI Learning.

- Gupta, G. S. B. (1974). *Mulk Raj Anand: A study of his fiction in humanist perspective*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot.
- Gupta, G. S. B. (1999). Bhabani Bhattacharya's "So many hungers!": A study. In M. K. Naik (Ed.), *Aspects of Indian writing in English* (pp.209-221). New Delhi: MacMillan.
- Indra Mohan, T.M.J. (Ed). (2005). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Iyengar, K.R.S. (1962). *Indian writing in English*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Khan, S. A. (2000). *Mulk Raj Anand: The novels of commitment*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Kulkarni, J. (2006). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. Kanpur: Chandrolak Prakashan.
- Marak, J. C. (2010). *Mulk Raj Anand: From literary naturalism to hopeful humanism*. Guwahati: EBH Publishers (India).
- Mishra, P. (2014). R.K. Narayan. In A.R. Mehrotra (Ed.), *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English* (pp.193-208). Delhi: permanent black.
- Mukherjee, M. (2014). The beginnings of the Indian Novel. In A. R. Mehrotra (Ed.), *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English* (pp.92-102). Delhi: permanent black.
- Naik, M.K. (1982). *A history of Indian English literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Naik, M. K. (1973). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

- Namboodiripad, E. M. S. (1986). Half a century of Marxist cultural movement in India. *The Marxist*, 04 (2). Retrieved from: <http://cpim.org/content/marxist-cultural-movement-india>
- Nath, S. (2011). *Delineation of the disadvantaged*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- Paul, P. (1983). *Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A thematic study*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Pooma, K. (2009). *The mind and art of Mulk Raj Anand*. Perambalur: Mercury Publishers.
- Prasad, S. S. (1997). *The insulted and the injured: Untouchables, coolies and peasants in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. Patna: Janaki Prakashan.
- Rajan, P. K. (1994). *Mulk Raj Anand: A revaluation*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.
- Singh, R. (2010). *Mulk Raj Anand: His vision and work*. Jaipur: Ponter Pubs.
- Sinha, K. N. (1972). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New York: Twayne Publishers.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTEXTUALISING SOCIAL DISCONTENT AND SUBDUED SPIRIT OF REBELLION

As a novelist, Mulk Raj Anand has emphasised on individuals as human beings, but at the same time, pressing social issues also receive due importance in his novels. In fact, complex social issue like ‘untouchability’ gets adequate representation through the deft portrayal of some powerful characters in most of his novels. As a conscientious novelist, Anand was aware that he might be accused of giving more importance to the social problems rather than the characters of his novels. Therefore, whenever he got opportunity, he expressed his concerns and interests through his characters. It is his creative desire as well as the demand of time and situation, which are responsible for the creation of such subjugated characters. Therefore, the close study of his characters on the basis of how they were socially discriminated is necessary to find out the elements of social discontent in his novels. This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the main issues of the thesis—‘social discontent’ and ‘subdued spirit of rebellion’, which would help to discuss Anand’s art of character portrayal in his novels. Both the issues are looked at from close quarter, so that important matters related to them become conspicuous. This is necessary, as it would offer a better position to grasp the cultural and social issues of the time in which Anand’s novels were written.

Whenever Anand’s novels are mentioned, one is always reminded of the characters like Bakha in *Untouchable*, Munoo in *Coolie*, Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Lal Singh in *Lal Singh Trillogy*, and Ananta in *The Big Heart*. While delineating them, Anand took resort to his imaginative apprehension and recreation in delineating these

characters and he was successful in showing through his novels how social discrimination had been rampant in Indian society. Some of the main factors which give birth to social discontent are—caste system present in the Hindu society, merciless exploitation of the poor by the rich, dehumanising effects of Industrialisation-an outcome of modernisation, destruction of peasantry or peasants' world etc. Through his novels, Anand sensitised his readers about the presence of various social discriminations rampant in the Indian society of his time, and tried to liberate the Indian masses from the clutches of such oppressions.

An attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss what is social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in case of the fiction of Anand, and how various societal elements usually contribute to the emergence of social discontents. It is important to mention here that while carrying out this research, the researcher is influenced by ideas of Social Realism, which mostly refers to an international movement in arts that draws attention to the everyday conditions of the working class and the poor. Like a social realist, Anand too is very critical of the social structures and forces, which create and maintain these conditions. However, in Anand, we find a unique attempt of exploring the ills of the society and provide a vehement critique of the same, a characteristic not so easily to be found in his contemporary Indian novelists writing in English.

### **The Notion of Social Discontent:**

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the meaning of “Social” as “connected with society and the way it is organised”. Therefore, when we refer to ‘social’, we understand the relationship of the individual with the society, and how in larger contexts, this relationship ultimately leads to the organisation of society. The



same dictionary defines “discontent” as “a feeling of being unhappy because someone is not satisfied with a particular situation”. Therefore, social discontent refers to the dissatisfaction and unhappiness of the members of the society due to some particular issues related to them. Discontent arises from definite forms of oppression and marginalisation. It has been linked with rejection. It is closely related to the feelings of the marginalised and oppressed masses, and is also allied to the agenda of increasing the range of freedom and justice.

In India, social discontent is pervasive because, individual and groups have been being subjected to discrimination on the basis of caste, class, poverty, religion, political ideology, custom and tradition from the ancient times. Social discriminations are varied, and motives behind social discrimination are also complex and multidimensional. Sometimes, it is difficult to find out the real causes of discrimination because they may be due to prejudice or because of ego. Therefore, it is not possible to think of having a society without discrimination. When we look at it from close quarter, it is seen that all societies across the world are full of discriminations. However, the manifestations of social discrimination may vary from society to society. If in a society there is oppression, misery, suffering, exploitation and tyranny, the manifestation of discontent can become a matter of serious concern.

It can be stated that social conflicts and tensions occur because of discrimination, which might have taken place earlier. In this research study, an attempt has been made to look at the dissatisfaction and discontents of some of the characters in the novels of Anand selected for this study due to the problems related to caste, exploitation of labour, modernisation, destruction of the peasantry etc. In other words, these elements give birth to discontent in the hearts of the subjugated characters who are destined to suffer

in the world presented in the novels of Anand. However, for the convenience of understanding the various elements, which create social discontent in the fictional world of Anand, they are attempted to be explored individually in this chapter.

### **Caste:**

Caste has been ingrained in the Hindu social system since the ancient times. To have a clear understanding of Caste, it is necessary to give a careful look inside the Hindu social system with reference to Varna and Jati. The term Varna refers to the attributed ranks of various jatis. Varna is comprised of several jatis with similar ritual positions. Jatis are graded on the basis of hierarchy—Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya are the three upper level jatis. The Shudras are the lowest amongst the four. Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya, these jatis have to undergo initiation rites after their birth. Therefore, they are regarded as twice born. The Shudra jati consists of various artisans and other occupationally specialised non-polluting jatis. Apart from these four levels of jatis, there is another level comprising of those jatis who follow occupations, which are regarded unclean and polluting. These jatis are excluded from the Varna system, and they are called Antyaja. Antyajas are untouchables because of their polluting occupations – they work in leather or do scavenging (including handling human wastes). Gandhiji called the Antyajas Harijans, and now a day, they proclaim themselves as Dalits. Adivasi or Girijans are also inside the Antyaja category but most of them are free from the curse of untouchability. They are included in the Hindu society but are excluded from the Varna system.

There are a few theories on the origin of Varnas. Best known and most cited amongst them is the theory of divine origin, which is found in the *Rig-Veda*, which is referred to

as Purusha Sukta. According to this theory, Purusha or the creator, the primeval being sacrificed himself for the creation of the four orders of the society. Head and mouth of Purusha were responsible for the creation of the Brahman, the arms of the Purusha gave birth to Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas were originated from the thighs, and the Shudras were born from the feet of the Purusha. It is apparent that this is just a symbolic representation of the four Varnas corresponding to cultural body images of various organs of the Purusha in descending order. In this order, the Brahmans were bestowed with the highest position as they were ascribed the duties of accumulating knowledge and then disseminating it. The Brahmans also performed the duties of sacrifice. The Kshatriyas were second in rank in the Varna hierarchy. They took the responsibilities of administration, governance, and defending the kingdom. The Vaishyas looked after trade and commerce, and agriculture. The Shudras were ranked lowest with the avowed promise of serving others, practising crafts and labour.

Jatis, which enjoy higher social and ritual status, have the arduous and complex task of maintaining the rules and regulations for keeping up purity and staying away from pollution. Pollution in this regard, is related to food items and personal contact. Vegetarian foods like fruit, milk, shrubs, roots are sattvic and can be eaten by Brahmans. Water can be easily polluted by the mere touch of very low jatis. According to S. C. Dube (2015):

It is for this reason that the wells for the clean jatis and the scheduled castes are separate in most villages. If there is only one well it will be used exclusively by the “clean” castes; the scheduled castes are denied access to it. Traditional water carriers are of the fourth Varna level and water drawn by them will generally be accepted by all, except by those practicing the highest level of purity. In their

case, water must be drawn by a person of equally “pure” rank and that too in a ritually “pure” personal condition. (p. 56)

There were also social norms prescribing prohibition of physical contact between “clean and noble jatis” and “inferior jatis” regarded as untouchables. In some places, the most severe form of untouchability is practised, and it is held that even the sight of the untouchables or their shadows can pollute higher jatis.

Practice of untouchability in mild form only refers to staying away from the untouchables so that no physical contact should occur, and barring of untouchables from the entry of the household of the higher jatis.

The untouchable jatis were denied entry into temples and access to common village wells. Their living quarters had to be built outside the village, often at some distance. They had to sit separately in schools; even tea-shops earmarked separate cups for them which they had to wash themselves and keep aside. (Dube, 2015, p. 58)

An important trend amongst the rich and powerful jatis was that they supported each other and forged unity amongst themselves to subjugate the lowest placed jatis. They used to terrify the lower jatis by using their economic power and political connections.

Anand revolutionised Indian writing in English by portraying the events of a sweeper’s life in his first novel *U*. He portrayed the difficulties faced by the untouchables in the society in this novel. In this regard, E. M. Forster wrote: “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 cannot escape”

(Anand, 1981, p. 8). Anand was aware of the difficult life of the untouchables as he passed his childhood days inside the cantonments of British Indian army. The distance between the huts of menial servant and quarters of clerical staffs were not much. However, there was great social chasm in between the two classes of people. Anand's mother restrained him from mixing with the children of the untouchables, but he was unable to follow his mother's instructions in this regard. It was during that time, that he had developed admiration for an untouchable boy Bakha. This untouchable young boy had many qualities—he was handsome, a singer and a sportsman. In fact, Anand considered him to be an extraordinary human being. However, unfortunately, Bakha did not get any opportunity from the society to express his talent. Contrary to it, he faced frequent humiliation and insult at the hands of upper caste members. Therefore, when Anand decided to become a writer, he wrote his first novel on this character Bakha whom he knew in his childhood. It was his great attachment with the untouchables, which led him to write the first draft of the novel within three days.

Anand disclosed that there had been rampant social discrimination and oppression on the untouchables. He did not show the untouchables revolting against the subjugation in the novel. But, he wanted to open the eyes of the oppressors towards their injustices. He earnestly requested “for truth against the age—old lies of the Hindus by which they upheld discrimination” (Anand, 1968, p. 16). He trod on a new path when he made an untouchable like Bakha the central figure of his first novel. He remarked that even his contemporaries were also shying away from the portrayal of the untouchables in their novels:

Most Indian writers of the modern period, like Bankim Chander Chatterji, Ratan Nath Sarshar and Rabindranath Tagore, had not accepted in their novels, that

even the so-called lowest dregs of humanity, living in utmost poverty, squalor and degradation could become heroes of fiction. (Anand, 1968, p. 6)

But, the publication of *U* was not so simple and easy. Anand (1981) remarked that the novel was “first rejected by nineteen British publishers” (p.182). It was the twentieth publisher who consented to publish this classic on the condition that E. M. Forster would write the preface to it. It was his tremendous moral courage, which led him to write a novel against the caste system at the age of twenty-five years. Through this novel, Anand wanted to express through *U* how millions of untouchables were living a horrible life of exploitation. His sympathy was with the victims of this cruel system of India that still continue in various corners.

### **Exploitation of Labour:**

According to the Census of 1931, the total population of India was 353 million, out of which 141 million were children below 15 years (as cited in Rajani, 1934, p.4). When compared to other countries, in India juveniles took the larger part in production. 31.4 million People of India were agricultural labourers, and amongst them, 23 million people were landless labourers or farm servants (Rajani, 1934). In the factory and industry of India, especially during the initial stage of the development of the cotton industry in Bombay Presidency, there were many abuses of women and children due to the lack of employment opportunities. The practice of pledging by the parents and guardians of the child for domestic service often led to the abuse of labour. Though, it was forbidden, the guardians often took resort to this practice due to their poverty. The labourers got wage payments on monthly basis in the—“Cotton mills of Bombay, the tea gardens of the Assam Valley, and some other industries in various parts of the

country” (Rajani, 1934, p. 56). But, wage payments on monthly basis had an objectionable feature—delay often to fifteen days for the payment. Such long delay in paying the labourers their wages was a grave problem as they were then forced to purchase their daily requirements through credit or sometimes they had to borrow money from the moneylenders at a high rate of interest.

The workers’ position in the factory was entirely decided by the foremen, and this led to bribery and corruption. These supervisors or foremen controlled their workers till the time they work in the factory: “Most of the workers, adults as well as children, are engaged by supervisors or foremen” (Rajani, 1934, p. 32.). The sardars and foremen were regarded very important in industrial set ups because they used to engage the workers, took the burden of training them, offered housing facilities when needed and also provided funds at high interest rates to them. They were having the power to dismiss the workers from their jobs or transfer them to better position. The workers considered them their protectors inside the industry and they went on tolerating the exploitation. These intermediaries were known as jobbers, sardars, mukadams or maistries in India. Often the sardars took dasturi (bribe) from the workers as a mark of gratitude for the engagements.

This practice of taking bribes by the foreman for engaging the labourers was a routine affair in the mills of Bombay: “besides paying fees for a job, the workers have to pay a part of their wages during the continuance of their service” (Rajani, 1934, p. 33). Such bribes to the sardars and their superiors were very common incident inside the factory system. These intermediaries never shrank away from cheating the workers of their wages. Their power used to increase when the manager of the factory happened to be a European as he usually lacked linguistic command to understand the problems faced by

the workers. As the workers were illiterate, scarcely they could get promotion to the supervisory grades. The workers were also subjected to the oppression of the sardars. They constantly suffered from the insecurity of losing their jobs because of the change in trades, choice of the consumers and the personal whims of their employers. Such an environment contributed largely to their discontent.

The tea plantation in India before India's Independence was largely owned by the Europeans. Only a small number of tea gardens were managed by the Indians. The required labour for the tea garden was obtained from distant places because local population was not sufficient for such huge requirements. Unlike the factories where men were preferred as labourers, in plantations employment was given to men, women and even children. For example, in the tea gardens of Assam, the labourers were recruited by the sardars of tea garden from distant places like Chota Nagpur, the Santal Parganas, Bihar, the United Provinces, Madras and the Central Provinces. To cover such great distance, the labourers had to take a journey of several days. To obtain labour, the plantation owners had to invest a large amount of money per labourer. Therefore, they wanted to keep the recruited labourers for a long period of time, which led to various atrocities ranging from compelling the labourers to sign a contract where physical punishment was mentioned as an important measure to curb the disrespect of the contract. The plantation owners engaged sardars to recruit labourers and the sardars adopted various unscrupulous means to bring unsuspecting labourers to the tea gardens. Due to scarcity and difficulty of getting labourers, the tea garden authority preferred to recruit families so that they could be forced to work in plantation site : "the policy of plantations has been to recruit families rather than individuals.... and immigration has been a constant source of supply of child labour to the Assam tea gardens"



(Rajani,1934, p.30). When they enlisted themselves as plantation labourers, they did so with three ambitions– they wanted an umbrella of their own, a buffalo, and a piece of land where they could cultivate something. The sardars took advantage of these ambitions of the would be tea garden labourers and lured them away from the security of their homeland.

Once the immigrant labourers arrived at the plantation areas, their fate was determined by the whims of the planters. The labourers were forced to enter into a penal contract according to which the planters got the right to arrest the truant labourers. The labourers were forced to live a life of prisoner:

They live in lines to which the public are denied access, and watchmen are maintained to observe and report all movements to and from the lines. Although the labourers move here and there, attending the local market and conducting their sidelines of business, they cannot go far, or absent themselves long, without their movements being noted. (Panandi, 1933, p. 113)

Though law was passed against such atrocities, the illiterate labourers were unable to take any advantage of such legal rights.

The tea garden labourers were paid very low wages in comparison to industrial labourers. Moreover, all the members of the family had to work to earn the livelihood. In spite of that, the labourers were unable to maintain a healthy life style. It was heart-rending to observe that many young children of four to six years old worked in the tea gardens and contributed to the family's income. Often, the sardars and managers of the tea gardens beat the labourers if they tried to show any dissent: "beating with canes was

now and then resorted to by some of the garden sardars and managers to make labourers work better” (Panandi, 1933, p. 113).

The life of the labourers in the tea gardens was very unhealthy because they were susceptible to various deadly diseases like malaria, dysentery, typhoid, hookworm etc. as the tea gardens were situated in remote areas and forests. The tea gardens were also lacking in clean arrangements for health and hygiene. In this regard, Rajani Kanta Das remarked (1934): “The result was a heavy death rate among all classes of workers, including children, and many of the gardens were classed as unhealthy” (p.41). The labourers should get the payment of their hard work on the basis of the nature, duration and place of work. As the labourers were not paid adequately, they were unable to maintain their family with the scanty wages they received. Instead of providing the just payment for the hard work of the labourers, the employers enjoyed the profit alone. The society might have run very smoothly if the labourers were not exploited mercilessly. The degradation of the quality of life was easily discernible when the capitalists received manifold advantages and accumulated their wealth, whereas the working class could not get due wages for their labour. In such a situation, the poor working class people had no alternative but to fight with full might against the injustice and exploitation.

In his novels, Anand talks about the fate of the poor labourers. Because the British Government was biased towards the traders and landlords, the poor labourers were caught in the web of debt-slavery. In such an atmosphere, the labourers could do two things—they could enrol themselves in the British army during the time of war or they could migrate to another place in search of better work and life during the time of

peace. Mulk Raj Anand beautifully explores the discontent arising out of the exploitation of the poor in novels like *C* and *TLAB and TSATS*.

### **Destruction of Peasantry:**

In his *Letters on India*, Anand (1942) said: “The peasant...is India and India the peasant” (p. 29). Anand wrote how the British rule had destroyed the peasantry in India. The peasants were ruthlessly exploited by unscrupulous traders and callous landlords. For the peasants, land was everything but they were mercilessly uprooted from their land because of the exploitation of the Sarkar, landlords and money-lenders. The British government introduced the policy of collecting land revenue in cash. Consequently, the illiterate peasants were trapped in the web of the dishonest government officials, cunning traders and greedy moneylenders. The Indian villages lost the capacity of remaining self-sufficient unit on the burden of new economic factors.

The peasants suffered mainly because of debt. In India, according to Woolf, “it is the bonds of debt that shackle agriculture” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 220). In addition, the debts were for the most part unproductive. Before the colonial period, the capacity of the peasants to borrow money was limited as they were unable to provide security for their borrowings. The peasants could not mortgage their landed property as security. The stable nature of the British rule, Pax Britannica and agricultural advancement and profit cumulatively increased the land value in Punjab. B. S. Saini (1975) mentioned, “The average price of land rose from Rs.10 per acre in 1869-70 to Rs.451 per acre in 1938-39” (p. 221). With the enormous increase of the value of land, the peasants got new avenue to borrow money from the moneylenders by offering their agricultural land as security. The moneylenders cheated the ignorant and illiterate peasants by falsifying

their accounts and by charging excessive interest. The peasants were very extravagant in their unproductive spending on marriage ceremony, litigation and base enjoyments like drinking and gambling. Such habits and inclinations invariably led them to perpetual state of poverty and liabilities of repayment from which they could hardly relieve themselves. Along with this, the peasants also suffered from uncertain rainfall, loss of livestock due to epidemics and fragmentation of their agricultural land (Saini, 1975). They were unable to buy back their mortgaged land, as they had already consumed the borrowed amount in marriages or some other social ceremonies.

In this way, the impoverished peasants could never redeem their mortgaged land, which led to the confiscation of the land by the moneylender under civil decree. The moneylenders began to consider this a steady and very profitable investment. Therefore, they continued luring the unsuspecting peasants more and more into their grip. Such reckless borrowing by the unthrifty peasants on the strength of agricultural land ultimately turned them in to landless peasants or tenants. Colonial rulers were not against such developments, as Carver remarked: “the best agriculture in the world is carried on under the tenancy system (England)” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 192). But, in India, the situation was totally different because according to Calvert: “an English landlord is his tenant’s best friend and spends fully one-third of his rental back on the land and its needs, most Punjab landlords levy double the rent an English landlord would do and spend practically nothing back on the land” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 192). Moreover, the British Government welcomed such a development because it is thought, “the facility of transfer would place the land at the disposal of those who would bring capital, intelligence and enterprise to bear on it” (Saini, 1975, p. 223). After acquiring the mortgaged land, the money-lender in Punjab basically offered it to

his former debtors to cultivate. In this regard, Calvert remarked that the moneylender “does not invest any capital in improving it – but contents himself with obtaining the best rent he can” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 223).

Anand stated that a situation was created in which the peasants were forced to live under the whims of Indian moneylenders and landlords. They were denied the fruit of their hard labour by the Colonial government and their agents. The tyrannical rule of British government forced them to become victims to indebtedness, which was unprecedented. The moneylenders took the advantage of the legal system introduced by the British, and invented different ploys to exploit the illiterate peasants. The pathetic condition of the peasants was not confined only to Punjab province; the peasants of other provinces were also reeling under debt and misery. Nehru mentioned the condition of the peasants in this way: “The peasantry were a blind, poverty-stricken, suffering mass, resigned to their miserable fate and sat upon and exploited by all who came in contact with them- the Government, landlords, money-lenders, petty officials, police, lawyers, priests” (Nehru, 1936, p. 48).

Anand was aware of all kinds of oppressions and exploitations of the poor and helpless peasants. He mentioned about the famous revolutionary peasant song from his mother: “Take care of your turban, O Peasant” (Sharma, 1971, p. 51). The Kisan revolt of 1907 in Punjab was stated to be inspired by this peasant song. In *TV*, Anand analysed the problems of the peasants. Exploitation of the peasants by the landlords and moneylenders gave rise to the serious kind of discontent among the peasants. In *TSATS*, the rampant exploitation of the peasants was graphically presented. They were shown as poor, starving, crushed and miserable. However, the peasants were also capable of showing their courage when they expressed their discontent through various modes

against the British government and against their agents like landlords and the moneylenders. Mulk Raj Anand's fiction helps us to have a clear understanding of the condition of the Peasantry during Pre Independence India.

**Issue of Industrialisation:**

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Indian cottage industries and handicraftsmen were thriving satisfactorily. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were various kinds of cottage industries in India as one can be find in statements as offered by Panandi (1933):

Cotton, woollen and silk textile industries, metal industries, turning out brass, copper and bell-metal wares and arms of various kinds, iron, ship-building, stone, sandalwood and marble carving, gold and silver thread, glass, paper, fine embroidery, perfumery, leather and enamelled jewellery industries. (p. 1)

However, after the Industrial Revolution, there were divergent changes in the field of production, labour, transport, and communication in England. Various factory made cheaper products were imported to India with the result that the Indian cottage industry lost its pre-eminent position. India became a source of raw material for the British industries as well as a profitable market for the factory products. The products of the Indian cottage industry were prohibited to enter into the markets of England through various decrees, and heavy import duty was also imposed upon them. Machine made products of England became very popular amongst the Indian masses due to low price and better quality. On the other hand, the patronage that the cottage industries received from various quarters like royal courts and Indian nobles were also shrinking due to the diminishing popularity of the products. It was in such a situation, Indian cottage

industries suffered from gradual decay in large numbers during the middle part of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Small artisans who worked in cottage industries were poor and so they were unable to buy necessary raw materials for their industry. The artisans received capital from the intermediaries, and they had to sell the finished product to these intermediaries. Some moneylenders also financed the artisans at exorbitant rates of interest. As there was lack of organised marketing system for the finished products, the big merchants exploited the artisans. Sometimes, intermediaries with shops of their own procured the necessary goods from the artisans on price-wage system. The artisan had to accept the price-wage as was given to him by the shop owner.

It was a dreadful condition for the Indian economy. At that time, India was not a sovereign country. Unlike the western nations where they successfully adapted themselves to the changing situations, in India it was different. The change was shocking and people lacked adaptability and organizing capacity to cope with such necessary changeover from the cottage industry to the modern industries run on machines. Lack of scientific knowledge and shortage of capital were also the other important factors responsible for the inability of that much-needed change over. Consequently, the labourers and artisans who were once engaged in the cottage industries were compelled to turn to agriculture for their livelihood. In this way, India became an agriculture-based economy from cottage industry based industrial economy.

Such a change brought about serious repercussions in the form of extreme poverty of a large number of Indian citizens. There were also periodical famines due to such extreme poverty. The Famine Commissions in their reports opined that lack of industry

was one of the principal causes of the recurring famines in India. Thus, poverty and hunger made India a land of destitute, which was a land of prosperity earlier. In this regard, Panandi (1933) remarked: “The continuing poverty of the people and the absence of industrial careers for the educated Indians, resulting from this industrial stagnation, produced serious economic discontent, which soon allied itself with the political discontent” (p. 5). The Swadeshi Movement and Gandhi’s urge to boycott foreign goods were important events of the period, which marked a growing tendency amongst the Indians to work for the much sought after industrial regeneration in India. It was much more needed because industrial development would certainly generate more jobs than the agriculture. The wages was also higher in industrial set up which would ensure better life-style for the labourers.

Before the arrival of the British, the transformation in social and cultural structure of India was varied and drastic but superficial. The British brought with them scientific temperament and modern system of education which unfurled new knowledge, ideas and values. With the help of such new inputs, some progressive men of India began to think fresh to lead them towards new modes of analytical power. There was also an expansion of knowledge and awareness in Indian masses resulting in the growth of their prospect in different fields. The scholars, writers and philosophers were also attracted towards this conflict between tradition and modernity from the time of such developments in science and technology. Modernisation is inevitable and indispensable for any developing country, but in a colonised country like India, the decision-making was always in the hands of the colonisers and so the benefits of modernisation could never be reached to the citizens.



In *TBH*, Anand artistically delineated industrial values advocated by the western culture and their apparent contradiction with the indigenous culture. Thus, Anand showed the consequence of the colonial rule in India. He also handled the theme of the conflict between traditional values of the indigenous artisans and the inevitable modernisation of the Indian industries. He presented the discontent of some people who were attached to the old and past habits and traditions, and opposed industrialisation and modernisation, and which ultimately led to the martyrdom of Ananta, the central character of the novel.

### **Notion of the Subdued Spirit of Rebellion:**

Along with social discontent, Anand's unique handling of the notion of subdued spirit of rebellion in his novel also invites the attention of the critical readers. Rebellion can be explained as the rejection to comply with the established order, the attempt of preventing the dominant system by action through armed or violent resistance. It is an opposing power, activity and attitude, which challenge domination and subjugation. It is reactionary and liberating and at the same time against resignation. It aims at liberating the exploited from the clutches of exploiting forces.

Mulk Raj Anand is one such novelist who introduced revolutionary socialism in Indian English fiction. However, in nearly all his fictional works, his characters are more a victim than a rebel in the true sense. An attempt has been made in this section to discuss the meaning of the term rebel and how Anand deals with the idea of a rebel and rebellion in his fictional works. One interpretation may be the fact that Anand wanted to conceptualise the notion of rebellion to be synonymous with the idea of freedom. For example, in Anand's autobiographical novel *Confession of a Lover*, commenting on the

uncertain political scenario and nightmarish situations in Pre-Independence India, the character called Krishan tell his friend Noor Mahammed:

We must learn to rebel...The important thing is to be—become rebellion itself! Free! Free! Free! Utterly Free! ‘Rebellion and Freedom’ Not acceptance and Death...It is only through Rebellion against Everything...I want to caste out my fears. I want to embrace people—even those who are illiterate and down and degraded!...We will become a big people! We will make a new life! (pp. 27-28)

However, it is equally interesting to note that in other novels of Anand, which are selected for the purpose of this study, the elements of rebellion does not fully develop to render a noticeable impact on the society. In most cases, the rebellious tendencies in the characters remain subdued and fail to bring any change in the situation of the poor desolate people. However, before exploring all these issues in detail, let us try to understand what the term Rebellion actually entails in the context of this study.

Here, in this study, rebellion is considered in affirmative terms focussing on the positive and creative forces it embodies which enable the weak to restructure an exploitative social order. It exposes the unfair practices, undermines the power of the authority, and may lead to find out an equal place for the common masses and their practices. Rebellion is the expression of the voices of the marginalised and oppressed, which brings these voices to the forefront, and at the same time, helps to confront direct and indirect structures of the dominant and the oppressive. Social, political and economic disequilibrium of power often provoke rebellion. Dominance and rebellion are oppositional, but both are linked to power. Rebellion is instrumental in bringing transformation to the existing structure by reshaping the spaces available to the

marginalised and oppressed. When power becomes depraved, it leads to suppression of the masses, resulting in restriction of the productive promises of the society, ultimately paving the way for the surfacing of rebellion. It brings change in the existing oppressive order and sometimes even destabilises it. It may not be able to disrupt the oppressive power but it can still bring about necessary space for the individuals. Therefore, rebellion against exploitation and oppression in the society is an attempt of starting a just order.

Rebellion evolves from consciousness of being wronged. This consciousness may be permanent or may stay only for a temporary moment. The potential rebel may not grasp hold of this consciousness at the beginning and so he goes on obeying what he has been asked for. At the beginning, his knowledge of freedom and right is restricted to his own understanding but slowly and gradually when this understanding of right will become common to all, he will submit himself in support of common good. The rebel in such circumstances can even dare to accept death because he understands that it is better to surrender his life for the common good rather than for his own sake. With such an understanding within him, the rebel can steer himself away from petty selfishness of everyday life and he can rescue himself from his isolation.

Rebellion is not driven by selfish motives and egoistical attitudes. Whatever little bit of selfishness is there in its aim, that is for the greater good of the community or for the sake of humanity. When there is rebellion, the rebel has to commit himself to the fulfilment of it. Another important aspect of rebellion is that the rebel may take part in rebellion not as the sole way of making an end to oppression but may be because of seeing someone suffering from oppression. In that case, the rebel is contemplating rebellion because he identifies himself with the oppressed. He does not encroach upon

other's freedom and right, but seeks to defend upon his own freedom and rights. The rebel fights for keeping intact the integrity of his own as well as his fellow-being's worldly existence. The rebel questions certain aspects of his validity of the existing system. When he finds the answer, his next step is to attempt incorporating his findings into the existing system to bring about partial or complete change to the system. His attempts to bring about such changes are necessary for elevating man to a higher order, so that man can live in dignity. Therefore, it can be said that the rebel's attempt of raising rebellion is a positive impulse to defend the essential dignity of the very existence of man.

Unity is one of the most important aspects of rebellion. Without unity, rebellion cannot flourish. It is the binding force necessary to bring about rebellion. Man takes resort to rebellion for bringing about necessary change relating to his existence in the society, but at the same time man has to accept his limitation in staging rebellion for survival due to the difficulty of connecting human minds in an exploitative social setting. Such an understanding leads to the knowledge that one man's experience of unhappiness can turn into a comprehensive unhappiness of the whole community. Therefore, the rebel must keep the noble promise of bringing about change for the greater interest of mankind. The rebel should possess the ability to contradict the existing system because such ability affirms the existence of a borderline for the oppressor. The rebel's ability to contradict confirms that he is aware of his space, which has been encroached upon, or his understanding that an unacceptable authority has been imposed upon him, which has crossed a certain limit violating his necessary rights. In this way, the rebel refuses to submit to such conditions, which he regards unbearable. He may also think that he has the right to contradict because of his absolute confidence on his justified position.

In contrast to the term rebellion, subdued spirit of rebellion is quite different. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the meaning of “subdued” as “unusually quiet, and possibly unhappy”. The same dictionary defines the meaning of “spirit” as “a state of mind or mood; an attitude”. On the basis of the meaning of “subdued” and “spirit”, it can be stated that the term “subdued spirit” refers to unusually quiet and unhappy mood or attitude relating to rebellion. However, as it has been discussed above, rebellion has nothing to do with quiet mood or attitude. Rebellion is a dynamic force bringing about just order and change in the society. Therefore, it can be said that “subdued spirit of rebellion” is not a direct rebellion; it is a passive resistance against the tyrannical order. Alternatively, it can be seen as a gesture of not conforming to the prevalent power structure of the society. People showing subdued spirit of rebellion are aware of the lacks and shortfalls of the existing system, but choose to remain silent because of the all-pervasive dominance of the system. However, the vital aspect of subdued spirit of rebellion is the knowledge of the deficiency of the system, which will ultimately bring about the necessary change. Therefore, the subdued spirit of rebellion can be equated with a kind of mild start in the desired change in the system without taking resort to any means of violence or can be equivalent to a passive resistance to the system of oppression and exploitation. It can also be regarded as the harbinger of a strong rebellion to be followed later.

Marginalisation and subjugation of the oppressed is based on their surrender and compliance to the dominant prevailing power. Peaceful opposition to oppression reveals the strength of the downtrodden and exposes the oppression of the authority. Likewise, the non-violent struggle against oppressive regime is often more effective than revolting with weapons. The oppressed can show dissent against the authoritative

rule by non-cooperation and by peaceful demonstrations leading to change of attitude on the part of the authority. Voice of dissent and peaceful opposition to tyranny are necessary in exposing the hypocrisy of the oppressors, and in shattering the delusion of the oppressive system that subjugation and exploitation can go on without check. Therefore, change in the oppressive order may take place when the subjects refuse to accept the same and raise their voice. This is an existential dilemma and the characters of Mulk Raj Anand remain so crushed that they are even unable to raise their voice against the oppressive order of history, politics and society.

However, in this regard, it is pertinent to have a clear understanding of Anand's views on the idea of rebellion. Dionys Mascolo opined that "an intellectual...could not be a communist because of the errors and crimes committed by the system, and at the same time an intellectual had to be a communist to take his path in the eradication of social injustice" (Camus, 2000, p. xvii). It is certain Anand was influenced by Marxist thinking but he was not a Marxist. Anand was enthusiastic about the Marxian concept of equality. Albert Camus was supporting 'rebellion' but he did not support revolution. Likewise, Anand was influenced by Marxism's concept of equality, but he did not support violent rebellion. Anand supported humanism; his protagonist could utter 'no' but cannot take part violent rebellion by indulging in murder. In his protagonists, therefore, moderation is noticed. They take the middle path as they have intense love for life as well as an urge to go on. There arose in their mind the spirit of rebellion because of different sorts of discontents, but this rebellion cannot turn itself into a physical or violent activity. Such a spirit of rebellion is always subdued, and Mulk Raj Anand, as a social realist succeeds in representing this type of rebellion in a very appealing manner.

In Anand's novels, immortal characters like Bakha, Lal Singh and Ananta understood the condition of the ordinary poor people around them, felt the danger of the rampant exploitations, because they were also the victims. It was basically expected that they might protest against the exploitation. However, in reality, they were unable to do so. Along with them, their companions were also mute observer of exploitation. Naturally, the question arises—what is the reason behind such subjugation? Obviously, there were many socio political issues, which became responsible for this subdued spirit of rebellion. Castes, belief in Karma philosophy, lack of education are some important issues, which are responsible for subdued spirit of rebellion observed in Anand's novels. Therefore, it is necessary to look into these issues to understand the notion of subdued spirit of rebellion. The following is an attempt at providing a thorough discussion of the concept of Caste, Karma, and system of education in Pre-independence India and how they contributed to the subdued spirit of rebellion in Anand's novels.

### **The Maze of Caste System:**

Thousands of years ago in ancient India, the society was divided into different classes so that all the communities living within it could function properly. Such a classification might have contributed greatly to the development and prosperity of the life of man during that time. However, with the changing time, the social necessities and basis must also change. Throughout the ages, the Indian society changed in multiple aspects, but the strict structure of caste system remains dominant all the times. Such a rigid structure might have been necessary in ancient India. But, in the present situation, it lost all its usefulness. In fact, casteism had been associated with many

social and economic evils, which dampened the progress of Indian society from having modern and progressive outlook. In the Census of 1911, caste is defined as:

An endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name and having the same traditional occupation, who are so linked together by these and other ties, such as the tradition of a common origin and the possession of the same tutelary deity, and the same social status, ceremonial observations and family priests, that they regard themselves, and are regarded by others as forming a single homogenous community. (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 47)

Therefore, caste is related to birth and therefore cannot be chosen. A Hindu can be rich and very talented but such virtues do not help him to change his caste. He is bound by social norms to accept the caste of his parents.

As discussed earlier, in ancient time, Indian society consisted of four jatis – the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The Brahmans were entrusted with the duty of imparting knowledge and performing priestly rituals. The Kshatriyas were people belonging to ruling class. The Vaishyas were the class of people consisting of tradesmen and peasants. The Shudras consisted of the lowest strata of the society. B. S. Saini (1975) commented, “In its original form it was a class system rather than a caste system. With the passage of time, various factors contributed to the inflexibility and segmentation of the original four classes” (p. 48).

In the caste system, the Brahmans were on the top of the hierarchical order. The Kshatriyas followed them. The Vaishyas and the Shudras were next to follow. Carpenters, weavers and blacksmiths were included in the artisan caste, whereas tanners, barbers, washermen, potters and oil pressers belonged to the menial caste. Both



these two castes i.e., artisans and menials belonged to the Sudras. The lowest among all the castes were the scavenger castes—the Chuhra or Bhangi and Dumna (Saini, 1975). These castes were regarded unclean and untouchable. Inter-marriage amongst the castes was prohibited and if any violation was observed it was dealt with severe punishments. Saini's remark is worth quoting in this regard: "marrying outside the caste entailed social ostracism and for this reason, the endogamous limitations were seldom transgressed. Strict notice of such breaches was taken by caste government" (Saini, 1975, p. 50).

Every society has its unwritten laws, which it enforces on its members. Most often, in the Indian society, social and religious rules have close relationship, and there were specific sets of rules for specific castes, which were to be followed with strict adherence. Sometimes, for the higher castes, the public opinion served as rules. For the lower castes, caste authority was strictly maintained by the Panchayats to obtain obedience from them for the customary rules. Panchayat acted as the standing body to look after any transgression or violation of the rules related to castes. The Panchayats were held on the basis of the appeal made by the complaint or by the accused either to investigate the allegation made or for looking after the possible mitigation of a sentence.

Like inter caste marriage, inter-dinning was also strictly prohibited amongst the higher castes and lower castes. Food items were divided into two classes—pakka food and kacha food. When food was cooked in ghee it was called pakka food, and it was regarded immune to pollution. Food, which was processed in water, was regarded kacha food and was considered liable to be polluted by a mere touch. Some high castes people used to take pakka food from the lower castes people. The caste authority like

Panchayat dealt with the breaches of caste rules for marriage, and the laws relating to eating and drinking amongst the castes. There were various punishments for the offender when the offence was established. The general form of punishment was in the mode of fine and depending on the caste status, the amount of the fine also varied. Sometimes, the punishment was delivered in the form of feast to be fed to the Panchayat or the community. Purification ceremony following the rules of shastras was also prescribed by the Panchayat. The severest punishment was social excommunication. Such a dreaded punishment was offered only when the offender was found to be rebellious and recalcitrant.

In this way, in the Indian society, the caste system nullified the right to equality and destroyed the self-esteem of the lower castes people, mostly the untouchables. It also debarred the untouchables from any kind of freedom from the ancient times. They were in constant fear of transgressing the caste rules and any violation of such rules led to the punishment. Generations passed facing different kinds of exploitation and subjugation, which imprinted indelible impression on the untouchables. Sometimes, occasional sense of resentment might arise in their minds, but that was too faint to be expressed from their dominated hearts. No help from any quarter was there for these people. They were accustomed to their lowest position in the society and never ever tried to change it. They knew that their happiness depended on their ready acceptance of caste rules and so they went on accepting in docile submission.

Most of the above-mentioned practices of untouchability are observed in Anand's novel *U* in a very poignant manner. Bakha, the protagonist of *U* suffers humiliations and insults for his caste. Apart from Bakha, other untouchables also had to accept their marginalised position in society. Bakha could not understand the meaning of social

injustice his community had to face, and often he wanted to fight against it. However, he was conditioned by the prevalent social norms and was forced to reconcile to his miserable state. Consequently, constant subjugation and humiliation of the untouchables like Bakha bred a mental attitude, which was fatal to their development as human beings. To avoid pollution, the untouchables were made to live in isolated places away from the inhabiting places of higher caste people. No public well was open to them and their children could not study in ordinary schools. Even, the doors of the temples were restricted to their entry. The severity of exclusion was such that even the mere shadow of the untouchable could pollute the high caste person. However, despite such inhuman treatment, Bakha and his likes were unable to raise their voice or to stage rebellion as they were often crushed by the inhuman caste system.

### **The Influence of Karma:**

In the Indian religious traditions, explanation of evil is understood through the doctrine of Karma and rebirth. The suffering of an individual is construed as the result of wrongdoing of his previous birth. Such a concept is possible through the idea of multiple incarnations of man. Someone's suffering in this life is indicative of that individual's wrongdoing in his past life. Similarly, his present wrongdoing or sin will be punished in this life or in his future life. This philosophy endorses a consistent and comprehensive explanation for the punishment of evil. None but the individual himself is responsible for his sufferings. Such a philosophy of Karma and rebirth, definitely offers emotional and intellectual satisfaction in explaining sufferings of man in Indian context. It seems, this philosophy attempts to provide a plausible explanation to the

injustice, unfairness and the sufferings of innocent men and women in the Indian society.

According Hindu philosophy, life is a cycle, which goes through true self with different difficulties to reach ultimately the realisation of true self. Everything that has happened in this world is not merely due to chance or accident. According to Hindu philosophy, Dharma or Law of God governs the world, but Dharma does not predestine man to his fate. Here comes the doctrine of Karma into action because karma acts as the driving force of the moral order of the world governed by Dharma. Man is free to act but his action will be weighed upon on the scale of Dharma. Man's action is not impeded upon by any external factor. In fact, man reaps the fruit of his own action. According to the doctrine of karma:

Individuality is due to Karma...The kind of world into which we are born is just the return of the works of the doer. The individual organism is the working machinery intended to produce that requital in the form of actions and it results into suffering and happiness. (Radhakrishnan, 1923, p. 97)

In this way, the mystery behind man's suffering and range of man's conditions in life are attempted to solve through the doctrine of Karma, Rebirth and Sansara in Indian philosophy. In his life, man is endowed with social status on the merit of birth, virtues, happiness and sufferings on the basis of his action—good or evil in his past life. Doctrine of rebirth or reincarnation states that man's present condition and even his future life is determined by his actions of past life.

In Hindu Philosophy, Karma is considered a causal law, which maintains that somebody's action in past life has direct impact on the happenings of future lives, and

that soul is an immortal entity in the mortal body, which can act of its own accord and bears man's individual and moral responsibility from one life to another across the time. Doctrine of Karma embodies within itself the law of cause and effect as it claims that every action irrespective of its time of occurrence past or present has consequence, which may be immediate or remote. P. Nagaraja Rao (1981) commented:

The doctrine of *Karma* inculcates in us faith in the absolute justice, that we experience and an attitude of wise, uncomplaining acceptance of the inequalities of life. In the Indian view of life, there is the marked absence of bitterness when misfortune befalls them. There is no shouting against injustice, no railing against God. *Karma* induces in us a mood of acceptance and understanding as we know that there is no dark fate that governs us. We move by our deeds. (pp. 17-18)

According to the karma doctrine, man is architect of his own fate and therefore, there is reason behind his sufferings in life. Therefore, man's suffering bears definite meaning. Again, if man goes on doing his work (karma), sufferings may cease or he may be happy in his next life. Clooney (1989) simplifies it in this way—"people suffer because of their past deeds in this and previous lives, and likewise enjoy benefits based on past good deeds" (p.530). However, the problem with the doctrine of Karma and rebirth is that it is very difficult to find out and define the nature of wrongdoing. At the same time, when somebody commits sins, there is no way of finding out what the retribution will be and when the punishment will be meted out. In this regard, Arthur Herman's (1976) observation is worth quoting: "since rebirth solution is adequate for solving the theological problem of evil, this undoubtedly explains why the problem was never of much concern to the classical Indian" (p. 288).

The oppression and unfairness in the Indian society is justified with the doctrine of Karma in the sense that suffering masses only repaying the price of the prior wrongs committed by them. In fact, it is understood that social oppression happens because of karma. The Indian regressive caste system is also ingrained in this Karma doctrine. The people of India do not blame God for the sufferings they have to undergo because the reason for suffering can be attributed to the Karma doctrine. This is very significant because the sufferer, in such a situation attributes his suffering to past wrong doings. Oppressors are never questioned about their actions. In this way, social oppression goes on continuously uninhibited for centuries after centuries.

In Anand's novels, except Lal Singh and Ananta, other characters accepted their position in the society. Bakha questioned his status as an untouchable in the society, but he was forced to accept his outcaste status. Munoo, a boy of fourteen did not have any understanding of the outside world; he became a puppet of his immediate surroundings, a passive and muted human being. Same is the case with Gangu, who knew intuitively about his imminent danger while he was on his journey to Assam with his family in the hope of a golden future. But, Gangu did not wish to do anything regarding his impending misfortune; he resigned himself passively to his destiny. These characters were lacking in the zeal to fight—to fight for their right. Therefore, the spirit of rebellion did not even occur in the minds of these characters as they were forced to believe that they were forced to accept the dictates of their Karma.

### **Problem of Illiteracy:**

The Pre-British Indian society was lagging behind in its socio-economic development in comparison to other modern civilisations around the world. In the Pre British India,

the caste-stratified Hindu society ascribed the duty of preaching religious doctrines and teaching to the Brahmin caste. Other castes were not entitled to get higher studies. Only Brahmins were allowed to undertake study in religious and higher secular subjects in institutions such as Tols, Vidyalayas, and Chatuspathis etc. Knowledge was imparted through Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hindus. The system of education in both Hindu Tols and Muslim Madrassas restricted and closed for the people belonging to the lowest strata of the society. The main objective of education was to make students ardent believers in religion-either Hindu or Muslim, leading them to make citizens who would be naive followers of the religion as well as the social structures approved by such religion. The pupils were made to believe in unchanging nature of authority, which ultimately dissuaded them from rational thinking. Prejudices and superstitions were accepted without any scrutiny.

There were vernacular schools for the common men. But only the sons of the traders got the opportunity to learn in such schools. Reading, writing, rudimentary knowledge of arithmetic, and religious interactions were rendered to them. The sons of lower caste people such as farmers were unable to get admission into these schools. In the religious instruction, pupils were trained to learn the teachings of Vedas, and to accept the caste system of the Hindu society. They also learnt the usefulness of moral virtue of showing utmost respect to the parents, teachers, village elders, and above all to the King. In fact, in such a learning environment, the pupils hardly got any scope and opportunity for the growth of their individuality. Consequently, from the very early stage of their life they were taught to be subdued as well as to accept the hierarchical order of the society. Muslims studied in the Madrassas where the medium of instruction was Arabic. In

some other schools, the students received the knowledge of vernaculars, Persian and other subjects.

It was in such a claustrophobic environment education in India was made available to the Indian people in the colonial regime under the British. Christian missionaries, British government and some western educated liberal Indians were responsible for the spread of modern education in India. In this regard, O'Malley (1941) said that the principal aim of the institution established by Christian missionaries was religion, but they also played vital role in spreading modern education in India (p. 139). However, the dissemination of modern education in India was made by the British government for the fulfilment of its political, economic and administrative needs. The initial move was taken by Lord Dalhousie. At that time, the British were able to conquer most parts of the Indian Territory, and established industries in the conquered land. To rule such a vast area of land, they needed strong administrative machinery. It was almost impossible for the British government to supply such a mammoth requirement of educated people with the knowledge of English to work in the administrative offices, industrial establishments, courts and other government institutions. Therefore, due to the urgent necessity, British government established schools and colleges in India to produce educated Indians who could cater to the needs of the government and commercial establishments. However, it is important to note that the educated Indians were primarily given subordinate posts of clerks, managers and agents.

Some liberal Indians also advocated for modern education in India. Gokhale, Tilak, Maganbhai Karamchand, Malaviya, Gandhi were some prominent Indians who supported modern education throughout India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy pioneered the demand for modern education as he thought that English education would inculcate



scientific and democratic thinking into the minds of the Indian people. Roy was against the indigenous system of education in Tols and Madrassas because such education only worked for the perpetuation of prejudice, superstition and the hierarchy of the society. In the words of Ram Mohan Roy:

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate their ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if that had been the policy of the British Legislature. (as cited in Desai, 1948, p. 131)

Every educated Indian of the period supported the modern education because it was anti-authoritarian and liberal, and it put stress on individual liberty, rejected blind faith and superstition, and also propagated rational thinking. However, one important aspect of modern education was that it was in English, and it brought about a chasm between the English educated Indian and the common masses. Again, this modern education was socially and culturally rooted in British life and it was unable to cope with the demand of Indian life and culture. Naturally, modern education in English glorified English life and culture, idealizing British rule and derided everything that was Indian. It also made the educated Indians to identify themselves with the life and culture of England.

It was observed that government neglected primary education for the Indian masses in village schools. They expected that educated Indians would impart knowledge and education to the illiterate masses as a duty. But such expectation was never fulfilled. In 1854, with Wood's Education Despatch, the modern education system had its formal

beginning, Woods Despatch had three objectives for Indian education system—firstly, it wanted to spread western culture; secondly it wanted trained educated persons for the public administration; and thirdly, the preparation of the Indians for the duty of the British government (Nurullah & Naik, 1943). The Despatch also stated the responsibility of the government for imparting education to the Indian masses and to women.

Thus, modern education was always disconnected from the ‘realities’ in India. The stigma of political servitude was never discussed, instead of it there was glorification of English life and culture portrayed through it. Social, cultural and economic backwardness of the Indian society was not at all a matter of concern, and the projection of India was always done in such a distorted manner that it weakened national pride. Modern education was imparted through the medium of English, which was never easy for the Indian students. In this regard, Shelvankar (1940) said that the aim of modern education system was:

To impress on middle class Indian youths the glory and grandeur of Britain and to train them to be competent servants of a foreign bureaucracy. It was vocational education with a vengeance; vocational education... which threw the weight of the curriculum on such matters as English syntax, Shakespearean prosody and the dates of the kings and queens, who had reigned over England.  
(pp. 54-55)

The attitude of the government regarding mass education only confirmed the belief that they were in India not for the much-required social up-lift but to siphon the resources of India for enriching the British Empire. Education was one of the elements of such

exploitation to economise the cost of producing a class of subordinate officials in India to serve the British administration and related institutions. According to B. C. Pal it was clear that "The British Government in India has, from the very beginning, tried to shape and control the course of public education, and the motive has always been to strengthen the foundations of their political authority in the country" (as cited in Buch, 1940, p.150). Therefore, pre-British and post-British education system in India was full of limitations and shortcomings. Education in India, during that period was never sufficient to root out the evils of the society. While pre-British education system merely maintained the status quo of the social evils and authority, the modern education system introduced by the British Government was mainly for vocational education of the Indian people for the interest of the administration and the industry. In fact, modern education system was not adequate in bringing in rational thinking to the India masses.

Among the characters of the novels selected for study, Bakha and Gangu were illiterate. Munoo of *C* studied up to class five and was hopeful of further study. Bakha was a latrine cleaner but he was yearning for education. Gangu was a landless peasant in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab province. Ananta, though there was no mention of his education in the novel, worked in Bombay and Ahmedabad, and he was familiar with trade union movements and understood the value of solidarity. Only Lal Singh studied up to class eight at Church Mission High School in Sherkot. Lal Singh and Ananta were aware of their position in the society because of their exposure into the outside world. Other characters were aware of their position in the society but they lacked necessary knowledge to give proper response to the immediate environment. In fact, as a whole, all the characters were devoid of satisfactory and complete modern education. Lal Singh could have attained complete modern education, had he not been threatened by

the landlord of his village. As they lacked systematic modern education, they were unable to interpret the reason behind their subjugation and exploitation. They accepted their position in the society without any probing into the root cause of their miserable state. Hence, this attempt to show lack of education as one prime reason for the spirit of rebellion being subdued in the characters mentioned.

### **Summing up:**

From the analysis done above, it has been observed that in Pre-Independence India, Caste and belief in Karma played very important part in moulding character and behaviour of man. These concepts of Caste and Karma were incorporated through the vernacular education system imparted to the learning masses in Tols and Maddrassas. After the introduction of modern education by the British, hope was widespread that the concept of Caste and karma would give way to reason. However, it is observed that modern education in India through the medium of English was a political move by the British government for the sake of perpetuating their colonial regime. So, Caste consciousness, belief in Karma philosophy, faulty education system—all these factors contributed to the subjugation of the Indian people in Pre-Independent India. Exploited and dominated by the society and by the rulers, the poor Indians hardly had any strength to oppose and revolt against the exploitative forces—be it social, political, and financial.

On the other hand, Mulk Raj Anand as a novelist believed in peaceful co-existence. He was never in support of rebellion and bloodshed. He was a humanist—a true lover of human dignity. His protagonists were from the lowest strata of the society. They were living human beings with the passion and love for life. Bakha, Munoo, Gangu, Lal

Singh and Ananta all were optimistic in their attitudes. They understood the value of just and dignified life, and therefore, they remained submissive and conformist in an unfriendly society. Against the violent social, political and economic exploitation, they were ineffective to voice their revolt. In fact, they understood the futility of the revolt against violent system supported by the power of ruling class. However, they were not mute at heart as they wanted to oppose the infringement of their rights but they could not materialise it into reality. Lal Singh became aware of the power of unity at the last part of *TSATS*, while Ananta was aware of it from the very beginning. Unfortunately, though, Lal Singh understood the need of unity, he only hoped for a better future by organising the peasants, Ananta failed to organise his community members from the initial stage. The discussion of the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand in the different chapters of this thesis shall be done against the background study on the various possible causes and results of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion, conducted in this chapter.

### **Reference:**

Anand, M. R. (1942). *Letters on India*. London: The Labour Book Service.

Anand, M. R. (1942). *The sword and the sickle: A Novel*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.

Anand, M. R. (1945). *Coolie*. London: The Penguin Books Limited.

Anand, M. R. (1945). *The big heart: a novel*. London: Hutchinson International Authors Ltd.

Anand, M. R. (1960). *The village*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

- Anand, M. R. (1968). The story of my experiment with a white lie. In M. K. Naik et al., (Eds.), *Critical essays on Indian writing in English*, Madras: MacMillan.
- Anand, M. R. (1976). *Confession of a lover*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Anand, M. R. (1981). *Untouchable*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.
- Anand, M. R. (1998). *Two leaves and a bud*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates, India Pvt. Ltd.
- Anand, M. R. (2008). *Across the black waters: A novel*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks.
- Barns, M. (1937). *The Indian press: a history of the growth of public opinion in India*. London: G. Allen and Unwin Limited.
- Buch, M. A. (1940). *Rise and growth of Indian militant nationalism*. Baroda: Atmaram Printing.
- Buchanan, D. H. (1934). *The development of capitalistic enterprise in India*. New York, Macmillan.
- Camus, A. (2000). *The rebel*. London: Penguin.
- Clooney, F. (1989). Evil, divine omnipotence, and human freedom: Vedanta's theology of karma. *Journal of Religion*.
- Das, R. K. (1934). Child labour in India. *International Labour Review*. Vol. XXVIII, No.6, Dec 1933, & Vol. XXIX, No.1, Jan 1934., Geneva.
- Desai, A. (1948). *Social background of Indian nationalism*. Mumbai: Popular Prakashan.
- Dube, S.C. (2015). *Indian society*, New Delhi: National Book Trust.

- Ghose, J. C. (ed). (1982). *The English works of Raja Rammohun Roy*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publication.
- Herman, A. (1976). *The problem of evil in Indian thought*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Hiriyanna, M. (1995). *The essentials of Indian philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Keyes, C. (1983). Merit-Transference in the karmic theory of popular Theravada Buddhism. In *Karma*, edited by Charles Keyes and Valentine Daniel. Berkeley: University of California press.
- Naik, M. K. (Ed.). (1968). *On Indian writing in English*. Madras: MacMillan.
- Nehru, J. (1936). *An autobiography*. London: The Bodley Head.
- Nururillah, S. & Naik, J. P. (1943). *History of education in India during the British period*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- O' Malley, L. S. S. (Ed.). (1941). *Modern India and the West*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Panandi, S. G. (1933). *Industrial labour in India*. Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (1923). *Indian Philosophy Vol. II*. London: Longman's Green & Company.
- Das, R. K. (1934). Child labour in India. *International Labour Review*, Vol.XXVIII, No.6, Dec 1933, & Vol.XXIX, No.1, Jan 1934., Geneva.
- Rao, N. P. (1981). *Fundamentals of Indian philosophy*. New Delhi: Indian Book Company.

Saini, B. S. (1975). *The social and economic history of the Punjab 1901-1939*. Delhi:  
ESS Publications.

Sharma, R. (1971). *Punjab in ferment*, New Delhi: S Chand & Co.

Shelvankar, K. S. (1940). *The problem of India*. London: Penguin Books Limited.

Lea, D. (Eds). *The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*.



## CHAPTER 3

### ***UNTOUCHABLE: THE RUTHLESSNESS OF THE CASTE SYSTEM***

I believe in the struggle – the struggle of man to free themselves and to expand freedom to others to sustain the ever expanding areas of consciousness, to make man truly human. (Anand, 1986, p. 25)

#### **Introduction:**

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the evils of untouchability as observed in Anand's first literary endeavour *Untouchable* (1981). The untouchables were barely treated as human because of their livelihood which was regarded polluting and unclean. The untouchables basically worked with the leather or cleaned human excreta. They were unable to live a life of freedom because in every walk of their life they faced severe social impediments. They were not allowed to draw water from the village wells nor were they allowed to enter into any temple. They had to live separately away from the living areas of the upper caste Hindus for fear of polluting them. The upper caste members of the society did not take any food items or even water from the untouchables. If any untouchable accidentally touched an upper caste Hindu, the caste Hindu would be required to go through purification rituals. The untouchables had to live a life of seclusion, segregating themselves from the normal day-to-day life of the society. They accepted their lot, regarding it as their sins of past lives. In fact, they complied with the norms of the society without making any visible disagreement. It is against such a background, Mulk Raj Anand made an untouchable the protagonist of his novel *U*. Discussion of the novel in this chapter shall be made keeping the main

argument of the thesis in minds. Further, the novel shall be analysed on the basis of the prevailing norms of the society regarding untouchability and how Anand's characters in the novel reacted or showed their resentments against it.

Anand passed his early childhood in army cantonment as his father worked in the British Indian Army. Inside the cantonment, he befriended many lower caste boys- who were sons of low caste people like scavengers, cobblers, washermen, bandsmen etc. Of course, Anand's mother was unable to tolerate such friendship with the untouchables. But, he went on continuing with his friendship with them. Amongst such untouchable friends, he was fascinated by the talent of an untouchable boy. This untouchable boy showed his variegated talent in different fields which was quite unusual. The boy was a wonderful singer as well as an able sportsman. Anand was quite impressed by his talent. But as the boy was an untouchable, his talent remained hidden from the outside world. In fact, the untouchable boy could not dream of excelling in his skill. His fate was painful and frustrating for young Anand. It was unacceptable for Anand and he regarded it an injustice done to the untouchable boy. For many years, Anand was disturbed by the boy's fate as he could not reconcile with, "the contradiction between the inborn qualities of this youth and the down and out status to which he was condemned" (Anand, 1968, p. 6). In England, when he decided to try his hand in writing novels, this lingering sense of injustice done to the untouchable boy prompted him to make him the protagonist of his novel *U*. His attempt of writing his first novel on that untouchable boy was as if to satisfy his deep rooted desire of doing something for that untouchable boy who was much wronged by the caste-ridden society. When he was able to complete the novel *U*, Anand said that it had "thrown off the weight of

centuries, hidden feeling of oppression, disgust and horror against insults, off one's chest" (Anand, 1968, p. 8).

### **A Brief Outline of the Novel:**

In *U*, Anand portrays a day in the life a sweeper boy whose name is Bakha. The novel is about Bakha's gradual self-realisation of his caste and the stigma of untouchability associated with it. Bakha lives in the outcaste's colony outside the town of Bulandshahr. In the mud-walled houses of the colony, lived the outcastes: "the scavengers, leather workers, washermen, barbers, water-carriers, grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society" (Anand, 1981, p. 11). The colony was totally unhygienic to live in because it lacked drainage system, lanes were covered with donkey, sheep, horse, cow and buffalo dung, and the air is filled with the odious smell of hides and skins of dead carcasses. Bakha lived his simple life with his brother Rakha, his sister Sohini and his father Lakha who was the Jemadar of all the sweepers. Because of his old age, Lakha stopped his work of latrine cleaning, and left it for his eighteen year old son Bakha. Bakha's family lived in a very unhygienic condition in a small and dark cottage. His father Lakha accepted the caste realities without any protest. But Bakha found it hard to understand why he couldn't get due respect as a human being in spite of working very hard all day long from the dawn to the dusk. He was fascinated by the manners of the Tommies as they treated him amiably. He also had fondness for his friend as they called him as 'Pilpali Shahib' due to his English attire.

As a scavenger, Bakha was efficient and quick in his work. The havildar Charat Singh liked Bakha's alacrity of latrine cleaning. He praised Bakha and promised to give him a hockey stick as reward. Bakha's sister Sohini had very attractive physical features,

following which she faced many injustices because of her young age and attractiveness. Bakha and his sister Sohini were destined to suffer from various unfair treatments from the caste ridden society because of their ancestral work of scavenging. One day, he accidentally touched a high-caste Hindu for which he was insulted and beaten. Then, his sister Sohini also faced an attempt of molestation by the village priest Pundit Kali Nath at the temple on the pretext of helping her. Bakha was helpless because he was aware of the fact that he could do nothing. When he went for the customary begging trip to have food items, a high caste Hindu woman threw down a piece of bread to Bakha from the balcony of her house.

Such inhuman treatment and humiliations were really intolerable for Bakha. He went on facing them without any complaint but it burned his inner being considerably. He faced the humiliation without any complaint but inwardly he burned in fury. His frustration was unlimited because of the insults he faced throughout the day. He was sad and heartbroken. He met the Salvation Army chief Colonel Hutchinson who asked him to come to the church to pacify his disturbed mind. But Colonel Hutchinson's soothing words were ineffective in pacifying his indignation at the society. Later, he went to Golbagh where he got the chance to listen to Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi's embalmng words uttered in support of the untouchables were really thrilling for Bakha. He was fascinated by the support Mahatma promised for the untouchables. But his anguished heart was pacified when the poet Iqbal Nath Sarashar mentioned the modern invention of flush system in latrines. At last, Bakha became hopeful of finding a solution to the curse of his low birth with the advent of scientific flush system.

### **Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in *Untouchable*:**

In *U*, the central character Bakha was dissatisfied with his life from the very beginning. Time and again, he had been expressing his discontent towards the inhuman treatment meted out to him and his fellow beings. He was an untouchable, but at the same time, he was a jovial young man with all the characteristic dreams and wishes. Unlike his fellow untouchables, he never learnt to see himself as an untouchable. He wanted to be a Babu because his uncle told him about the life style of a Babu. Sometimes, he was fascinated by the British sepoy and tried to imitate them by living like them or dressing like them. All the trials and tribulations of life made him aware of his untouchable status in the society. It was the grim reality of being an untouchable which haunted him like anything. His sufferings made him strong, but at the same time, it also made him aware of the difficulties of an untouchable. He realised that his caste would never let him live a free life and he was to carry the baggage of discontent throughout his entire life.

Bakha's predicament in the caste ridden society of India was the driving force of the actions of the novel. The reader is made to look at the bleak world of Bulandshahr through the perspectives of Bakha and occasionally through his old ailing father Lakha. In *U*, Bakha became the prototype of the untouchables. Anand's delineation of Bakha is clear and sympathetic. In this regard, E. M. Forster remarked:

*Untouchable* could only have been written by an Indian, and by an Indian who observed from the outside. No European, however sympathetic could have created the character of Bakha, because he would not have known enough about

has troubles. And no untouchable could have written the book, because he would have been involved in indignation and self-pity. (Anand, 1981, p. 9)

In *U*, Anand is critical about the prejudices of ossified Hindu society regarding the treatment meted out to the untouchables. Forster could not resist himself from expressing the following:

The Indians...have evolved a hideous nightmare unknown to the west: the belief that the products are ritually unclean as well as physically unpleasant, and that those who carry them away or otherwise help to dispose of them are outcastes from society. Really, it takes the human mind to evolve anything so devilish. No animal could have hit on it. (Anand, 1981, p. 8)

Anand understood the psychology of the upper caste Hindus as he was also one amongst them. They were proud of their class superiority over the other castes from the ancient times. In this regard he said: “The Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the two upper castes in Hindu society, justify their superiority by asserting that they have earned their position by the good deeds of multiple lives” (Anand, 1981, p. 17). For these upper castes, untouchables were non-existent for cultural mix-up. They were regarded as subhuman beings, treated with cruelty, and exploited ruthlessly. They refused to accept the untouchables as human beings, ignored them, bullied them and exploited them at will.

The protagonist of the novel, Bakha had to face numerous difficulties in society due to his caste. He was totally oblivious of the stigma of untouchability and so he wanted to live his life to the brim. He had an indomitable desire to play hockey and when Havildar Charat Singh offered to give him a hockey stick he was overjoyed. He was

full of gratitude and characteristic servility of a slave was observable in him. He showed: “the weakness of the down-trodden, the helplessness of the poor and the indigent suddenly receiving help, the passive contentment of the bottom dog suddenly illuminated by the prospect of fulfillment of a secret and long cherished desire” (Anand, 1981, p. 20). The untouchables accepted their humiliating position without any apparent show of dissatisfaction. They were censored through out the ages. Such censorship often put indelible impressions on their body and mind. Therefore, Forster remarked: “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 cannot escape” (Anand, 1981, p. 8). In the novel, the betel-leaf seller flings the packet of cigarette at Bakha because he was an untouchable. The betel-leaf-sellers action was like: “a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing round the corner of his shop” (Anand, 1981, p. 48).

Son of a scavenger, Bakha was destined to clean dung. He lived near dung all his life. The untouchables were doomed to suffer in perpetual untouchability. They were also not aware of any let out from this trap leading to their endless social ostracism. Most of the untouchables accepted their miserable lot without making any protest. Bakha’s father Lakha was one such untouchable who was unable to think of changing his lot of facing inhuman treatment from the upper caste Hindus. Bakha was inexperienced, so he was unable to tolerate the humiliation he received from the high caste Hindus. His sister Sohini went to the village well to fetch water for him. But she had to wait for a kind-hearted high caste Hindu helping her in filling her pitchers because untouchables were not allowed to draw water from the well. The public well was crowded with untouchables waiting for their turn to fill their pitchers. In this regard Anand remarked:

“if they were to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the nearby brook as their use of it would contaminate the stream” (Anand, 1981, p. 26). Facing such humiliating treatment, the untouchables could never think of a dignified life in the society where they had been living.

As a jovial young boy, Bakha wanted to go to school because he wanted to become a sahib but his father did not fulfill his wish. His father told him: “schools were meant for the babus, not for the bhangis” (Anand, 1981, p. 45). It was later when he could understand the reason of his father’s refusal to send him to school. It was really pathetic for him to understand that:

He was a sweeper’s son and could never be a babu. Later still he realized that there was no school which would admit him, because the parents of the other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of a sweeper’s son. (Anand, 1981, p. 45)

Then in the town, Bakha faced terrible humiliation and physical abuse when he accidentally touched an upper caste Hindu in the street. The man created a scene because he was polluted by Bakha’s touch. In anger, he slapped Bakha on the face undoing his turban. Bakha was spell bound at such an atrocity:

He stood aghast. Then his whole countenance lit with fire and his hands were no more joined. Tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. The cumulated strength of his giant body glistened in him with the desire for revenge, while horror, rage, indignation swept over his frame. (Anand, 1981, p. 57)



But there was no scope of revolt for the untouchables. He could have fled away from the scene but he did not do so because such an action on his part would have created much disturbances. Many upper caste men who surrounded him would have been defiled by his touch:

...he was surrounded by a barrier, not a physical barrier, because one push from his hefty shoulders would have been enough to unbalance the skeleton-like bodies of the onlookers, but a moral one. He knew that contact with him, if he pushed through, would defile a great many more of these men. (Anand, 1981, p. 54)

After this incident, the bitter reality dawned upon Bakha, and most pathetically he treaded on the road shouting at the pedestrian cautioning them about his approach: "Posh, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming, and posh, posh sweeper coming!"(Anand, 1981, p. 57). Such inhuman abuses and humiliations were familiar occurrence for the untouchables. But for Bakha it was new and so he could not reconcile such treatment and a faint shade of rebellion was observable in him. His introspection in this regard was indeed heart touching:

They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines everyday. That's why they don't touch us, the high-castes. (Anand, 1981, p.58)

Later, in a show of defiance he entered into the temple which he was unable to think of earlier. There was curiosity in his heart regarding the temple because he never in his life

entered in to a temple. His determination was like that of a murderer in his attempt to enter into the temple. But such courage on his part was momentary, because:

...he soon lost his grace in the low stoop which the dead weight of years of habitual bending cast on him. He became the humble, oppressed underdog that he was by birth, afraid of everything, creeping slowly up, in a curiously hesitant, cringing movement. After he had mounted the first two steps, he stood completely demoralized with fear and retreated to the place from which he had started. (Anand, 1981, p. 66)

There was more surprise waiting for him when he met his sister Sohini, who told him how the temple priest Pundit Kali Nath attempted to molest her. Pundit Kali Nath claimed himself to be a Brahmin belonging to the highest rank of the caste hierarchy but he could descend himself to the lowest level by attempting to molest an untouchable girl Sohini, Bakha's sister. Physically and mentally he was not fit to cohabit with a woman, but he was "brazened by the authority he exercised over the faithful and the devout" (Anand, 1981, p.33). He ogled at her as he was sure that he could do anything with Sohini without having the risk of any punishment. On learning about this misadventure of Pundit Kali Nath, Bakha was enraged and he even threatened to kill him. "I will go and kill him" (Anand, 1981, p. 71). But his rage was limited only to his thinking to taking revenge on the dishonest Pandit. It was only a verbal threatening. He was unable to attempt physical violence because he could not overcome the psychological barrier created by thousand years of oppression:

He could not overstep the barriers which the conventions of his superiors had built up to protect their weaknesses against him. He could not invade the magic

circle which protects a priest from attack by anybody, especially a low-caste man. So in the highest moment of his strength, the slave in him asserted itself, and he lapsed back, wild with torture, biting his lips, ruminating his grievances. (Anand, 1981, p. 73)

It was a pathetic condition for Bakha. He wanted to take revenge but he could not because he was shackled by an abstract intangible power. It was a psychological barrier which restrained him to go against the high caste Hindus. To say it precisely: “serfdom of thousands of years had humbled him” (Anand, 1981, p. 73).

Bakha and his family members were surviving on the left over foods given to them by the wealthy upper caste Hindu families. They used to collect left over food items from the upper caste Hindu households and from army barracks. His sister Sohini used to do that in the silversmith’s lane. But on the day when she was molested by Pundit Kali Nath, Bakha decided to do that work for his family. It was really humiliating to collect food by crying loudly: “Bread for the sweeper, mother. Bread for the sweeper” (Anand, 1981, p. 76). Unfortunately, in this activity also Bakha faced derision and abuse for polluting the place by resting on the doorstep of an upper caste Hindu household. The woman of the house vilified him:

Why did you sit down on my doorstep, if you had to sit down at all? You have defiled my religion! You should have sat there in the gully. Now I will have to sprinkle holy water all over the house. Spoiler of my salt! Oh, how terrible! (Anand, 1981, p. 81)

Then, she flung the bread to him from the top of her house as she didn’t like to come down. As ill luck would have it, the pancake fell down on the brick pavement of the

gully. Such behaviour was insulting and it eroded his self-esteem. Later, he muttered: “I shouldn’t have picked up that bread from the pavement” (Anand, 1981, p. 84). His mind and soul really suffered from great damage due to this type of insult and humiliation.

After these incidents, he was crestfallen and he wanted to discuss his ordeals with somebody. When his father sympathetically asked him about the reason of his indolence, he told him every thing. He was full of discontent regarding the manners of the upper caste Hindus. His father’s response was not supportive to alleviate his anguish. Lakha was worldly wise as life made him experienced enough and so he inquired how such an incident could happen. Repeatedly he asked his son whether he shouted customarily about his approach while treading on the road. When he learnt all about the incident, Lakha asked him not to show any dissent against the upper caste Hindus. Lakha told him:

No, no, my son, no,...we can’t do that. They are our superiors. One word of theirs is sufficient against all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us. Some of them are kind.  
(Anand, 1981, p. 90)

Lakha was also anxious about his son’s anger as he could possibly hit back by abusing the caste Hindus. He believed that the untouchables should not act against the atrocities perpetrated on them by the high caste Hindus. In utter frustration, Bakha shouted:

They would ill treat us, even if we shouted. They think we are mere dirt, because we clean their dirt. That pundit in the temple tried to molest Sohini and then came shouting: ‘Polluted, polluted.’ The woman of the big house in the

silversmith's gully threw the bread at me from the fourth storey. I won't go down to the town again. I have done with this job. (Anand, 1981, p. 89)

To pacify Bakha's anguished heart, Lakha referred to a nasty incident that happened to him when Bakha was a little child. His son was ill with fever and he wanted medicine for his son. When he went to meet Hakim Bhagawan Das for the medicine for his son, he was not allowed to enter into his chamber because he was an untouchable. He requested everybody to inform the Hakim to come to see the well being of his son but nobody showed any interest in him. Later, to save Bakha's life he forcefully entered into the Hakim's chamber for which the Hakim chastised him severely. Lakha told his son that the Hakim behaved very rudely with him. But the same Hakim visited his house later and saved his son's life. Therefore, he told his son: "No, no,...they are really kind. We must realize that it is religion which prevents them from touching us" (Anand, 1981, p. 93).

In this way, Bakha was made to realise that caste had been a dominant system in the Indian society which could not be changed. In this regard, the remark of Marlene Fisher is noteworthy:

Bakha actually does very little. He neither leads an insurrection nor runs away nor tries actively to change his circumstances. The actual social and economic conditions of the youth's existence were, after all, facts, and Anand was much too grounded in Indian social reality to ignore or gloss over such facts. (Fisher, 1985, p. 27)

After facing many insults from different quarters, Bakha met Colonel Hutchinson, chief of the local Salvation Army whose primary mission was to convert the Indians to

Christianity. He received pity and sympathy from the colonel, but his discontented heart could not get any solace from him. Interestingly, it seemed he could understand the real motif of the colonel, as he said: “The Sahib probably wanted to convert him to his religion. He didn’t want to be converted” (Anand, 1981, p. 143). In fact, he was afraid of the colonel in the later part of their conversation because it seemed to him that the colonel had hidden agenda for talking to him. Again, when the colonel’s wife Mary referred to them as dirty Bhangis and Chamars, at once he realised that their caste was the matter of contention for everyone. Bakha could only show his exasperation through these words: “Everyone thinks us at fault” (Anand, 1981, p. 148). It was really pathetic for Bakha to face humiliation again and again.

Bakha as an untouchable became very conscious of his lowest position in the society. In Golbagh, when Mahatma Gandhi was delivering his lecture, Bakha was captivated by the support of India’s most influential national leader to the cause of removing the scar of untouchability from society. At the same time, he also realised that in spite of having sympathy for them, Mahatma also blamed them through his last words:

They should now cease to accept leavings from the plates of high-caste Hindus, however clean they may be represented to be. They should receive grain only-good, sound grain, not rotten grain-and that too, only if it is courteously offered. If they are able to do all that I have asked them to do, they will secure their emancipation. (Anand, 1981, p. 165)

Bakha’s final impression of Gandhi was like this: “To be sure, he is a good man” (Anand, 1981, p.167). Mahatma was the first person who supported the untouchables with an open heart. Through out the day, Bakha was subjected to various exploitations

which led to his sheer hopelessness. The smouldering discontent of Bakha was somewhat pacified by Mahatma's call for a casteless society.

After soothed by the talks of Gandhi, Bakha met the poet Iqbal Nath Sarashar and the Barrister-at-Law R.N. Bashir. They were debating over Mahatma's speech at Golbagh. Bashir was critical of Gandhi's ideology while the poet was supporting him. According to Bakha, poet Iqbal was very much clear about the menace of social evils like untouchability. The poet opined that the caste had been a kind of luxury for the intellectuals at the cost of the happiness and well being of the untouchables. To live a democratic life one must dispense with the mechanical formulas and stereotyped forms of the society. With his practical outlook, the poet was able to offer a realistic solution to the problem of untouchability:

We must destroy caste, we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone. The Mahatma didn't say so, but the legal and social basis of caste having been broken down by the British-Indian penal code, which recognises the rights of every man before court, caste is now mainly governed by profession. When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain untouchables. And they can do that soon, for the first thing we will do when we accept the machine will be to introduce the machine which clears dung without anyone having to handle it- the flush system. Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society. (Anand, 1981, p. 173)

Bakha was thrilled at the hope of getting liberation from the curse of untouchability with the use of flush in the latrines. There were questions in his mind about such a machine which could bring respectability to the lives of the untouchables. He decided to tell his father about Gandhi's support to the untouchables. He also wanted to give the information of new hope coming in the form of machine to his father on his reaching home. In this regard, Asnani (1985) commented: "Anand has offered neither solutions nor his preferences. He has merely suggested a choice of possibilities" (p.14).

In this way, Bakha- the untouchable had to face many humiliations because of his birth in a particular caste. The sufferings of Bakha and his entire family at the hands of upper caste Hindus was shocking and inhuman. Humiliations and subjugations confronted by them were not particular to them; such treatments were meted out to all the untouchables. The members of upper caste Hindus were relentless in depriving the untouchables their rights of dignified living. Bakha was full of resentment and discontent representing the indignation and annoyance of the large section of untouchables. It is observed that on the basis of the purity and pollution principle, Bakha and his fellow beings were tormented and exploited without any inhibition. The terrible condition in which untouchables were forced to live can only be understood when we would go through the pages of the novel *U*.

In the ancient times, the rules of purity and pollution might have been just and necessary for the smooth conduct of the society, but when we look at the practical application of these rules in the contemporary Indian society, we will be able to realise the horror of it as these rules are applied on our fellow human beings. As a creative writer, Anand's portrayal of the lives of the untouchables definitely touches the inner



chords of every sensible man and woman of the society. In this regard, it is pertinent to quote Ketaki Goswami:

Anand's humanistic zeal is expressed through a host of negative pictures of the society. Excepting the Gandhi and, to some extent, the padre episodes, all others are bleak pictures of a tabooed society. Mental dirt and material/physical dirt coexist side by side in the world Bakha inhabits. (Goswami, 2009, p. 36)

In *U*, Bakha becomes a glaring example of the suffering youth of the untouchable community. The hopes and dreams of Bakha were same with every other youth of his time. His discontents were at work to expose the menace of untouchability in the pre-Independent Indian society. Bakha's discontent against the obsessively guarded ritualised rules of caste hierarchy was justified because it approved of the sufferings of the untouchables leading to their dehumanisation. Thus, Anand's first novel *U* became a living testament of the pain, misery and distress of the untouchables of India. The novel most faithfully represented the realities of the hardships confronted by the untouchables in their day to day life through the character of Bakha. Iyengar makes a pertinent remark about the enduring interest and perennial value of this book:

*Untouchable* strikes us as the picture of a place, of a society, and of certain persons not easily to be forgotten: a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy. (Iyengar, 2001, p. 339)

In fact, this particular orthodoxy which Iyengar refers to is horrifying. Bakha and his fellow untouchables were submerged in the rigours of caste system. It was indeed difficult for the untouchables to give vent to their pent up feelings and discontents.

However, it was Bakha who at least tried to express his exasperation through his monologues which sometimes seemed to be like expression of self-pity.

It can be stated that in *U*, all the untouchables accepted their position in the society. Lakha, Rakha, Sohini and other untouchables readily accepted that they were untouchables and therefore they should maintain detachment from the high caste Hindus. They never tried to question the orthodox rituals of the Hindu society. It was only Bakha who always overlooked the customs of the Hindu society which debarred the untouchables from coming into contact with the high caste Hindus. But such an attitude on his part could never be regarded as a rebellion against the social norms of the society. It is true, whenever he faced an adverse reaction from any member of the high caste Hindu society he was angry and inwardly showed his discontent. But he never tried to expand the periphery of his discontent. In fact, he was a lonely figure amongst the untouchables who used to look deep into the norms of orthodox Hindu society and found them inhuman and prejudicial. He never liked his vocation of cleaning the latrines and he expressed it candidly whenever he got chance. That is why, he was elated when the poet Sarashar talked about the flush system to remove all the Harijans from the task of cleaning the latrines. Bakha thought they would be able save themselves from the stigma of untouchability when the flush system would be introduced to the latrines. So, it is clear that Bakha is not a rebel against the social system but a conscious untouchable who could dare to think of discontent against the severe rules of caste system and its results. He could have fought against the caste system had he been an educated young man with the knowledge of the way of the world. Whenever he faced humiliating situation, he asked himself many questions which remained unanswered. He was not having any let out from the web of the caste

system which entwined him and his fellow untouchables in a python grip. At the altar of the caste system, Bakha was a sacrificial lamb. R.S. Singh remarked in this regard: “Between the struggle of the individual and society Bakha is always defeated...Anand’s feeling that individual protest would not change the social order gets recorded in Bakha’s passive acceptance of his destiny” (Singh, n.d., p. 42).

### **Summing up:**

Thus, from the discussion done above, it has been observed that the untouchables were always segregated from the mainstream life of the society. They were secluded as their touch and contact could contaminate and pollute the life of the upper caste Hindus. They could not even draw water from any natural water bodies and public wells. It is not surprising that no untouchable could dare to challenge this social norm. Instead the untouchables did their best to satisfy the upper caste Hindus by showing their servile humility in accepting these rules. It is also observed in the course of the study that Anand portrayed the character of Bakha, keeping in mind the actual social ambience of the society of his time. The rigidity and strictness of the caste system was such that the outcastes and lower castes had to face discrimination in every step of their life. It was as if they were not human beings but beasts of burdens.

The majority of them believed that even if some day they would vanish from the earth, there would not be any harm to the human race. For thousands of years, they had been subjected to discrimination on the basis of caste, the result of which is very severe because whatever is portrayed in *U* may be fictional but the suffering of the untouchable in the caste ridden Indian society is very much real. They had been deprived of all the amenities of civilised life. The untouchables were given secluded

place away from the high caste people to live in. They were not allowed to draw water from the public well and also needed to shout out loud about their approach on the road. They were not permitted to worship in the religious place where clean and noble jatis used to go etc. These are instances of a few injustices done to them which got revealingly expressed in *U*. Though there was no frequent dissatisfaction amongst the untouchables, occasionally they showed their discontent when situation demanded. Apart from Bakha, his father Lakha also once violated the norms of the caste system when he entered into the Hakim's chamber to get medicine for dying Bakha. There is no denying that the untouchables are obsequious to the demands of the society regarding caste, but at the same time, it is also true that only in extreme conditions they expressed their anguish and discontent.

Bakha and his father showed their discontent when they were pushed to the wall. In normal condition they very much acquiesced to the demands of the society. They never questioned the demands of the upper caste Hindu people. In fact, they could not think of bringing about a revolution against the harsh treatment meted out to them in the cruellest manner. They were illiterate and therefore unable to find out the manner of raising their voices against exploitation and injustice. Even when his sister was molested by the priest, Bakha could not rise to the occasion because he was conditioned to accept the atrocities of the caste ridden Hindu society. Opposition and rejection of the system never entered into his mind. Whatever he expressed against the caste system was only preliminary to the rejection of the system. But his feelings never got the opportunity of a proper organisation which was very necessary for revolt. The germ of rejection was there in his mind which might one day get a considerable proportion to be

termed as a complete rejection of the caste system. In fact, Bakha's spirit of rebellion was in a nascent stage, it needed time for growing into a full-fledged rebellion.

While concluding, it is pertinent to quote Anand regarding his views on Bakha:

In *Untouchable* I meant to recreate the lives of the millions of untouchables through one single person, in only one incident, the slap on the face of the hero. Now, the slap on the face evoked all the human relations. Or many human relations, of the sixty-five millions of people whom the hero represents, against the millions of caste Hindus. The essence of the situation of Bakha lies in this insult, as in Dostoevsky's *Insulted and Injured*, as in Tolstoy's *Hadji Murad*. Hadji Murad is a rebel chief, a conscious rebel, who is aware of what he is doing. But, Bakha is an incoherent mass of flesh, just dimly aware of the potential of human dignity. And, therefore, the expression of that delicate feeling of poetry of the imagination, of this so called unimaginative person is revealed, or suggested, in so far as he is aware of his own potential for loving and not being loved. (Rajan, 1986, p. 103)

Although the novel *U* failed to get an adequate readership which was mostly motivated by politics, his international audience did react favourably to the book. Hailing the novel as a minor classic, T. D. Brunton (1968) considered this novel as the testimony to Anand's already preached goal of learning about the self as human being as well as about the value of Indian social life. As already mentioned, E. M. Forster, whom Anand regarded as his most revered teacher, also stated that,

“*Untouchable* could only have been written by an Indian, and by an Indian who observed from the outside. No European, however sympathetic, could have

created the character of Bakha, because he would not have known enough about his troubles. And no untouchable could have written the book, because he would have been involved in indignation and self-pity” (Anand, 1981, p. vi).

Mulk Raj Anand’s literary forte lies in the fact that he succeeds in making Bakha stoical but with a smile to laugh at the so called Hindu society. Bakha felt “vaguely ashamed and self conscious at being seen buying sweets” (Anand, 1981, p.51) because his consciousness was shackled by the guilt of working in the polluted occupational environment.

## **References:**

- Anand, M. R. (1968). The story of my experiment with a white lie. In M. K. Naik et al. (Ed.), *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*. Madras: MacMillan.
- Anand, M. R. (1981). *Untouchable*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.
- Anand, M. R. (1986). *Apology for heroism*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Asnani, S. M. (1985). *Critical response to Indian English fiction*. Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Brunton, T. D. (1968). India in fiction. In Naik, M. K., Desai S. K. & Amur, G. S. (Eds.). *Critical essays on Indian writing in English*. Dharwar, India: Karnatak University Press.
- Fisher, M. (1985). *The wisdom of the heart: A study of the works of Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

- Goswami, K. (2009). *Mulk Raj Anand: Early novels*. New Delhi: PHI Learning.
- Gupta, G. S. B. (1974). *Mulk Raj Anand: A study of his fiction in humanist perspective*.  
Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot.
- Hemenway, S. I. (1975). *The novel of India, Vol. 2, the Indo Anglian novel*. Calcutta: A  
Writer's Workshop Publication.
- Iyengar, K.R.S. (2001). *Indian writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Naik, M. K. (1973). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Rajan, P.K. (1986). *Studies in Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
- Singh, R.S. (n.d.). *Indian novel in English: A critical study*. New Delhi: Arnold-  
Heinemann.

## CHAPTER 4

### *COOLIE AND TWO LEAVES AND A BUD: THE 'SAGA' OF THE COOLIES*

#### **Introduction:**

In pre-Independent India, there was rampant exploitation of the poor labourers who worked in the cotton industries and the tea gardens. Though law forbade it, the parents often let their underage sons and daughters work inside the industries and tea gardens to enhance the family earnings. The womenfolk also came forward to work with their husbands so that they could live a comfortable life. However, they had to face various abuses at the hands of their employers. The labourers received wage payments for their work. The meagre amount of wage the workers received was not sufficient to live with ease. Often, the labourers were forced to borrow money from the moneylenders to make both ends meet. The practice of borrowing money at high rate of interest from the moneylenders led the labourers into trouble, as they could not repay their loan in time. Moreover, the labourers had to satisfy the foremen and the sardars of the industry for their jobs by giving bribes. The labourers were in constant fear of losing their jobs in the industry if they failed to bribe the foremen who served as the intermediaries between the authority and the labourers. Hence, they wielded great power over the labourers.

Besides, the plantation labourers were duped into the plantation sites by the sardars who helped the plantation authority by bringing labourers from distant places by offering false promises of land and other rewards. The plantation authority preferred the family as a whole to work in the plantations. When the labourers reached the plantation



site, they were almost regarded as prisoners. The wage of the plantation labourers was lesser than the industrial labourers. Very young children were also employed in the tea plantations. The labourers often faced physical abuse from the sardars and the managers if they tried to disagree with the authority. The women labourers suffered from sexual exploitation at the hands of the managers of the tea gardens. They lived in very unhygienic condition, which often led to their premature death. In fact, the plantation labourers were forced to live a hellish life inside the tea plantation gardens.

Mulk Raj Anand's two early novels—*Coolie* and *Two Leaves and A Bud* provide a realistic portrayal of the exploitation of the poor labourers and their real hard work. These labourers were forced to accept a meagre amount of wage for their hard work following which they were unable to live a healthy life. They suffered mutely without staging any protest against their exploitation. It is on the basis of such a gory background that this chapter shall attempt to analyse the condition of the labourers in the household work, inside the industry, and in the tea plantation gardens. The level of discontent of the labourers caused by their exploitation, and the manner in which they react to such exploitations are also sought to be explored with textual references.

### **Brief Outline of the Novels:**

*C* is the tragic story of an adolescent boy Munoo. The novel is centred round the character called Munoo whose parents were dead, and so he was living with his uncle Daya Ram. To improve his financial condition, Daya Ram took Munoo to Sham Nagar and put him under the custody of Babu Nathoo Ram as a domestic help. In Sham Nagar, Munoo had to face the inhuman treatment of Nathoo Ram and his wife Bibi Uttam Kaur. Unable to bear such treatment, he fled to Daulatpur. On his journey to

Daulatpur, he met a kind-hearted person Prabha Dayal and lived with him. Prabha Dayal had a pickle making industry and Munoo started to work there. Prabha and his wife Parbati showered their love on Munoo. However, Prabha's business collaborator Ganpat made life difficult for Munoo. Ganpat cheated Prabha leading to the closure of the pickle factory. Munoo's ill luck returned as Prabha had to leave for his native place on doctor's advice to regain his health.

From Daulatpur, Munoo went to Bombay to have a better future. He was fascinated by the enchanting stories of affluence in Bombay. However, soon he became aware of the hard realities of city life. In Bombay, he met an old man Hari and his family. With the assistance of Hari, he got a job in Sir George White Cotton Factory. While working in the Cotton Mill, he made friendship with Ratan the wrestler. Ratan influenced Munoo a great deal which might have resulted in the emergence of a more mature Munoo, but the communal riot in Bombay brought about an abrupt end to their relationship. Amidst the riot, Munoo met with an accident, and Mrs. Mainwaring brought him to Simla. In Simla, as a domestic help and rickshaw puller of Mrs. Mainwaring, he lived a very hard miserable life. Such hard work took toil on him and the condition of his health deteriorated considerably. Finally, he breathed his last suffering from tuberculosis. In *C*, "Anand's indictment is against the society as a whole...The economic exploitation of the proletariat by a few egoistic, irrational, inhuman and cruel individuals very succinctly becomes the essence of Munoo's misfortunes" (Asnani, 1985, p.16).

The other novel *TLAB* began with the protagonist of the novel Gangu's journey along with his wife Sajni, son and daughter Buddhu and Leila from his native place Hoshiarpur to Macpherson tea estate in Assam. Sardar Buta lured them to Assam telling them about the tea estate utopia. However, Gangu and his family members worked very

hard to earn their livelihood. While working in the tea-estate, he lost his wife Sajni during the outbreak of malarial epidemic. He was so poor that he was unable to collect money to bear the expenses of her funeral rites. He asked for help from every quarter but none helped him in his ordeal. Later, he went to the village bania to borrow money in interest. Gangu suffered a lot because of the exploitation of the moneylenders and the landlords. There was a sudden quarrel in the tea-estate between two coolie women, which resulted in a riot. The Assistant Manager Reggie Hunt put down the quarrel ruthlessly. The coolies went to meet the Manager of the tea-estate Mr. Croft Cooke to seek redress to their grievances. However, it was observed as an indication of the impending mutiny and therefore, the police and the army were summoned. The kindhearted English doctor De La Havre was sacked from his service for supporting the cause of the coolies. Later, Gangu's daughter Leila fell a victim to the evil desire of Reggie Hunt. He was a womaniser and unable to control his lust, he chased Leila to her hut. Gangu arrived there to rescue his daughter from the clutches of Reggie. However, he was killed by Reggie mercilessly. In the trial, Reggie was acquitted by Justice Mowberly and a jury by majority votes. Thus, the novel *TLAB* tells the story of exploitation of the poor working class people. In exposing the social evils of his time, Anand handled the theme of exploitation very realistically.

### **Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and A Bud*:**

Munoo of *C*, was an orphan boy from Kangra hills. His father was a peasant whose plot of land was usurped by the landlord of the village:

He had heard of how the landlord had seized his father's five acres of land because the interest on the mortgage covering the unpaid rent had not been forthcoming when the rains had been scanty and the harvests bad. (Anand, 1993, p. 2)

His uncle and aunt, both of them treated him cruelly, and to improve their financial condition, he was almost sold out to Nathoo Ram. At the tender age of fourteen, his uncle dislodged him from his native village. At that moment, he was studying at the fifth standard. Had he completed his study, he could have shown better understanding in handling the course of events in his later life. Without education, his actions were mainly governed by instincts.

When Munoo reached town with his uncle, he knew that a different life was waiting for him: "Perhaps the customs in the towns are different" (Anand, 1993, p. 13). He became a domestic help in the household of a Bank sub-accountant Babu Nathoo Ram in Sham Nagar. His wife Bibi Uttam Kaur was very cruel. She debarred him from taking part in any celebration in the family. He was not even allowed to use the toilet as he was a rustic. He was turned into a slave from all respects. She told him: "You are being paid a good wage, more money than you ever saw in your whole life in the village, more money, in fact, than your mother or father ever saw" (Anand, 1993, p. 23). Her continuous nagging made Munoo feel: "He was to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten..." (Anand, 1993, p. 31).

The cruel behaviour of Nathoo Ram and his wife forced Munoo to approach his uncle Daya Ram, who had little sympathy for him to listen to his requests. He said: "You are their servant...You must not mind what they say. You must grow up and work. You

have had too easy a life at home” (Anand, 1993, p. 32). In fact, he threatened to kill Munoo if he would refuse to live in Nathoo Ram’s household. Daya Ram retorted: “I have neither sympathy nor food for you” (Anand, 1993, p. 48). So, he had to return to Nathoo Ram’s house. In such circumstances, he was convinced of his servitude: “It did not occur to him to ask himself what he was apart from being a servant, and why he was a servant and Babu Nathoo Ram his master. His identity he took for granted” (Anand, 1993, p. 34). Unfortunately, there was nobody beside him to offer love and sympathy. When he found no alternative to change his position as a slave, he was forced to think: “he promised himself again that he would be a good servant, a perfect model of a servant” (Anand, 1993, p. 36). At such a tender age, he was forced to accept the hard realities of life.

Munoo lived a carefree and easy life in his village, and he had not got enough time to adapt himself with the hard and complex life of a domestic hand. One day, out of an innocent prank, he bit his master’s eldest daughter Sheila’s cheek. He did not have any evil motif behind such an action. He did it inadvertently but he had to pay a heavy price for this offence. Bibi Uttam Kaur went prudish in this regard. Her outburst made Babu Nathoo Ram furious towards his servant and so he beat Munoo severely. Such inhuman treatment at the hands of his master was intolerable for him. So, he decided to leave Babu Nathoo Ram’s household. Munoo realised:

...there seemed to be only two kinds of people in the world. Caste did not matter...The Babus are like the Sahib-logs, and all servants look alike: there must be two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor. (Anand, 1993, pp. 55-56)

After Sham Nagar, Munoo went to Daulatpur. There he worked in a pickle factory owned by Prabha Dayal whom he met in train. Prabha provided him food and shelter. It was a hard life working in the pickle factory. Ganpat, the business partner of Prabha, was a cruel man who used to beat his labourers often forcing them to work incessantly: “They worked long hours, from dawn to past midnight, so mechanically that they never noticed the movement of their own or each other’s hands” (Anand, 1993, p. 92). While working there, he often faced physical torture from Ganpat. Thus, there was no change of his fate in Daulatpur:

It was a dark, evil life. He rose early at dawn before he had had his full sleep out, having gone to bed long after midnight. He descended to work in the factory, tired, heavy-lidded, hot and limp, as if all the strength had gone out of his body and left him a spineless ghost of his former self. (Anand, 1993, p. 89)

Later, Ganpat cheated his business partner Prabha in financial transaction, which ultimately brought about Prabha’s downfall. In this way, Prabha was forced to leave Daulatpur with his wife Parbati. Munoo suffered from another misfortune in his life.

Then Munoo came to Bombay to earn his livelihood. Though he was hopeful of a better future, the elephant driver with whom he came to Bombay, cautioned him: “The bigger a city is, the more cruel it is to the sons of Adam...You have to pay even for the breath that you breathe” (Anand, 1993, p. 152). When he observed beggars and coolies on the streets, Munoo became aware of the grim future that was waiting for him in Bombay. He understood the reality of Bombay, which he was going to face: “So, after all there is no money to be picked up in the streets of Bombay...because there are poor people

here, too” (Anand, 1993, p. 161). Like in Daulatpur, in Bombay also, he saw poverty-stricken coolies. At night, he observed multitudes of coolies lying on the footpath:

The bodies of numberless coolies lay strewn in tattered garbs. Some were curled up into knots, others lay face downwards on folded arms, others were flat on their chests, pillowing their heads on their bundles or boxes, others crouched into corners talking, others still huddled together at the doorsteps of closed shops, or lay on the boards in a sleep.(Anand, 1993, p. 162)

With the help of his newfound friend Hari, Munoo got his much-anticipated job in Sir George White Cotton Mills. Hari worked there earlier and then went to his native place to bring his wife, his son and daughter. His intention was to engage all of them in the factory. When he became successful in securing jobs for all his family members, he expressed:

They must learn to wake up early. They will have to go to work at the factory before sunrise every morning. Why did I go away from Bombay four months ago, if not to fetch them, so that, like the children of other men, they should begin to earn their living. Thus only can we make both ends meet. (Anand, 1993, p. 167)

The foreman of the cotton mill asked for commission because he offered them job in the factory. According to Hari, it was almost a tradition to do so: “Paying a commission to the foreman is a question of self-preservation. He is the most important man in the factory” (Anand, 1993, p. 175). Every worker in the factory tried to satisfy the foreman because of his important position in the factory. Deep inside their heart, they were not

satisfied to do so but it was their compulsion to obey him. Hari commented in this regard:

...he charged every worker in the factory a price for the gift of a job, a price which went up if there were more men about than there were vacancies to fill; and that, incidentally, he ran a moneylender's business; that lastly he was a landlord who owned hundreds of straw huts in the neighbourhood and rented them out to the coolies at a profit. (Anand, 1993, p. 175)

However, the story of workers like Munoo helps to understand the fact that despite facing atrocities in the factory from various quarters, the factory workers could not protest. They did not want to dissatisfy the mill authority. In Bombay, it was very difficult to get a job, and the factory workers were constantly in fear of losing it. They worked for twelve hours a day but when they returned to their huts or tenements, they could not get any solace. It seemed that existence was a kind of burden for the labourers:

A twelve- hour day wears one down. And to live in a fifteen-by-ten room, cramped on the floor, amid the smoke and smell of cooking and of the food eaten, amid a chaos of pots and pans, old beds and crawling children, in the publicity of the common staircase, the common washing place, the common latrines, and amid the foul smell of sewages that filtered over the pathways, conduces to comradeship. (Anand, 1993, p. 208)

Munoo felt happy after getting a job in the Cotton Mill, but such happiness was momentary. The coolies and workers of the Cotton Mill were treated in ruthless manner, which was led to Munoo's understanding that the land of equality and freedom



could never be found. The colliers and workers were forced to work for eleven hours a day with meagre wages. After returning from the factory, the workers got hardly any time for recreation. The women folk had to make themselves busy in cooking for the supper. Such a hectic schedule sucked away the vitality of the workers:

At night, when the six o'clock whistle blew, there was the walk home again. It was eight or nine by the time, the females, tired after the day's work, could cook a meal. To get eight hours sleep it was necessary to go to bed immediately. It was not hard to go to sleep. These men did not need veronal for their insomnia. The twelve hours a day was a sedative. (Anand, 1993, p. 208)

Coolies did not protest against their exploitation for fear of revenge and punishment. Ratan the wrestler was the only worker in the cotton mill who dared to show his discontent to the mill authority, as he shouted at the foreman: "you may be a foreman, but you have no right to beat the mill employees!" (Anand, 1993, p. 201). Ratan asked the labourers of the Cotton Mill to join the Trade Union to give vent to their pent up feelings: "You ought to be manly enough to stand up for yourself. Alternatively, you should come with me and join the Union. You are all so lethargic" (Anand, 1993, p. 207). Yet Ratan also suffered at the hands of the mill authority as he lost his job because of his dissenting attitude. Thus, he was forced to go to the Trade Union office for help but the cold response that he received from the Trade Union leaders was very disappointing.

It was Sauda, a fiery leader of the All India Trade Union Congress who promised to help him to fight against the injustices done to him by the mill authority. Sauda

delivered his speech narrating the problems of the mill workers. He was discontented because of the silence of the workers regarding their difficulties. He commented:

Do not all the insults you people suffer rouse you from the apathy to which you have succumbed? Does not all the misery, all the degradation you suffer rouse you to indignation?...Look at the room you live in,...Is it big enough to house you all? And thousands of you are content to live in these tenements, and straw huts which have no paved road, no playground. How long can you live like this? At the best six months and then you will go home to die. And those children of yours sweat hard all day for an anna and get stunted and never grow up. When will you wake up? When will you come to your senses? (Anand, 1993, p. 219)

Sauda explained the workers about the reason of their suffering. In his opinion there was a broad division in the society between the rich and the poor. The workers were poor because they did not know how to fight for their rights. They also did not have respect for themselves. Sauda's words are worth quoting:

There are only two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor, and between the two, there is no connection. The rich and the powerful, the magnificent and the glorious, whose opulence is built on robbery and theft and open warfare, are honoured and admired by the whole world, and by themselves. You, the poor and the humble, you, the meek and the gentle, wretches that you are, swindled out of your rights, and broken in body and soul, you are respected by no one, and you do not respect yourselves. (Anand, 1993, p. 233)

He wanted to raise the sunken souls of the workers so that they could muster enough courage to go against the mill authority. He realised that the workers were full of discontent but they could not express it due to fear of punishment. He opined that the labourers should unite themselves against all sorts of the injustices. He urged the workers to demonstrate their discontent by staging protest against the mill authority:

Stand up, then, stand up for your rights, you roofless wretches, stand up for justice! Stand up, you frightened fools! Stand up and fight! Stand up and be the men that you were meant to be and don't crawl back to the factories like the worms that you are! Stand up for life, or they will crush you and destroy you altogether! Stand up and follow me! From tomorrow you go on strike and we will pay you to fight your battle with the employers! (Anand, 1993, p. 233)

Sauda was acutely aware of the pathetic living condition of the mill workers. In spite of working hard all day long, there were many shortcomings in the lives of the coolies. He sorted out the primary necessities of the mill workers in a charter of demands and asked the workers to recite them along with him as a mark of solidarity amongst them:

'We are human beings and not soulless machines'

.....

'We want the right to work without having to pay bribes.'

'We want clean houses to live in.'

'We want schools for our children and crèches for our babies.'

'We want to be skilled workers.'

'We want to be saved from the clutches of the moneylenders.'

‘We want a good wage and no mere subsistence allowed if we must go on short work.’

‘We want shorter hours.’

‘We want security so that the foreman cannot dismiss us suddenly.’

‘We want our organizations to be recognized by law.’ (Anand, 1993, p. 234)

However, the communal riot in Bombay destroyed the spirit and prospect of strike by the workers in the cotton mills. Munoo lost his job in the cotton mill due to this communal riot. While trying to save his life from the rioters, Munoo met with an accident when a car knocked him down. Mrs. Mainwaring, the owner of the car, decided to take Munoo to her residence in Shimla for better treatment. In Shimla, Munoo slowly recovered and passed his time as one of the servants of Mrs. Mainwaring. Sometimes, he worked as her rickshaw-puller, and sometimes as a domestic help. The difficult nature of work took toll on him and his health deteriorated. Unfortunately, while working for Mrs. Mainwaring, he suffered from tuberculosis. He did not recover from this deadly disease and ultimately succumbed to it: “in the early hours of one unreal white night he passes away- the tide of his life having reached back to the deeps” (Anand, 1993, p. 282).

Thus, *C* is an account of the misfortune of Munoo, who had to accept the hard realities of life at an early age. Munoo’s suffering was heart rending, as he was all alone in the wide world. He was forced to fend for himself from a very early age. His travails gave testimony that the world had been governed by monetary considerations. It was observed that those who were poor and alone had to suffer from the lack of money and support. His uncle Daya Ram sent him to work in Babu Nathoo Ram’s house only for money and other favours. He did not consider that Munoo was his nephew. Babu

Nathoo Ram and his wife treated Munoo inhumanely because they were paying his uncle Daya Ram for his services. It was as if they could do any injustice and harm to him for he was their servant. His poverty gave them opportunity to exploit him mercilessly. Same kind of exploitation was noticed when he was living with Prabha. While working in Prabha's pickle factory, Munoo and other workers were cruelly treated by Ganpat who was Prabha's partner.

Munoo did what he wished to do in his life. He rolled around according to his wishes. Whenever he faced problems, he escaped from it. He never tried to confront his adverse fortune. Of course, occasionally he wanted to show his anger and discontent but he could not revolt for fear of more disgrace. He was self-conscious, and it was his self-pity, which often overpowered him. Like any other young boy, he could well understand ill-treatment and injustice, and whenever he was subjected to such behaviour, he was deeply hurt. He did not revolt against Babu Nathoo Ram in Sham Nagar, Ganpat in Daulatpur, and Jimmie Thomas in Bombay. But, he had necessary pride and self respect, which directed him to leave Nathoo Ram's household. When he remembered that he belonged to warrior caste, he became conscious of his dignity and wanted to give befitting reply to the insults. Munoo was aware that he was not in a position to struggle against his conditions. However, when he observed someone fighting against injustice, instantly he wanted to emulate that person. He wanted to be like the wrestler Ratan because Ratan faced life with unruffled confidence. Therefore, he said that he would grow up to be a strong man like the wrestler. Like Munoo, another character Hari was also remained subdued because of his poor financial condition. He was bent down by the burden of responsibility of looking after his family.

He was illiterate and did not have the courage to protest against injustices for fear of punishment. It was observed that on many occasions, he was protected by Ratan.

Unlike Munoo, Ratan and Sauda championed the causes of the oppressed labourers. Ratan defended Hari and saved him from the clutches of moneylender Nadir Khan's men. Ratan got respect from his opponents due to his physical power. Sauda severely criticised the capitalists mill owners. He was extremely vocal in support of the mill labourers. He tried to raise the spirit of the mill labourers against the exploitation of the mill owners. He showed them how they had been treated by their employers like animals without showing any consideration for them. He was a leader with tremendous oratorical skill. He delivered his speech with authority and was able to influence his listeners by appealing to their conscience. His revolutionary speech, which was addressed to the labourers, could be regarded as one of the most influential speeches in the Indian English novel.

Gangu, the protagonist of the novel *TLAB*, is taken for discussion in this chapter. He is an illiterate peasant. He came to work in the Macpherson Tea Estate in Assam with his wife Sajani, his children Leila and Buddha. He was forced to leave his native place of Hoshiarpur because he lost his landed property at the hands of the village moneylender:

...the hut as well as his three acres were part of the joint family property, and Lalla Beli Ram, the vakil, had told him that, as the law of Angrezi Sarkar stood, the debt incurred by one brother of a family was binding on another...how the interest on my younger brother's mortgage piled up, so that all my three acres and my hut as well went just as a free gift to Seth Badri Dass.(Anand,1998, p.3)

After losing everything in Hoshiarpur, he had no other alternative but to leave his native place to earn his livelihood. Later, Gangu became a victim of Sardar Buta's false promises. Buta knew how to entice landless peasants into his fold. His alluring words are like this:

If anyone needs money for something special such as the purchase of a cow, for marriage or for the propitiation of the ancestors' ceremony, the sahibs advance it free of interest, and recover it only gradually. The manager Sahib knows and cares for all his people. He attends to their well-being, and he keeps them happy and contented. (Anand, 1998, p. 4)

He accepted Sardar Buta Singh's cheating with calm resignation. He could do so because of "the religion of fatalism, his faith in which was increased by his knowledge of the inevitability of death, unconsciously inclined him to build a shining ladder between heaven and his lot" (Anand, 1998, p. 172). Gangu knew intuitively that Buta was lying to him but he did not like to break that spell of hope offered to him. It was his neighbour Narain who informed him about the real picture and the cheating ways of the sardars who basically acted as the agents of the tea-planters: "Yes, all the coolies here are brought by the agents of the planters. Not one would come here of his free choice. What curse upon your fate has brought you?" (Anand, 1998, p. 37). He stated that the Sardars of the tea garden were important persons in the tea-estates. The plantation authority considered the Sardars very important because they used to help them in maintaining discipline inside the tea-estate. He expressed: "The sardars are favoured people. What they say goes...The sardars have land to cultivate, but I have none. The manager pays the sardar, the sardar pays me what he likes" (Anand, 1998, p. 171).

Gangu's fortune slanted from bad to worse, and he was miserable at heart. When Gangu and his family earned less than eight annas as the salary of the entire week, he was totally disappointed. All the promises of high wages, free gift of land etc were mere lies. His sheer disappointment could be discerned from the following lines:

What had the family got after almost a whole week's work? It did not even work out at eight annas a day for the whole family: three annas for him, two annas for his wife and daughter, and three pice for his child. Why, in the village he had been able to earn eight annas a day alone by working on the landlords's land when he had lost his own! And the planter Sahib, while giving him the contract, had said that there was no land yet which he could spare to give him for cultivating rice. (Anand,1998, p. 64)

Gangu realised that he committed a big mistake by taking Sardar Buta into confidence. Gangu recalled a proverb with indignation: "Never believe a barber or a Brahmins, for the one arranges marriages, and has to describe an ugly girl as a fairy, and the other draws horoscopes; and must make the evil stars appear the luckiest" (Anand, 1998, p.8). Gangu's wife Sajani suffered from malaria and died without getting any treatment. Gangu could not arrange a loan for the cremation. He went to the planter of the tea garden Croft-Cooke for loan, but he was driven away from his office for fear of contamination. Later, he broke his oath of not borrowing money on interest from the Bania and borrowed twenty rupees from him for the funeral rites.

The labourers of the tea garden were forced to work in unsanitary conditions. The tea gardens in Assam were like a prison house and the labourers were like prisoners. Gangu's friend Narain told him about the prison like tea-gardens:



This prison has no bars, but it is nevertheless an unbreakable jail. The chowkidars keep guard over the plantation, and they bring you back if you should go...The chowkidars go round at night with a lamp and open every door to see if we are all at home. There used to be a roll call every night before I came” (Anand, 1998, p. 38)

There was no escape from the tea gardens because there was close vigil on the movements of the coolies so that they could not escape. Again, the chowkidars used to visit the huts of the coolies at night to ascertain whether they were inside or not.

Gangu’s neighbour, Narain suffered greatly. He used to be subdued easily as he was aware of the punishment he would receive for any dissent. He told Gangu some harrowing incidents of punishment, which took place in the tea gardens of Assam. He compared the tea estate with hell: “...You are in the kingdom of Yama...” (Anand, 1998, p. 214). The labourers were not given any scope to organise themselves into any Union by the tea estate authority. Persons with any link with Trade Unions were debarred from entering into the tea estate. In this regard, Narain said: “The sahibs of the plantations won’t allow its representatives to come and tell us what a trade union is” (Anand, 1998, p. 210). Gangu lost his hope when Narain informed him about the horrible stories of exploitation and subjugation of the coolies by the tea-planters with the help of the police and magistrate. Narain also told Gangu about the fate of twenty coolies who complained the Deputy Commissioner of Jorhat about the violation of the contract. The complaining coolies mysteriously disappeared after their decision to return home. In this way, Gangu became aware of the danger of working in a tea estate. But, unfortunately, his belief in fate led him to relate his misfortune with the Karma of his past lives:

...as in the old days in his village, so, now, he plodded on like an ox all day....detached and forgetful in the Nirvanic bliss of emptiness where the good and evil of fortune seemed the equally just retributions of an inevitable, inexorable fate, imposed by the Omnipotent, Omniscient Providence, of whom Siva and Vishnu and Krishna were the supreme incarnations.” (Anand, 1998, p. 261)

Regarding the suffering of the Indians, Croft Cookes’ daughter Barbara had some important questions: “Why do these swarming, under-nourished, bleary, worm-eaten millions of India suffer so? Is it because the festering swamps of the tropics breed disease, and that they cannot check the tribulations of destiny?” (Anand, 1998, p. 123). She was sympathetic to the sufferings of the coolies because of her close association with De la Havre, her lover. She was well aware of the reality of India where one section of the society suffered from poverty while the other section was living very expensive lives. Echoing Munoo and Sauda, Barbara also talked about the division between the rich and the poor:

The black coolies clear the forests, plant the fields, toil and garner the harvest, while all the money-grubbing, slave driving, soulless managers and directors draw their salaries and dividends and build up monopolies. Therein lies the necessity of revolution in this country. On the one hand, the vast masses, prisoners of so many chains, bearing the physical signs of grief, of lassitude, even of death, and on the other hand, the supercilious rich, wrapped up in their self-assurance and complacency, never once questioning the ideals of glory and power and wealth. (Anand, 1998, p. 124)

John de la Havre, the doctor of the Macpherson tea estate, understood quite well the cruelty of the British officers. H. M. Williams (1973) termed him a “walking capsule of humanism, socialism, progressivism and left-wing idealism” (p.34). He was disgusted with the inhuman treatment meted out to the coolies. He commented: “Man is selfish. Man is evil; there is nothing more horrible in this universe than the cruelty of man to man” (Anand, 1998, p. 128). He was careful in expressing his views regarding the condition of the coolies. The minimum wage that they got was not satisfying for them:

Wages of coolies on the Indian plantations have not changed for the last seventy years. The wages of a coolie in 1870, were five rupees per month. In 1922, the maximum wages of a coolie on the Assam tea plantations did not exceed seven rupees per month (about ten shillings and six pence). (Anand, 1998, pp. 125-126)

De la Havre had sympathy for the labourers. He was aware of the ignorance of the labourers regarding the unhygienic condition of the places where they lived. He remarked, “These coolies didn’t look as if they would require the breathing space of seven hundred cubic feet, or the floor area of thirty-six feet that an ordinary human being requires.” (Anand, 1998, p. 137). He was surprised at the resigned outlook of the labourers. He knew they were illiterate and poor but still there should be a little bit of resistance in them to save themselves from the atrocities of the tea estate authority. He wrote in his notebook: “The present system of plantation labour is a curse and a crime. It is a monstrous crime against humanity” (Anand, 1998, p. 126). When the coolies were beaten badly by Reggie Hunt and his agents, and when one of the labourers died, they were agitated and went to meet De la Havre and told him about the atrocity. De la Havre asked them: “Why do you let them beat you? Why can’t you beat back—all of

you together?” (Anand, 1998, p. 200). One coolie told that they could not hit back because they considered British rulers as their *mai-bap*. De la Havre was angry at such a naivety and told them:

I am not your *mai-bap*; I am like you, a slave of the planters. I do not suffer from them as you do, because they think I am a sahib. They and their like beat the workers of Vilayat in the same way as they beat you. (Anand, 1998, p. 200)

De la Havre helped the coolies to proceed with their march against the tea estate authority. He knew his attempt was futile but still he thought: “he was acting for freedom, for personal liberty and private virtue- that he was acting for the lives of these people.” (Anand, 1998, p. 226).

Emboldened by the company of De la Havre, the coolies decided to complain against Reggie Hunt but when Croft-Cooke and some riflemen stood in front of them their courage betrayed them, “They fell back almost automatically, and stood paralysed, their hearts contracting, their shrivelled hands joined, their heads dizzy with sudden shock of having been caught unawares” (Anand, 1998, p. 205). For helping the coolies, De la Havre was sacked from his service by Croft-Cooke. At such a treatment, he was shocked and he could only utter: “The mutiny has been crushed” (Anand, 1998, p. 227). He did his best for the sake of the tea estate labourers. He even sacrificed his love for Barbara and also his job but his sacrifice went in vain. His failure was not because of his limitations but due to the lack of unity amongst the tea estate labourers. The tea estate labourers lacked unity amongst themselves. They were illiterate and they had no leader amongst them to show them the right path. Thus, their aspirations were always subdued.

*TLAB* also provided a realistic picture of physical exploitation and molestation of coolie women. Reggie Hunt, the Assistant Manager of the Tea garden had lustful eyes on the wives and daughters of the coolies. Premila Paul (1983) termed him “the human python” (p. 37). Narain candidly revealed Reggie Hunt’s character: “He is a very *budmash* sahib. He is always drunk. In addition, he has no consideration for anyone’s mother or sister. He is openly living with three coolie women!...Nobody’s mother or sister is safe in this place” (Anand, 1998, p. 42). The coolie women tried to keep themselves away from his ugly glances. He brought coolie woman to his quarter without any shame. The wife of Neogi was the most recent victim to the carnal desire of Reggie. His indomitable lust is expressed through the following lines:

She yielded to him, her body limp and contorted into a silent despair, her eyes a gaze at the wild sensual heat in his face, her heart turned inwards at the cold virginity that seemed to freeze her at the contact with him. He made a sudden up charge, as if he swung her body hard, hard, harder, tearing the flash of her breasts, biting her cheeks and striking her buttocks till she was red and purple like a mangled corpse, ossified into a complete obedience by the volcanic eruption of the lust. (Anand, 1998, p. 83)

In one fateful afternoon, Reggie saw Gangu’s daughter Leila inside the tea garden plucking tea buds. He was fascinated by her teenage beauty and yearned for possessing her. His lust for Leila is quite visible in the following lines: “Slim young body defined by the narrow girth of her skirt and the fine stretch of her bodice, her whole demeanor like a bird that would flutter in the hands of the shikari” (Anand, 1998, p. 121). An innocent teenager Leila was terrified by Reggie’s advances and she ran away from the garden towards her hut. He was mad with lust and followed her. However, she escaped

from the attack and reached her hut. When her father Gangu arrived at the scene, Reggie fired at him with his revolver. Gangu's suffering ended with his tragic death at the hands of Reggie Hunt.

The trial for the charge of murder exposed the blatant partiality of Mr. Justice Mowberley and a jury of seven Europeans and two Indians. They acquitted Reggie Hunt from the charge of murdering the plantation coolie Gangu. In this regard, Asnani (1985) commented: "Evil is thus shown triumphing and leaving no room for goodness of life" (p.19). The suffering and misery of the coolies did not get any attention from the tea estate authorities. The tea estate authority was the ruler and the coolies were ruled, apart from that, there was no consideration for anything in the bleak alien world of the Macpherson tea estate. In this context, Meenakshi Mukherjee remarked: "Anand is a rational humanist...believing in the power of sciences to improve material conditions, in progress and in the equality of all men, and his manifest intention is to propagate his beliefs through his novel" (Mukharjee, 1971, p. 7).

Thus in novels like *C* and *TLAB* Anand beautifully exposes the tragic exploitation of the poor labourers as well as their labour. He vividly described the sufferings of the poor in these two novels. Munoo of *C* lost his life due to poverty and rampant exploitation of his labour. Munoo's tragic fate reflected the difficulty of the poor masses of India who suffered from poverty and starvation and ultimately succumbed to death because they were deprived of their due share of wage for their labour. Again, the life of the coolies in Macpherson Tea garden was miserable. Their woes and miseries were due to the ruthless exploitation by the tea-planters. It can be stated that the novel clearly reflected what man had made of man. It was the realistic portrayal of the indentured Indian coolies and their inhuman suffering inside the tea garden. Therefore,

Niven (1978) stated, “These people are leading unrewarded, uncreative lives. They are cogs in a machine...” (p. 88). Gangu was made landless by the selfish Sahukar Seth Badri Das, and his lawyer also cheated him by misinterpreting the law. Then he was being lured into the Macpherson tea garden by Sardar Buta, he reached Assam with his wife and children to have a bright future. However, it was the fierce oppression of the tea planters and their fiendish agents who destroyed all his hopes and ultimately brought about his untimely tragic end. The tea planters never treated him and other coolies as human being rather they were treated as beasts of prey. Ravi Kumar’s (2005) comment about this novel is worth quoting: “A fierce denunciation of man’s cruelty to man, *Two Leaves and A Bud* projects Anand’s humanism, his rejection of his theory of Karma and God and the destructive effects of poverty and fatalism” ( p. 115).

### **Summing up:**

It can be argued that the novel *C* becomes an exposition of the division between the rich and the poor. Here, money is the most important factor in deciding any relationship. *C*, therefore, can also be regarded as a chronicle of the exploitation of the poor and their labour. Anand portrays the lives of coolies and workers with utmost sincerity. The downtrodden were too weak to stage any kind of revolt against exploitation. They were trying to save themselves by retreating from the scenes of exploitation, not by facing and fighting against the same. Therefore, H. M. Williams (1973) commented that the novel emerged “as an anguished cry, an indictment of the cruelty of the he system, and a declaration of pity for the hero, the betrayed and depraved Munoo” (p. 30). *TLAB* also exposed the cruelty of the tea planters and their treatment of the coolies as sub human beings. The poverty-stricken coolies were subjected to humiliation and exploitation

without having any respite. It also reflected the dreadful condition of social deprivation of the coolies, intrusive character of the tea garden authority, and the exploitation of the labour. Gangu was subdued from the very beginning of his entry into the tea estate and he never got redemption from his sufferings. The novel forcefully represented the predicament of the helpless coolies who were exploited in every possible way at every step of their life.

In the foregoing discussion, it is observed that the coolies and labourers were exploited by the rich and powerful of the society. It is clear, the helpless coolies and the labourers were forced to tolerate all the exploitation because it was the question of their survival. They were unorganised and scattered. It is true that discontent was dormant in them, but it could not become collective discontent due to the atrocities of the authorities. The tragic fate of Munoo and Gangu culminating in their death could raise the issue of inhuman treatment meted out to the poor and dispossessed by the rich and powerful and would stir the conscience of man to stand united against such treatment. The novels seemed to carry the message that the poor labourers should get their due share of wages for their hard work and labour. When it would happen in reality, most of their problems would go away. Therefore, it can be stated that love and humanism would be the only key to solve the problems of the exploitation of the poor labourers. Asnani's (1985) comment in this regard is worth quoting when he said that Anand "pointed out social conflicts and ills, not because he champions any abstract social theory, but because he has seen and experienced and felt them intimately in his own surroundings" (p. 21).



## References:

- Anand, M. R. (1993). *Coolie*. London: The Penguin Books Limited.
- Anand, M. R. (1998). *Two leaves and a bud*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.
- Asnani, S.M. (1985). *Critical response to Indian English fiction*. Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Mukharjee, M. (1971). *The twice born fiction*. New Delhi: Heinemann Educational Book.
- Niven, A. (1978). *The yoke of pity*. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann.
- Paul, P. (1983). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A thematic study*. New Delhi, Sterling Publishers.
- Ravi Kumar, N. P. (2005). *Two leaves and a bud: A proletariat novel*. In *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A new critical spectrum*. T. M. J. Indra Mohan (Ed.). New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Williams, H. M. (1973). *Studies in modern Indian novel in English*. Vol. I. Calcutta: Writers Workshop.

## CHAPTER 5

### *THE LAL SINGH TRILOGY: THE LOSS OF PEASANTRY*

#### **Introduction:**

The policy of the British Government to collect revenue of farmland through cash was largely responsible for the exploitation of the peasants by moneylenders and landlords. B. S. Saini remarked, “The advent of Pax-Britanica...the village organization as a self-sufficient unit was the first to disappear under the stress of new economic factors” (B.S. Saini, 1975, p. 41). The British was relentless in exploiting the rural peasants with the help of its agents- cunning moneylenders and greedy landlords. The peasants were forced directly or indirectly to borrow money for the sake of paying taxes and other requirements. About the unprecedented poverty of the peasants, Khushwant Singh remarked:

...the 1870’s ushered in an era of peasant indebtedness which had never been known in the country before...elaborate legal system introduced by the British contributed towards the impoverishment of the peasantry and the enrichment of moneylenders and lawyers.” (Khuswant, 1966, pp. 151-152)

Likewise, regarding the condition of the peasants, Jawaharlal Nehru commented: The peasantry were a blind poverty-stricken, suffering mass, resigned to their miserable fate and sat upon and exploited by all who came in contact with them-the Government, landlords, money-lenders, petty officials, police, lawyers, priests” (Nehru, 1936, p. 48). In 1920, Nehru visited Pratapgarh, and he was shocked to observe the miserable condition of the peasants. In his own words: “a new picture if India...naked, starving,

crushed and utterly miserable” (Nehru, 1936, p. 52). This actual event was incorporated by Anand in his *The Sword and the Sickle*.

Mulk Raj Anand had deep love and sympathy for the peasant folk, which can be traced back to his mother who came from the family of a peasant. Anand had deep attachment with his maternal uncle and grandfather whom he observed from close quarters. As a child, the life style and actions of his father influenced him very much. When he became a writer, those past memories assisted him greatly in portraying the lives of the peasants of Punjab in the early years of twentieth century. In his famous Lal Singh Trilogy, Anand portrayed the condition of the peasants and how the peasants were forced to live in inhuman condition. Anand stated:

I had always felt that the simple hard working folk on the land were more innocent than the clever businessmen of the towns. In addition, the Sikh villagers’ Sat Bachan mentality of service seemed to me always spiritually nobler than the world of work through cash-nexus, which was prevailing in the cities. And yet the devotees, who toiled from dawn to dusk, were mostly indigent, scratching their little land, for small gain and constantly being deprived of what little they had by the money-lenders, the absentee landlords, and the Sarkar, whose mainstay was the land revenue. These big eyed often hollow-cheeked children of the soil took so little out of the land they tilled for the amount of work they put in. (Anand, 1973, pp. 89-90)

The peasants did their best to earn their livelihood with hard work and honesty. However, their simplicity and honesty did not save them from the clutches of the exploiters. In this chapter, a detailed investigation has been made regarding how the

simpleminded peasants were exploited and duped by various land lords, money lenders, religious guru and above all by the representatives of the British government, and how they had to remain mute observers of all sorts of inhuman atrocities.

Through these three novels *TV*, *ATBW*, and *TSATS*, Anand brought to the forefront the miserable condition of the peasants. The settings of *TV* and *TSATS*'s are in India, whereas the setting of *ATBW* is in the war torn Europe in the World War I. *TV* is about the dissatisfaction and discontent of Punjabi peasants. *ATBW* exposed the hypocrisy of the British government which left the helpless peasants exploited and forced them to fight for the British army. *TSATS* is about the revolutionary spirit of the peasants and their sacrifice for the sake of their right. The novel also exposed some of the leaders who claimed to work for the peasants but in reality, they were working for their own good. All the three novels, as a whole became a human document of suffering of the peasants. They can also be treated as the testament of the ruthless exploitation of the Indians by the British Government from all corners—political, social, religious etc.

### **Outline of The Lal Singh Trilogy—*The Village, Across the Black Waters and The Sword and the Sickle*:**

These three novels in the Lal Singh Trilogy poignantly represented the life of the peasants of Punjab in the Pre-independence India. These novels are interlinked through the actions of the protagonist Lal Singh a Punjabi boy of the village Nandpur. The first novel of the Trilogy *TV* is the gripping story of the misery of the Punjabi peasants interspersed with the exploits of the adolescent protagonist Lal Singh or Lalu. The novel begins with the introspection of Lal Singh's father Nihal Singh regarding the change in the lives of the peasants. Nihal Singh was discontented with many things, of

which his primary concern was with the exploitation of the peasants by the village landlord and the village moneylender. Lal Singh was sent to Albert Mission High school, where he studied up to class eight. He was having progressive outlook and often showed his displeasure at the traditional beliefs and rituals. Many a times, he found himself at loggerheads with his parents and the village community members. His father Nihal Singh's conflict with the village landlord Harbans Singh had severe consequences for him because he had to leave his village Nandpur. Later he enlisted himself in 68<sup>th</sup> Rifles of the British Indian army to save himself from the police. Tragedy awaited Lal Singh as his elder brother Sharm Singh was hanged for killing land lord's son and his father breathed his last because of this family misfortune of losing his eldest son. The novel ended with the departure of Lal Singh with his regiment for France to take part in the World War I.

The second novel of the Trilogy is *ATBW*. The novel is about the valour of the Indian sepoy in the foreign shores of France. Lal Singh and his companions Daddy Dhanoo, Uncle Kirpu, Subah Singh, Rikhi Ram etc. and other Indian sepoy entangled themselves in the war with the Germans, though they were not aware of the causes of this world war. This may be one of the finest war novels in English with the blatant portrayal of the claustrophobic tension at the battlefield. The ultimate dehumanisation of the sepoy due to the cruel demand of the situation at the battlefield was delineated with precision. At the same time, the novel also portrayed the stringent discipline of the army, which sometimes infringed upon the basic freedom of the sepoy creating much discontent but no rebellion.

*TSATS* is the third and the last novel of the Lal Singh Trilogy where the revolutionary spirit of the peasants is portrayed in realistic detail. After returning from Germany as a

war prisoner, Lal Singh understood the exploitative nature of the British government because he was released from his duty in the most unceremonious manner. His crime was that he was a war prisoner in Germany. Lal Singh returned to his village but he faced disappointment reaching there as his family household became desolate—his parents and the eldest brother no more, his elder brother turned a sadhu. He observed the result of the war everywhere in all pervasive desolation and wretchedness of the peasants. Amidst such despair, Lal Singh met his childhood love Maya and eloped with her to Rajgarh. The Count Kanwar Rampal Singh offered him hospitality and he soon engrossed himself in the revolutionary ideals of the Count. He became a leader of the landless exploited peasants of Rajgarh and fought for their rights. Lal Singh also met Gandhi and had a conversation with him. But, he was not sure about achieving success through the Gandhian mode of agitation. In the last part of the novel, Lal Singh was imprisoned for the crime of going against the government policy.

### **Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in Lal Singh**

#### **Trilogy:**

Mulk Raj Anand had very high opinion about the peasants. He opined, “The peasant... is India and India the peasant” (Anand, 1942, p. 29). However, the exploitation of the British Government destroyed peasantry and the country as well. The traders and landlords were the vicious agents of the British Government in the business of exploitation. The helpless peasants were “uprooted from the land by the inexorable pressure of their three oppressors: the Sarkar, the landlord and the moneylender” (Anand, 1942, p. 68). Anand’s awareness of peasant’s revolutionary capacity came to him through his mother as she used to sing an inspiring peasant song first sung by

Banke Dayal, the editor of *Jhang Sayal*: “Take care of your turban, O peasant” (Sharma, 1971, p. 51). The song urged the peasants to unite and prepare for supreme sacrifice for the sake of the country and for one’s own self-respect. The song kindled the patriotic feeling into the peasants and it was instrumental in rallying the peasants for the Kisan revolt of Punjab in 1907.

The novel *TV* opens with the description of Nihal Singh to his son Lal Singh about the meanness of the British government in annexing Punjab to its territory. According to Nihal Singh, the British government was successful in doing so because of the betrayal of some Sikh generals. British government bestowed the traitors with land and other benefits. Nihal Singh told Lal Singh about Teja Singh who was one of the traitors. Teja Singh’s son Harbans Singh was the landlord of their village Nandpur who usurped five acres of land from Nihal Singh:

To make Teja Singh a landlord; think of the iniquity, people. We lost ten of the twenty-five acres we had inherited, through the thuggery by the Sarkar. And after the traitor's death, his son, Harbans, has the effrontery to take another five by producing a false deed... But I will see that the wrong is righted. I will fight this suit about my five acres as I have fought it for ten years.” (Anand, 1960, p. 7)

Nihal Singh was unable to tolerate such injustice on him by the landlord. His decision to fight a legal battle against the injustice spoke of his indomitable character. However, at the same time, he was also naïve to keep faith on the British government in getting justice. The peasants would have been happy with their lot, had they been left undisturbed with their occupation, but such condition was hard to think of under the

British rule. Nihal Singh's wife Gujri sadly commented: "It is a terrible world in which only thieves and robbers seem to prosper" (Anand, 1960, p. 22). There was all round exploitation from all quarters. The peasants lost all hope and Nihal Singh was forced to utter: "The pleader thugs you, the seth counts so quickly, you can't tell the figures and the policia wants his palm greased before he lets the cart go past the custom" (Anand, 1960, p. 22). Anand portrayed Nihal Singh's abject poverty, and while doing so, he delineated the deplorable condition of the peasants due to rampant exploitation. The peasants were illiterate but they understood the intention of the British government. Justice was an illusion when the protector became the perpetrators of injustice. An intelligent peasant Harnam Singh spoke of the action of the government: "The Sarkar is buying up the harvest cheap storing it in its granaries so that it can sell it at a profit" (Anand, 1960, p. 21).

The British government, with the help its agents, made the peasants believe that they should do their best to produce more crops so that they could get extra money for it. Naive peasants believed such promises and invested everything they had on the farmland. However, when the harvesting was done, and because of the abundance of the crops when the price crashed to the lowest, the government showed the real face and bought the crops at the lowest of the price. The condition of the peasants could be well understood when they had to sell the crop at a price, which was one tenth of the price of seed. In this way, the peasants were tricked to mortgage everything they possessed to the cunning moneylenders to repay their debts. Though the peasants were in debt, they never refrain from religious rituals. They were superstitious and believed that by showing respect and offering gifts to the holy man of the village they could earn the blessings of the almighty. Lal Singh's father Nihal Singh was also no exception. He



had reverence for village holy man Mahant Nandgir and sent Lal Singh to offer Mahant a piece of Japanese silk cloth. Lal was never having any good opinion regarding the character of the holy man of the village, as he was aware of the tricks of such men due to his exposure to education at the Church Mission School in Sherkot. Lal opined that the holy man “ate sumptuous food dressed in yellow silks, smoked charas and drank hemp, and if reports were true, whored and fornicated” (Anand, 1960, p. 45).

Lalu wanted to work for the betterment of his village. However, in such a tender age, he had no resources and power to do so. At the beginning of *TV*, Lal is shown as an impetuous young man, a beginner in the journey of life. In fact, he is too young to comprehend the complexities of life. With his father and two elder brothers to take the decisions relating to family and financial matters, Lal was almost free to live a life full of happiness in his own way. Then he visited Manbad festival of lights with delight. In a sudden fit of impetuosity, he had his hair cut without thinking about the sacrilege he would commit by violating the religious beliefs of his community. The village community and his own family members were shocked at his conduct. Such an act of hostility against the religious ritual of keeping full head of hair uncut was unprecedented. Subsequently, Lal was dealt with severe actions by the village community for this violation of the religious ritual. Villagers led by landlord's son blackened his face, made him sit on a donkey and paraded him across the village, so that in future no one could dare to violate the sacred religious customs of Sikhism. Young Lal was aghast at such a punishment meted out to him. He expressed his sheer disgust:

That I was born on this land...That my mother gave birth to me while she worked in the fields...that these are my father's fields...I wish I had never been

born...I wish I had been born somewhere else, in some city, in some...in any place other than this village. (Anand, 1960, p. 98)

As a tender young village boy, Lalu's discontented heart could give vent to his pent up feelings only through words.

One day, Lalu accompanied his father Nihal Singh and his eldest brother Sharm Singh to the village moneylender Chaman Lal. They wanted a loan to meet the expenses of Lalu's elder brother Dayal Singh. But, the moneylender was cunning and he refused to sanction the loan amount. He demanded a bond for sanctioning the loan so that he could exact heavy interest on the loan later on. Lalu could sense the trick of the moneylender because he knew the moneylender would take the thumb impression on the bond without writing anything about the loan amount and the interest. Lalu forbade his father to give such a bond to the moneylender. But, his suggestion was not accepted and Nihal Singh and Sharm Singh put their thumb impressions on the bond for the loan. During that time, it was a popular trick adopted by the moneylenders to cheat their customers. Lalu was young but his educated mind was quick to catch this clever trick of the moneylender.

In another occasion, Lalu observed how a Patowari, a government official, who used to collect the land revenue, wanted to travel gratis on a yekka. The yekka driver Jhandu showed his discontent in an appropriate manner: "You expect us to give you everything for nothing as soon as you put on a kot pat-loon or a uniform. And you bully and bluff and swagger about the poor people" (Anand, 1960, p. 124). The abject condition, in which the villagers of Nandpur lived, even appalled Hercules Long, the Deputy Commissioner of Manbad. He was an honest officer, who understood the exploitation

of the British government quite well. Though Mr. Long had good will towards the villagers, he practically could do nothing to lessen the sufferings of the peasants. The Deputy Commissioner had chosen Lalu as the patron-leader of the Boy Scout movement initiated by him. This move was not appreciated by the village landlord and his supporters because it was a prestigious position, particularly because it was offered by a powerful British officer. In case of Lalu, it was something like a dream came true. Though such a duty had nothing to do with the improvement of the condition of the villagers, Lalu accepted this duty because for him it was a matter of pride: “a confirmation of all the vague, impractical plans to reform the village that he had evolved from his own passionate purpose and conviction” (Anand, 1960, p. 142). In the mean time, Lalu was suspected to be in a love relationship with the landlord Harbans Singh’s daughter Maya. The enraged landlord conspired against Lalu forcing him to escape from his beloved village to avoid arrest.

After this incident, Lalu went to Ferozepur and enlisted himself in the army. In the army, Lalu met the peasants who joined the army to make enough money so that they could recover their mortgaged land. While serving in the army, he met Kirpu and Dhanoo, two dispossessed peasants and made friendship with them which enhanced his knowledge of the suffering peasants. Kirpu told his tragedy: “I and my brothers had forty acres of land...It was all lost because there was always drought in the hills of Kangra and the revenue could not be paid” (Anand, 1960, p. 191). Dhanoo also had similar experience to tell which was full of agony and suffering: “animals by the hundreds and men by the thousands suffer a pain beyond endurance in out of the way villages like mine...” (Anand, 1960, p. 193).

These destitute peasants and tenants were wretched human beings without any hope of survival. They were lured into the army by the agents with false promises of reward. When they enrolled themselves in the British Indian army, the dehumanizing treatments of the army officers began. When compared, the Indian army officers were found to be more brutal than the British officers. The peasants who enrolled themselves in the British army found the enclosed spaces of army barracks a veritable hell. They could not understand that in a country which was under foreign rule it was only an illusion to dream of a free space where one can live with dignity. They could only live a life of illusion. They were in such a pathetic situation that they could not even dare to show their displeasure and discontent.

During his first few months' stay with the army, Lalu faced atrocities at the hands of his superiors. In the mean time, Lalu had to return to his village on leave for a few days to meet his father who was bed-ridden. During his absence from the family, many untoward incidents happened. Lalu's eldest brother Sharm Singh was hanged for murdering the landlord's son Hardit. Nihal Singh did his best to save his son but he could not. The whole village was submerged in debt, the peasants were clueless about their next course of action as there was nobody to guide them in such a difficult condition. In spite of such misery and sufferings, the British government was relentless in its agenda of exploiting the peasants. The situation is best expressed through the words of Lalu's uncle Harnam Singh:

The Sarkar should know how to regulate prices and should give guarantees to the farmer against the cheapening of the market. How are we ignorant folk to know the market conditions beforehand? How can we plan the crops so as not to produce too much or too little? But, the Sarkar will not do a thing. It merely

sends down the Patowari to collect rent and takes money on the yield with out bothering about what prices the grain has fetched. (Anand, 1960, p. 213)

Harnam Singh's words echoed the misery of every peasant. It seemed during the time of peace such ruthless exploitation had never occurred in the history of human civilisation. Helpless Lalu decided to return to his regiment at Ferozepur. As the World War I broke out, Lalu had to move with his regiment to Europe.

In the novel *ATBW*, the action started when the soldiers of Indian origin were brought to fight in Europe, they did not know anything about the war which they were going to fight in that alien land. The strange thing was that they even did not know about their enemy. It was a strange war they were going to participate. As soldiers, they obeyed their officers, and that was all they could do, "they were like conscripts, brutalised and willing to fight like trained bulls, but without a will of their own, soulless automations in the executions of the army code" (Anand, 2008, p. 133). The sepoys only joined the army with the hope of earning a good living and to get back their lost dignity:

For when they first joined the army, these legionaries did so because, as the second, third or fourth sons of a peasant family overburdened with debt, they had to go and earn a little ready cash to pay off the interest on the mortgage of the few acres of land, the only thing which stood between the family and its fate. Besides, the soldier pledged to fight the battles of the King-emperor, brought the necessary prestige to keep the local policeman at bay and to bail out brothers, fathers or uncles, who were arrested for non-payment of rent or debt. And, of course, always the proud family imagined that the second, third, fourth son would win promotion, a sudden prize, a grant of land or a life- pension for

conspicuous bravery in battle, and that would help them to pay off all arrears and start clear of all the misery once again with full possession of the land. (Anand, 2008, p. 168)

The naive Indian sepoy in the British army were hoping for the reward they would receive from the British government for their involvement in the war. However, they were totally oblivious of their pathetic condition in the trenches of Flanders in France:

They had already come through the long and weary trail and were now in the stage of waiting in this vast, timeless universe for their fate to fulfill itself as they had been suddenly transplanted into the world of their ancestors where men struggled against the elements, the gods and Destiny” (Anand, 2008, p. 132).

It was as if they were marching against death. Most of Lalu’s companion soldiers met their tragic death in the battlefield. Daddy Dhanoo was killed in the battle while Kirpu was forced to commit suicide due to hypocrisy, intrigues and intimidation inside the barrack. *ATBW* can be regarded as one of the best war novels written in the settings of the First World War. The novel poignantly tells the dehumanizing aspects of war in graphic detail. The Indian peasants turned sepoy were forced to leave their motherland, who were hardly any match to the trained German soldiers, but the bravery they showed on the face of death was truly commendable. Lalu, in such a devastating war atmosphere, was thinking in his usual manners:

He could not believe that ordinary men and women of good sense, and governments of France, England and Germany, which were saner and wiser than the ordinary people over whom they ruled, could be engaged in a war in which

men were being killed and wounded and houses shattered. (Anand, 2008, pp. 92-93)

Lalu's active participation in the war made him aware of the devastation of war. Already he saw numerous deaths in the battlefield. Being horrified at the prospect of annihilation of the Indian sepoy, he inquired introspectively "will a victory be achieved by killing all the soldiers of the enemy or will they just frighten them into surrender?" (Anand, 2008, p. 313). Amidst such horrifying atmosphere, he was also enlightened by the dignified life lived by European farmers like Monsieur Labusiere. He remembered his village Nandpur and the sub-human standard of life lived in the Indian villages. Knowing and feeling the disparity, such comparisons bring forth discontent in Lalu's mind. Of course, a deep prospect of an honourable life was always there in him only if he could successfully survive the war and could achieve a reward.

Lalu had a desire to mould his life according to his own wishes and expectations. However, when he became a sepoy and came to France to live a life inside the trenches where death might be reality at any moment, he understood that his desires could hardly become real until he worked hard for it. It was only after he lived a life of war prisoner in Germany that he became conscious of his capability. In this way, *ATBW* unfurled the sufferings, dissatisfaction and discontent of Indian sepoy engaged in the battlefields of France who ultimately had to sacrifice their lives for the British government.

The last novel of the trilogy, *TSATS* starts with Lalu's return to his motherland. He lived in Germany for five years as a prisoner of war. He was released and came back to India in 1920. When he reached India, he planned:

I don't really want to stay in the new regiment but I would willingly serve a few more years if there is only hope of getting something which would help my family. I would like to start a farm in Vilayati style." (Anand, 1942, p. 20)

However, his hope was soon destroyed when he learnt about his demobilisation. Such an action was natural on the part of British government, because after the war was over, the government hardly needed the services of a prisoner of war. Moreover, justice became a mockery at the hands of British government in earlier instances also. At such a callousness and unexpected turn of events, he was disheartened and discontented. He went to Manabad and accidentally met his childhood friend Gughri from whom he learnt about the tragic disintegration of his family. His parents and his eldest brother were no more alive, his elder brother Dayal Singh embraced ascetic life and became a sadhu. Such a tragic outcome was never expected but he withstood it and remained stoical.

Returning to his native village, Lalu decided to work for the benefit of the villagers, the peasants who were helpless on the face of atrocities and exploitations of the moneylenders, landlords and government officials. An urge for doing his best to the benefit of the peasants was within him. Of course, such feeling was not new for his family as his father often told him how he fought for the Khalsa- the honour of Sikh people. While working for them, he found a way to minimise the memory of his family tragedy: "he must do something for others" (Anand, 1942, p. 73). At such a critical juncture of his life, he met a revolutionary- Professor Verma with whom he had previous acquaintances. Professor Verma told him about count Rampal of Oudh and his intention of helping the peasants: "to organize the peasantry of the big estates in his province into Kisan Sabhas" (Anand, 1942, p. 77). On Professor Verma's request, Lalu decided to accompany him to meet count Rampal.



Meanwhile, Lalu also developed a relationship with the landlord Harbans Singh's widowed daughter Maya, who was indirectly responsible for Lalu's escapade from his village long ago. After getting professor Verma's proposal for working for the liberation of peasants with the Count Rampal, he eloped with Maya to Rajgarh. Of course, he was not sure whether he did the right thing to bring Maya with him when he had undertaken such an important task of working for the benefits of the peasants—"Why, o why, did I encumber myself with a breakable possession like you when I had just succeeded in controlling my own destiny for once?" (Anand, 1942, p. 87).

However, he thought he should select his priority between his love for Maya and his desire to indulge in activities of working for the oppressed peasants. In comparison to his cherished desire to work for the suffering peasants, his love and duty towards Maya became subsidiary. He seemed to understand: "there were no black or white people, no yellow or brown people, not even Francis and Chinis and Japanis, but there were only two races and two religions in the world, the rich and the poor" (Anand, 1942, p. 85). He was impressed by the Count's sympathy for the poor peasants. The Count was against the oppression of the peasants and termed the exploiters "non-cultivating, rent-receiving intermediaries and parasites" (Anand, 1942, p. 20). People from various classes ranging from the evicted tenants, the communists, the intellectuals, and the Congressmen accompanied the Count. These people had different motives while associating themselves with the Count. The Congress people forged good rapport with the Count because of the supporters he had amongst the discontented peasants and the participation of these peasants was most essential for the success of the movements initiated by the Congress. On the other hand, the communists had their own motif of

spreading the ideas of revolution amongst the landless peasants with the help of the Count.

The hypocrisy of some congress leaders was exposed who turned blind eye towards the problems of the peasants. In one such incident, when a young boy died begging and his relatives sought help from the Count for justice, the congress leader Tiwari expressed his inability to do anything for them. In fact, he tried to evade the situation when Lalu proposed to carry the body of the boy to Allahabad for placing it as an evidence of atrocity towards the peasants. Accordingly, they proceeded to Allahabad, but they were obstructed midway by the Nawab's men. A tenant was killed again by the Nawab's men. Lalu along with some companions somehow reached Allahabad. In Allahabad, Lalu met Mahatma Gandhi at Anand Bhawan. He had a conversation with Gandhi and he requested Gandhi to help the landless peasants and tenants fighting for their cause. However, Gandhi had a different plan for the whole of India: "If they render implicit obedience to me their general...then they should believe me when I say that if they spin and wear Khadi and abolish untouchability they will win Swaraj and be free from oppression" (Anand, 1942, p.205). But, Lalu became restless, as Gandhi's reply did not conform to his way of thinking regarding the problems and difficulties of the landless peasants and tenants. He almost lost hope with the action and philosophy of the national leaders in solving the problems and difficulties of the peasants.

Soon, the British government became aware of the developments in Rajgarh and cautioned the Count Rampal not to meddle with the government policies and to keep distance from his unruly companions. Therefore, a village named Kisan Nagar was established to accommodate the landless peasants and evicted tenants. Lalu and his companions were working actively in the pursuit of accommodating the peasants in

Kisan Nagar. A Kisan Sabha was also convened to show off the discontent of the peasants. The peasants grew bold and they ascertained:

They would not pay illegal exactions, would not acquiesce in forced labour, would not sell produce at market prices, and would not pay nazrana even if their refusal invited eviction, would not plough on evicted field, and would not rest till the eviction laws were repealed.” (Anand, 1942, pp. 269-270)

For fear of disturbance, the police intervened in the proceedings of the Kisan Sabha. The police dispersed the peasants. Lalu and his companions were taken into police custody. However, the English magistrate released the revolutionaries because he was apprehensive of riot by the discontented and beaten peasants thronging the Court. The peasants considered it as a vindication of their position and regarded it the beginning of their victory over the tyrannical system.

The British government sensed ensuing trouble and soon Count Rampal and his associates were put under house arrest. The Count refused to obey the order and hence he was arrested and sent to Rae Bareilly. Lalu and other disgruntled peasants decided to demonstrate their protest against the arrest of their leader and marched to Rae Bareilly. The British government was ready for such demonstration of the peasants. The police dealt with the demonstrators violently, firing at them killing many. Many peasants including Lalu were locked-up in the police station. While inside the prison, Lalu went back to his past and asked himself:

Why had a whole generation been wiped off the surface of the earth? He mumbled to himself impatiently as he had often done before. Why were there food riots in Germany? What had happened to the square of land I was promised

by the Sarkar? And why was I demobilized? Why the money famine? Why was the speculation in Bombay not stopped and why was the black money of the contractors not taxed? Why the scarcity, the restlessness, the uncertainty in Vilayat as well as in Hindustan? ....What is the destiny of man how can I control it? (Anand, 1942, p. 388)

When he thought about the crushed demonstration of Rae Bareilly, enlightenment came to him. While living inside the four walls of the prison, and Lalu thought: “Now is the time to learn the ways of struggle, my love, now is the time to live in and through the struggle...Now is the time to change the world” (Anand. 1942. p. 393). He decided to guide the peasants on the path of achieving their goals through revolution when he would be out of the prison. He knew that the peasants failed because he and other leaders could not guide them properly. Lalu understood that their common enemy was British government and its policy of exploitation. Lalu also found out that he had a definite advantage to lead the landless peasants and evicted tenants because of his peasant ancestry. He decided “to throw himself with great zeal into the work for the peasants, and had become one with them more easily than any one of the leaders” (Anand, 1942, p. 280). He determined to liberate himself from the clutches of fear and to a great extent he was successful in doing so.

Thus, the three novels—*TV*, *ATBW* and *TSATS* are glaring examples of the testament of the exploitation and subjugation of the peasants. The protagonist of these three novels Lalu is the embodiment of discontent, as from the very beginning he expressed his displeasure against the ossified rules and regulations of the society as well as of the religion. Of course, he had to pay the price of his discontent, which was contrary to the social and religious beliefs and rituals. His character is given primary importance to the

analysis because the actions and the events of the novels hovered around him. Lalu's character developed gradually from a naïve village boy to a potent revolutionary. His journey was quite an extraordinary one as he could have remained an unknown village boy of Nandpur village but his sheer will power to defy the odd made him what he was. Because of the versatility of Lalu's Character in these novels Alistair Niven termed him an 'Everyman' (Niven, 1972, p. 48). Elements of discontent in Lal Singh Trilogy are related to the exploitation of the peasants by various agencies of the society like the British government employees, the landlords, the money lenders etc. They might have subdued, but revolutionaries like Lal Singh, Count Rampal, Professor Verma etc. instilled into them an indomitable spirit to fight back against injustices and exploitations.

In this way, the trilogy is about the simple peasants who worked on the land but the fruit of their work had been usurped by the landlords, the moneylenders in connivance with the agents and official of the British government. These three novels of the trilogy not only reflected the shameless exploitation of the peasants but also the resilience of the poor peasants. The peasants were the discontented lot on the face of their exploitation. The novels occupied a broad panorama of life and events of the peasants. It also dealt with politics, history, economics, sociology, religion and folklore. There were different classes of people—peasants, moneylender's government agents and officials, manual workers, landlord, priests, sepoys and their officers, prostitutes, pimps, sadhus etc who contributed to the drama of life in these novels.

It may be argued that Mulk Raj Anand, through these novels, relentlessly attacked the hypocrisies of the society, the Congress leaders, the British government and the Sadhus. Lalu, the protagonist in all the three novels, showed his discontent from the beginning.

Unlike Lalu, other Anandian protagonists—Bakha, Munoo and Gangu were unable to show their discontent. Bakha was uneducated and an untouchable—he was never capable of showing dissent, Munoo was only a coolie to fight against the British government, and Gangu was old and believer of fate. They were passive and did not possess the courage to speak against the authority. But Lalu is different from them as he kept his faith on his peasant ancestry. He was definitely influenced by the brave narratives of his father about his participation in different wars. Lalu's tumultuous spirit was restless when he was a teenager, but after joining the British Indian army, his spirit became steady due to the influence of martial discipline.

Besides, when Lalu was in Germany as prisoner of war, his exposure to revolutionary personalities created a desire in him to work for the exploited and subjugated citizens of India. His demobilisation from the army after his return to India was shocking for him. But, when he returned to his village, he observed the miserable condition of the peasants living the life of destitute. It was an epiphanic moment—a moment of realisation which led him to take his decision to participate actively in liberating the peasant folks. Revolutionary intellectual Professor Verma served the role of a medium in connecting Lalu to the Count Rampal. From a susceptible teenager, Lalu became a mature adult with necessary control over his actions with the lofty ideals of fighting for the cause of the peasants. The Trilogy truthfully reflected the exploitative nature of the British government. But, at the same time, it also demonstrated the attitude of the Indian rulers and leaders who were supporting the British policy of exploiting the peasants for their narrow selfish motives. *TSATS* ends with Lalu's strong belief that in near future, he would be successful by forging strong brotherhood amongst the exploited peasants.

## **Summing up:**

In the Lal Singh Trilogy, it is observed that almost all the major characters such as Lal Singh, his father Nihal Singh, Lal Singh's eldest brother Sharm Singh, Kanwar Rampal Singh expressed their discontent and displeasure quite forcefully. There was rampant exploitation and subjugation of the peasants in the colonial period. The landlords forcefully evicted the tenants, the moneylenders tricked their clients and cheated them, the imperial police force sided with the landlords and the money lenders, and the British government officials exploited everybody with apparent impunity. In the British Indian army, there were nepotism, humiliation and harassment. It was a bleak world of corruption without any respite.

It is observed that though the exploiting and oppressing machineries were strong and malevolent, important characters like Lal Singh, Nihal Singh, Jhandu, Daddy Dhanoo, Uncle Kirpu, Kanwar Rampal Singh etc. never disinclined to do their duties. They were not fearful of the consequences of their actions. They were active and whenever occasion arose, they questioned the validity of such exploitative situations and actions. Unlike the protagonists of *Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*, these characters of the Lal Singh Trilogy believed in fighting against the unjust order. They were not subdued by the magnitude of the evil however strong it seemed to be. Lal Singh's discontent and protest against the religious hypocrisy, his fight against the landlords, Nihal Singh's unending diatribe against the village land lord, Jhandu's protest against the Patowary, Daddy Dhanoo and Uncle Kirpu's strong resistance against the atrocities of the Indian officers of the British Indian army, Kanwar Rampal Singh's unwavering support and fight for the cause of the landless peasants and the

tenants were some of the glaring examples of how they showed their revolting attitude against the oppressive order.

Therefore, on the basis of the analysis done on the three novels of the Lal Singh Trilogy, it can be argued that, the subdued spirit of rebellion is not distinctly observed here. Because, along with social discontent, the spirit of rebellion is discernible all through the novels of the Lal Singh Trilogy. Lal Singh and Kanwar Rampal Singh were educated and knew about the process of revolution. They understood the necessity of solidarity and goodwill, and so they organised Kisan Sabhas to unite the peasants against the exploitative forces. They may not be successful but they dared to fight against the injustice. At the end, Lal Singh said: "Revolution is a need of togetherness, Comrade, the need to curb malice among men, the need for men to stand together as brothers..." (Anand, 1942, p. 367). This is the ultimate message i.e., to fight against the injustice and oppression, the oppressed must understand that he is oppressed and then he must convey this message of oppression to his fellow beings, so that everybody can stand against the oppressive system together. Though full-fledged rebellion was not present in the Lal Singh Trilogy, the characters were not meek sufferers like Bakha, Munoo, and Gangu. They showed their fighting spirit whenever they were led by an able leader. This is what makes Anand's Lal Singh Trilogy different from his previous social novels which also throw light on the progress of the writer Mulk Raj Anand himself.



## References:

- Anand, M. R. (1942). *Letters on India*. London: Labour Book Service.
- Anand, M. R. (1942). *The sword and the sickle: A novel*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.
- Anand, M. R. (1960). *The Village*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Anand, M. R. (1973). *Author to critic: The letters of Mulk Raj Anand to Saros Cowasjee*. Saros Cowasjee (Ed.). Calcutta: Writers Workshop.
- Anand, M. R. (2008). *Across the black waters: A novel*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks.
- Nehru, J. (1936). *An autobiography*. London: The Bodley Head.
- Niven, A. (1972). The lala trilogy of Mulk Raj Anand. *The Literary Half Yearly*. Vol.13, No.1.
- Saini, B. S. (1975). *The social and economic history of the Punjab 1901-1939*. Delhi: ESS ESS Publications.
- Sharma, R. (1971). *Punjab in ferment*. New Delhi: S Chand & Co.
- Singh, K. (1966). *A history of the Sikhs*. Vol.2 1839-1964. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## CHAPTER 6

### ***THE BIG HEART: THE ONSLAUGHT OF INDUSTRIALISATION***

#### **Introduction:**

India was self-sufficient in the production of various textile, metal, jewellery products till the colonisation of the country by the British. With the coming of the British and subsequently their assumption of the political power in India, the Indian cottage industries suffered from severe competition with the factory made goods. The cottage industries of India were the source of employment and livelihood for the common Indians. The peasants in the villages were engaged in various activities related to the cottage industries, and at the same time, they also worked in the cottage industries for getting extra earnings. The peasant-turned artisans were poor and so they could not buy raw materials for their industries. The artisans were forced to depend upon the wealthy merchants, intermediaries, and moneylenders for the necessary patronage. The moneylenders lent money at very high rates of interest making it very difficult for the artisans to repay the debt. Big merchants paid the artisans in advance for the finished products so that they could get much profit. However, the artisans suffered for such practices as they got limited option for selling their products.

It was in such a difficult period, the cottage industries also lost the patronage of the royal courts and prominent aristocratic Indians. The cottage industry products lacked the quality and excellence of the machine made products. The decreasing popularity of the cottage industry products created severe livelihood crisis amongst the artisans. They were forced to stop working in the cottage industries in which they had been working for generations. Encouraged by the success of machine run industries in the west some

wealthy Indians established industries. Only skilled Indians who had the knowledge of machine could expect to get employment in the industries run by the machine. In such a situation, the village artisans did not have any other option left for them, but to leave their ancestral profession. Some of them turned to already over populated agricultural sector as landless peasants and some others migrated to industrial cities for working as labourers and menials.

It is in such a critical period that Anand situates his novel *The Big Heart*, which deals with the lives of the thathiars. The thathiars were living a simple life working in their cottage industries producing utensils. But when a machine run industry was established in their locality, everything changed forever. It is against such a background, that the impact of industrialisation as the cause of growing discontent in the minds of the thathiars has been analysed in this chapter. The focus shall be on the difficulties faced by the thathiars due to the establishment of the industry in their locality. Though industrialisation is a much-needed modern proposition, yet the unemployed thathiars staged a rebellion against the setting up of the industry, which ended in bloodshed. Contrary to such a violent means to fight for the rights of the thathiars, there was also attempt to organise a Trade Union to negotiate with the industrialists regarding the demands of the thathiars. This aspect is also analysed in this research endeavour.

### **Outline of the Novel:**

*TBH* revolved around Ananta the man with a big heart. He was an orphan who was brought up by Karmo, his stepmother. However, he did not show any love or respect for her. His growing up was such that he became careless in his activities. He was very strong physically for which village children used to call him as the holy bull. Ananta

worked in Bombay Naval Yard and in Ahmedabad Cotton Mills. It was in his stay in such big industrial cities which changed him completely. He noticed pain and suffering in man and understood the value of tenderness and love in the midst of such bleak atmosphere. He was living with Janki who was a beautiful young widow. Though she was suffering from tuberculosis, he loved her very much. When he returned to Amritsar along with his beloved Janki, he was much pained looking at the pathetic condition of the thathiars. His anger and strength became his valuable assets in leading the meek thathiars to struggle for their right.

The thathiars were skillful in transforming metals into utensils. However, there was fighting inside the community because of monetary considerations. Murli Dhar who was a well-to-do thathiar, took the help of a rich kaseras Gokul Chand, to establish the new factory to produce utensils by using machines. But while doing so, they also deprived the members of the thathiar community from the jobs and craftsmanship in the factory leaving them in a hopeless situation. Both the communities-kaseras and thathiars were Rajputs. Kaseras were related to the selling of the utensils, whereas, the thathiars manufactured the utensils in their smithies. Kaseras regarded their caste superior to the thathiars. Factory owners Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar were against the thathiars like Ananta, Ralia and Puran Singh Bhagat. They were fully aware of the activities of these thathiar leaders. Because of such hostility, Murli Dhar did not consider to invite his community members—the thathiars into his son Nikka's betrothal ceremony. The thathiars came to know about this and consequently they grew even more hostile towards these factory owners.

Ananta had his own principle and ideas in fighting against ignorance and poverty of the thathiar community. When he returned to Amritsar, he began working in his hereditary

vocation of making utensils. However, soon he realised that it was difficult to earn livelihood by making utensils due to the setting up of a factory in his locality. Machines brought about unemployment and misery to the thathiars, and they realised that their problem was due to the introduction of the machine by the local industrialists- Murli Dhar and Gokul Chand. Introduction of the machine was a curse to them. The situation was so grim that the thathiars were unable to find any solution to their problems. Ananta also suffered from the same predicament but he could discern the progress of the outside world, which made him aware that the introduction of the machine was inevitable. Therefore, Ananta realised that his thathiar brothers should accept the machine to make their life happy. He wanted to unite them to bargain with the factory owners to give them job. However, they laughed at Ananta's appeal and did not give any attention to it. Ananta's relationship with Janki was the main reason behind the thathiars' reluctance to regard him as their leader. The thathiars behaved in this irresponsible manner because of their illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty. But Ananta wanted to do his best to improve the living standard of his thathiar brothers. In spite of his love and concern for the thathiars, Ananta had to sacrifice his life for the sake of his community.

### **Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion in *The Big Heart*:**

*TBH* is about the experience and incidents of a day in the life of the protagonist Ananta. The action of the novel took place in the cat-killers lane or Billimaran. Ananta was living with Janki without marrying her, and by doing so, he broke traditional social norms. Ananta did not consider it something serious but his community took it as transgression and harmful for the society. So both of them were considered outcasts in

the thathiar community. Such a daring act on the part of Ananta prevented him from mixing freely with his thathiar brothers.

Ananta and many other thathiars lost their livelihood because of the industry established by Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar. Ananta possessed the necessary skill and experience to be employed in the new factory. But he was refused a job in the factory established by Murli Dhar, the head of the thathiar community. Both the factory owners Gokul Chand and Khushal Chand noticed the difficult condition of the thathiars. They wanted to offer jobs to the thathiars, but their partner Murli Dhar had contrary opinion regarding the thathiars. He was totally against thathiars like Ananta and Ralia. Murli Dhar had different view regarding Ananta because he considered Ananta a rival to the success of his son. For Murli Dhar, Ananta was a rogue who instigated the thathiars against him and his factory. But his suspicion was baseless. Such injustice infuriated Ananta, but he subdued his anger by considering it something insignificant. However, Ananta regarded these wealthy kaseras and thathiars- Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar responsible for the unmitigated misery of the thathiar community.

Ananta knew that technology and development were two issues running side by side. Without technology, man would not have been able to progress to the height of civilization. He accepted the machine but could not approve of the attitude of the factory owners as they refused to employ the jobless thathiars in the factory. He was aware of the discontent of Ralia and his unruly companions and their hostility towards the factory. He requested Ralia and his companions to find some work so that they could earn for their children. He told them that in such a critical period of their life they must do their best for the survival. But, he did not find fault with them because they were illiterate and naïve enough to understand the technological development

throughout the world. He also knew from his experience that without unity amongst the thathiars shrewd businessmen like Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar could not be forced to give the thathiars employment in the new factory. Therefore, he insisted on the need to put pressure on the factory owners to employ them in the factory not out of sympathy but as a right. But at the same time, he was also aware that he could not persuade the thathiars to accept his suggestions because of his scandalous relationship with Janki. So, he was helpless as his fellow thathiars were sticking to some non-issues like his staying with Janki, and his disregard to traditional rituals etc. They considered him a notorious social rule breaker who dared to live with without marrying Janki. Such callous indifference of the thathiars to his suggestions made him disheartened.

Ananta was conscious that man of his nature could hardly act following the customs of the society. He had a discussion with the poet Puran Singh Bhagat and told him the reason for the perplexity of the thathiars regarding their action—“They haven't been able to make up their minds, Sardarji, whether they hate machines too much to take jobs in the factory or whether they are really looking for jobs there...” (Anand, 1945, p. 82). He was aware of the exploitation of the government agents and so he remarked, “It is those respectable people who, having no strength, enter Government service, who are responsible for oppressing people everywhere! I am much more concerned about those ‘doots’ than about the ‘doots’ of hell!” (Anand, 1945, p. 84). He could well discern the misery of his fellow thathiars and the pitiless behaviour of the government and its agents, and was ready to bring about the necessary change. Therefore, he declared, “I would take the plunge into the ocean. After all, men have gone to their deaths with a song on their lips, and here is the promise of an abounding life, certainly of struggle. Let the storm rage, I say!” (Anand, 1945, p. 85).

Ananta wanted to accept the best elements of the machine because machines could change the fate of his community of thathars to which he belonged. He realised that the sense of a traditional life was also very essential for understanding of the present condition, which could be done by accepting the good things of the past. Because he earlier lived in cities, he was aware of the technological developments which could help man in living a comfortable life. He understood the advantages and the disadvantages of the machine. But, for the coppersmiths, the machine was the real monster, which deprived them of their legitimate livelihood. Ananta's call for accepting the machine as the harbinger of new age and new thinking went unheeded. They were unable to understand Ananta's preaching:

This is the machine age, son,

This is the machine age

We are the men who will master it. (Anand, 1945, p. 19)

Ananta had positive outlook on life, and he used to speak: "There is no talk of money, brothers; one must have a big heart" (Anand, 1945, p. 19). He understood the difficulties of the coppersmiths in earning their livelihood after the introduction of the machine. And therefore, he urged them to accept the machine as their savior, but not as their enemy. It was apparent, Ananta was guided by what Anand (1986) said in *Apology for Heroism*—"What is needed is the big, the understanding, the generous, wise heart, informed by passion and schooled by a knowledge born of love" (p. 156). In the novel, Ananta was not suffering from inactivity as he understood the importance of solidarity and brotherhood. However, the members of his community were suffering from poverty, ignorance, and hatred. They were unwilling to listen to others. Ananta understood the necessity of the trade union to safeguard the interest of the labourers,



which led Margaret Berry to comment: “In no other novel has Anand so attempted to organize a whole social, economic and political picture” (Cawasjee, 1992, p. 143).

When he observed some of the thathiars—Ralia, Viroo, Arjun, Dina etc. waiting in front of the new factory gate in the hope of getting job, he approached them and talked to Ralia. He wanted to bring change into their lives through revolution. His experience of working in Bombay and Ahmedabad, and his exposure to the ways of Trade unions in those places, led him to put his belief in revolution to bring in change. However, at the same time, he was also wondering at his sudden attraction towards revolution. Earlier, he was not much concerned about others as he was busy enjoying his life eating and drinking freely. He had a very selfish attitude regarding life. He realised that the root of his love for revolution was due to his sheer selfishness in his youthful days: “... his sudden love of ‘Revolution’, was due to the disgust he felt for the selfishness of his youth” (Anand, 1945, p. 21). But slowly things changed and a feeling of failure came over him making him restless when he observed the suffering thathiars. The miserable condition of the workless thathiars made Ananta introspective. One day, while returning home, he observed a heart-rending scene of a woman giving birth to a child by a rubbish heap. The scene forced him to ask himself about the reason of the terrible sufferings of the thathiar community. Though he was very tired, he decided to do his best for the betterment of the poor thathiars. Such a miserable plight enhanced his doubt regarding the existence of God:

O God, O God, O God, as Gautam Buddha once called as he contemplated the misery of Kapilvastu before renouncing the evil. Dizzy with the heat and perplexion, he determines to do something for the welfare of these suffering

people. No God, he felt, could make such a world and consign it to such suffering. (Anand, 1945, p. 68)

Ananta was apprehensive of a great disaster approaching the community due to the growing discontent of the thathiars. Even in his dream also, he had symbolic vision of such disaster proceeding towards them. He was aware of the atmosphere of hopelessness due to hunger and poverty and wanted to save his coppersmith brothers at any cost. Ananta realised his worth as an avant-garde to bring in revolution for the greater benefit of the thathiar community. Therefore, he compared the need of the machine with the necessity of revolution. He remarked that a switch could control the machine, so the controlling switch of the revolution must be with the revolutionaries. Therefore, he decided to organise the thathiars into a Trade Union and fight for them by bringing in revolution. Ananta Said: “I have no doubt that I want to do something, but I was not sure until now what to do” (Anand, 1945, p. 93). To make a revolution possible, Ananta ambitiously proclaimed that he would go to Roos and meet their revolutionary leader for the better understanding of the revolution.

Ananta told Ralia that first they should unite themselves into a union and then they should demand jobs inside the factory. He expressed the strength of the union by citing examples from his experiences in the trade unions of Bombay and Ahmedabad. However, the poor and illiterate thathiars like Ralia did not possess the necessary wit to understand the importance of the union. To make him understand the necessity of unity, Ananta told Ralia—“If you have asked Channa whether he can give you jobs and he has said no, then resolve to get together as men. It will make us brothers and make our voice irresistible...” (Anand, 1945, p. 29). But he failed to impress Ralia and his companions because they did not want to do any thing following his advice. It is

evident that their only concern was to get a job and then to have wages in cash. One of Ralia's companions, Viroo was afraid of the machine and he referred to Gandhiji's comment that those who believed in machine would definitely be destroyed by it which came to be true in Ananta's case.

Ananta's plea for accepting the machine did not make much impact on the unruly thathiars. Ralia was furious about the machine and Ananta was unable to make any impression on him. He frankly told Ananta that they were not impressed by his talk because they were not convinced about the worth of his stay in Bombay and Ahmedabad. According to Ralia, the machine was nothing other than a bloodsucker of the workers who worked with it. Out of sheer anger and frustration Ralia even slapped the foreman of the factory Channa for not complying with the demands of the thathiars. Such a hostile atmosphere made Ananta restless, as he could not convince his thathiar brothers about the importance of accepting the machine.

It was a very difficult time because the workless thathiars were very much agitated. They were willing to fight against anybody who would disregard their demand of employment. Lack of money led to lack of food, and the thathiars were suffering intolerably from hunger. Ananta understood this problem and therefore, he urged the thathiars to accept of the advent of machine. He remarked about the worth of the machine in this way: "Like the fashionable Vilayati bride, we have accepted, we ought to accept the dowry of machines she has brought, and make use of them, provided we keep our hearts. Machines don't think or feel, it is men who do" (Anand, 1945, p. 40).

The ignorant thathiars could not understand such simple facts about the usefulness of the machine. However, they were skeptical about Ananta's activities- that he might

have secret link with the owners of the factory. His attempt to form a Trade union for the thathiars also went futile because of such suspicion. Ananta argued that if they could form the Trade union, then the thathiars would be able to bargain with the factory owners. But as they misunderstood him, it was painful for him to remain a mute bystander to the sufferings of his fellow thathiars. Ananta remarked:

Ralia and Company think that I like the machines which have come into the lane and that these machines are the cause of their doom. They say that the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi is against the machines. And I don't know which way to begin to make them see. (Anand, 1945, p. 40)

He was aware that he could not lose heart at the moment of adversity. He remembered what Puran Singh Bhagat told: “Never Surrender to fear—never, never, never...You will be so strengthened that you will go a long way—To oneself and others” (Anand, 1945, p. 69). He realised that the life was contaminated with injustice, cruelty, dishonesty, and in such a situation it was difficult to find out the actual path of life and proper course of action.

In such a hopeless situation, Ananta decided to meet the poet Puran Singh Bhagat whom he regarded as his guru. The poet had been to different countries like Britain, China, Japan and Russia. He ran a charity house Sant Harnam Das where there was provision for free and frank expression in discussions. In one such discussion, Ananta argued in support of the machine and its benefits. He advocated for an organisation which could embrace all the thathiars into its fold and then to wage a forceful war against the factory owners. But Ralia opposed Ananta and he raised his voice against the machine and the factory owners. Ralia's friend Viroo regarded the British

responsible for bringing machines to India. In this context, he said: “They all wanted to eat dung and drink urine in that very factory this morning!” (Anand, 1945, p. 57). Both Ralia and Viroo supported the revolution propagated by Satyapal. They were against the wealthy thathiars who established the factory. Ananta requested them to think about their own contradictory attitudes i.e., they wanted job in the factory, but at the same time, they had hatred for the factory. Such contradiction was detrimental to the well-being of the thathiars. So, Puran Singh Bhagat told them to remain cautious while using words against each other. He was sticking to the idea of forming the trade union. He said:

Test a friend in trouble, brothers. In addition, I beg you with my joined hands to see that if we want to prosper, we must not fight amongst ourselves I tell you there is no hope for our land except in Revolution. However, that requires devotion and thought. (Anand, 1945, p. 62)

On Puran Singh Bhagat’s advice, they even went to meet a lawyer Mr. Latif who could inform them about the procedure of forming a Trade Union. They wanted to know the process of staging a revolution to safeguard their rights. It was a hopeful beginning of forming a trade union but unfortunately, their attempt went in vain, as they were unable to meet him. The disheartened thathiars almost lost the interest in forming a Trade Union after this.

Other characters like Satyapal and Mahasha Hans Raj were against the machine. Satyapal was a selfish student leader who wanted to misguide the angry thathiars against machine and the factory. He also forcefully asked the thathiars not to seek job in the factory. From his speeches, it was clear that he gave primary importance to his

selfish personal gains rather than the interest of the suffering thathiars. He talked against communism and to gain ground on his logic he gave instances of Roos and China where misuse of power had been rampant. He openly criticised Ananta for his inclination towards the revolution. He wanted immediate result by raising a violent revolution. He believed that to make a revolution it was essential to take resort to violence. He said: "We will have some blood-letting soon, and shoot all the traitors who have joined hands with the Sarkar" (Anand, 1945, p.153). He did not show any respect for the idea of forming the Trade union because it would only lead to consumption of time. Satyapal opined , "There is no time to form the union. You must act if you are to make an impression" (Anand, 1945, p. 154). Unlike Ananta, Satyapal disregarded the power of unity.

Like Satyapal, Mahasha Hans Raj was also against the machine. He claimed to have the influence of Arya Samaj on him because of his upbringing in such environment. He preached about Gandhian thoughts and requested people to follow it. His opinion was that there would not be any mental satisfaction with the people who worked inside the factory. He was sceptical about the intention of the British in introducing machines in India. He was a staunch believer in Gandhi and religion. He expressed: "I say, what Mahatma Gandhi has always said, that man is not all belly but also belief, that whatever you do you must do it in accordance with our Hindu dharma" (Anand, 1945, p. 147). He opposed the use of machine and regarded religion essential for truthfulness and honesty.

Unlike Satyapal and Mahasha Hans Raj, Ananta's understanding of the problems of thathiars was not theoretical. Satyapal was educated and he possessed high oratorical skill supported by knowledge of the books. Mahasha Hans Raj championed the causes

of religion and morality. Ananta's knowledge of the problems and sufferings of the thathiars was practical and was based on his first hand knowledge of the problems of the thathiar community. He even organised the panchayat meeting in his shop to discuss about the problems of the thathiars. He requested Puran Singh Bhagat to attend the panchayat in his shop. He was hopeful that "Revolution" would possibly abolish sufferings of the thathiars and bring about happiness:

...taking the plunge into the struggle for 'Revolution' he had entered an arena where only the hardest search would yield a way among the thorny paths of the tiger-infested jungle of this world...And that required first that one must become a man oneself, to battle with the despairs which assailed one, and to believe in happiness and the possibility of abolishing unnecessary suffering, to settle one's doubts patiently in fact to believe in 'Revolution' as a new kind of religion. (Anand, 1945, p. 139)

Later, he even criticised Puran Singh Bhagat as the poet had doubt regarding his ambition to stage a revolution. He said candidly that people like Puran Singh Bhagat could only think:

There is no solution.... You force yourself to fear the truth by talking aloud to yourself as if you were making an effort to believe that you can do something. And all the time you want to do nothing! The trouble with you learned folk is that you spend so much of your time looking at your own feelings and at the end you are too weak to act. (Anand, 1945, p. 93)

His conversation with the poet was a good example of his maturity to take big decision on his own.

Then, Ananta explained the need of the hour by saying that the situation demanded immediate action as it was the question of belly not the soul: “A well fed man needs religion, Mahashaji; it is a question of the belly! The soul is with us all the time, because we are ourselves according to the Hindu faith” (Anand, 1945, p. 155). Therefore, he repeatedly exhorted the thathiars to join the union and to indulge themselves in the revolution for their existence. While working for his community, he even forgot to look after his beloved Janki. It was his concern for the revolution, which forced him to remain unmindful of Janki’s health.

In the Panchayat meeting, there was an intense attempt to decide the future course of action regarding the miserable condition of the thathiars. Puran Singh Bhagat, Satyapal, Mahasha Hans Raj and Ananta had their distinctive viewpoints and suggestions but there was no consensus. Puran Singh Bhagat wanted to get support of everybody for he believed in the strength of collective action to achieve success. He was against Satyapal’s concept of revolution and tried to infuse the necessity of revolution into the minds of the thathiars: “I certainly don’t believe that communists want to destroy personality or the soul. They wouldn’t have beaten the Germans off in this war if they had no souls and had no respect for human beings” (Anand, 1945, p. 148). Like Ananta, he was also in favour of peaceful revolution and therefore wanted to inform the jobless thathiars about the necessity of forming a Trade union. He told them:

That is exactly why I came here to beg you and Lala Anant Ram not to encourage these brothers to do anything, which may disturb things. After all, at the moment all members of our nation, whether they be employers or employees, together worthy of respect, are equal partners in the struggle against evil.” (Anand, 1945, p. 149)



He requested the thathiars to inspire themselves by the teachings of Guru Nanak: “Only a revolution will complete the information of Guru Nanak” (Anand, 1945, p. 150).

However, it was Ananta who requested Ralia and his companions to take part in a peaceful rally to the factory. He said:

The Revolution is not yet. And it isn't merely in the shouting It is only through a great many conflicts between then employers, authorities and the workers, in a whole number of battles which our comrades elsewhere are fighting, that there will come the final over-throw of bosses.” (Anand, 1945, p. 209)

But Ralia and his friends opposed such non-violent protest. As they were influenced by Satyapal, they wanted a violent revolution and decided to go for a strike with Satyapal.

There was no consensus amongst the thathiars, Ralia and his friends decided to go on a strike. Satyapal and Prof. Mejed accompanied Ralia and others in their march to the factory to attack and destroy it. Prof. Mejed incited the poor thathiars to attack the factory because, “The real enemy is hidden there, that factory, which is going to convert you all from feudal slaves to wage slaves” (Anand, 1945, p. 209). Ralia led from the front and he went on destroying the factory at will. He threatened the factory workers to get out of his way if they had any intention to save their lives. Instigated by Satyapal, other thathiars also took part in destroying the factory. At the time of such mayhem in the factory there was nobody to dissuade them from such destructive activities. Unfortunately, at such a crucial moment, Ananta was not there to intervene as he went to meet Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar to achieve a settlement for the thathiars. He was unable to foresee such a sudden change of the events at the factory site. Meanwhile, at

the factory site, Ralia completely changed himself into a destroyer uttering such words as:

This is the Kaliyug, they say, Han, the Kali Yug!...Acha, then, I am the destroyer of this madarchod age, Shiv!...Come, bothers, I am Shiv.' 'Fire and steel are good servants, but evil masters! I will destroy them and laugh as they used to laugh Ha, ha, ha!' '...I will become a bigger machine with this hammer, a bigger master, greater than your...*Ho, ho, ho.*" (Anand, 1945, p. 214)

When Ananta became aware of such untoward happenings, he rushed there to dissuade Ralia and his companions from the destruction of the factory. Though he faced stiff opposition from Ralia, he overpowered Ralia and seized the hammer from his hand. But demonic Ralia struck Ananta on the head with a hammer and killed him instantly.

Thus, Ananta sacrificed himself for the sake of the welfare of his thathiar community. When Puran Singh Bhagat heard about this tragic incident, he came there to meet Janki. According to the poet, Ananta was a martyr because he sacrificed his life for the sake of his thathiar brothers. Puran Singh Bhagat prophesised that a day would come when the poor thathiars would be able to recognise Ananta's sacrifice and would remember him with love and respect. He said, "Why, they may even recall the wise things he said to them now that he is dead. For what can be more persuasive than the death of a man who was so sincere in his love for them" (Anand, 1945, p.229). He requested Janki to forgive Ralia and his companions for the crime they had committed.

After the demise of Ananta, Janki found herself nowhere. She felt as if she was in a vortex. Janki decided to become a revolutionary following the ideals of Ananta. Janki regarded it her sacred duty to fight for the same cause for which Ananta sacrificed

himself. Puran Singh Bhagat assured her of his support when she would be able to come forward for that noble obligation. He said, “One has to take risks...in order to prepare for the new life. That is the only way in which we shall learn to become new men and women” (Anand, 1945, p. 230). She made herself ready to accompany the poet in her new destiny. Though Ananta was no longer there in Billimaran, the preparation for the revolution must go on and Janki took the responsibility along with the poet Puran Singh Bhagat for it.

Thus, from the above analysis, it can be observed that in *TBH* the thathiar community is discontented against the introduction of machine. *TBH* is marked by the conflict between hereditary thathiars and the capitalists. The use of machine might have helped the thathiars immensely if they had accepted it. But on the contrary, the thathiars destroyed the industry. In the process, Ananta had to sacrificed his life at the hands of Ralia. In fact, Ananta became a martyr for the cause of the machine. Except Ananta and the poet Puran Singh Bhagat, other thathiars did not give any importance to the power of unity. In fact, they were against the formation of a Trade union. Unlike the other characters of Anand, in *TBH*, Ananta, from the very beginning, gave due emphasis to the much-needed unity amongst the thathiars.

### **Summing Up:**

In *TBH*, it is observed that almost all the characters in the novel actively expressed their discontents regarding the establishment of the industry by the wealthy industrialists Murli Dhar and Gokul Chand. The thathiars can be divided into three groups—the first group is the labourers working in the industry. The the second group can hardly be regarded as a group as only Ananta is the member who supported the establishment of

the industry. Amongst the thathiars, only Ananta could realise the advantage of the machine for which he advocated in support of the industry set up by Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar. His logic was that in modern world, the rise of the machine could not be obstructed for a long period. Hence, it was necessary that the thathiar should accept it whole-heartedly. Therefore, Ananta proposed for uniting the thathiars into a Trade Union to fight against the industrialists under the aegis of the Union. Ananta had previous knowledge regarding the usefulness of the Trade Union movement because of his experience of working in Bombay and Ahmedabad. The last group is the most prominent as all the disgruntled and unemployed thathiars are in this group and Ralia is their leader. These thathiars wanted immediate action and therefore rejected Ananta's proposal. The student leader Satyapal incited these thathiars for a bloody rebellion and they were impressed by such an appeal. They wanted to destroy the industry, because, according to them, they were unemployed due to the industry. Apparently, it was the reality but such an action on their part could not bring happiness to both the sides—the industrialists and the thathiars.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it is clear that Ananta was aware of the necessity of solidarity and unity and therefore, he was insisting on uniting the thathiars into Trade Unions, and then wanted to lead them to a peaceful revolution to bring about a certain change in the lives of the thathiars. Riemenschneider (1967) commented: "While Lalu has discovered, after a painful process, that living in harmony with oneself is the prerequisite for success, Ananta possesses this knowledge right from the very beginning. His problem is the realization of his ideas" (p. 15).

The labourers of the newly established industry were not discontented as they got wages in a difficult situation while most of their fellow thathiars lost their livelihood

because of the industry. Ananta was discontented because he could not convince his fellow thathiars to organise them into a Trade Union. He was aware of the power of the revolution and he along with the poet Puran Singh Bhagat did their best to help the thathiars by making them understand the power of the revolution. Ananta was in favour of peaceful revolution without any bloodshed. He wanted to force the industrialist duo Murli Dhar and Gokul Chand to take the thathiars into their industry as workers. Ananta, as a conscientious thathiar accepted the introduction of machine and asked his fellow thathiars to use it for their own benefit. But discontented thathiars like Ralia, Dina and others were totally against the industry. They were vengeful because the industry had destroyed their ancestral profession. When the student leader Satyapal incited them against the machine, they gladly accepted it. In sheer anger, Ralia along with his friends destroyed the industry. Ralia's revolt against the machine went too far. His anger destroyed the industry but at the same time, it also destroyed Ananta, his friend.

Ananta's death at the end served as a revelation for the violent thathiars. After committing the crime, Ralia became dumb with terror, as he did not kill Ananta in cold blood. However, his discontent was so overpowering that he could not restrain himself from such a heinous action. Riemenschneider (1967) commented in this regard:

Anand has created a symbol in Ananta, which triumphs over death. Ananta has attained the status of liberty, which is necessary to fight constructively against the evil system of society. His outward failure is an inward triumph and is not a consequence of his imperfections. (p. 16)

Anand was aware of the difficulties faced by the coppersmiths because of his first hand experience of knowing them when he was in Amritsar. C. D. Narasimhaiah (1969) expressed:

Anand has fused the personal issue into the public one of the leadership of the coppersmiths and has posed the issue of the suffering in store for a leader whose lead is questioned because of certain social injunctions interfering with the holiness of the heart, sacred to the leader, as an individual. (p. 132)

With the martyrdom of Ananta, it seems that the issue of modernisation becomes a matter of great consideration for his followers. By sacrificing his life, Ananta becomes a revolutionary for the greater benefit of his community.

#### **References:**

- Anand, M. R. (1945). *The big heart: AS novel*. London: Hutchinson International Authors Ltd.
- Anand, M. R. (1977). Why I write. In *Indo-English Literature: A collection of critical eSsays*. Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan.
- Anand, M.R. (1986). *Apology for heroism*. Bombay: Kutub-Popular.
- Narasimhaiah, C. D. (1969). *The swan and the eagle*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.
- Riemenschneider, D. (1967). *An ideal of men in Anand's novels*. Bombay: Kutub Popular.
- Cowasjee, S. (1992). "The big heart: a note", In, R. K. Dhawan (Ed.). *The Novels of M.R. Anand*. New Delhi: Prestige Books.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Indian novelist, short story writer and art critic Mulk Raj Anand is one of the most famous and most accomplished of the fiction writers who wrote in English in the Pre-Independence India. Often called the Zola or Balzac of India, Mulk Raj Anand provides a realistic and sympathetic portrait of the poor and oppressed people of India in nearly all his full-fledged novels. Anand, had been one of the founding members of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association, and is often remembered as one of the three 'founding fathers' of the Indian English novel, the other two being Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan. Hemenway provides a very significant remark regarding Anand's contribution to Indian English Writing, which reads like the following:

India offers native English language novelists who can match their Anglo Indian counterparts in professional polish, hackneyed exoticism, propagandist diatribes, and startlingly original endeavours. The novel in India is no longer the special province of alien Englishmen. Indo Anglian novelists have been multiplying in geometric progression as Anglo Indian writers have been fading from the scene. One most influential, indispensable pioneer of the Anglo-Indian tradition is Mulk Raj Anand. (Hemenway, 1975, p. 3)

Although Anand wrote his fiction in English, the impossibility of communicating his heartfelt thoughts in a foreign language is best reflected in what he stated, "I literally translate all the dialogue in my novels from my mother tongue and think out the narrative mostly the same way" (Anand, 1948, pp 23-24). However, despite his doubts, Anand justifies the use of English: "I did not regard the dictionary as my God, and that

made my write simply and to convey Indian sentiment, as far as possible, in my kind of Indo English” (Anand, 1948, p. 18). As Hemenway (1975) further observes, Mulk Raj Anand advocated for Indian writing in English primarily because he regarded English as a language, which while enslaving the Indians, ironically inculcated in them the ideals of freedom, and because he was aware of the value of English as the language of international communication. This aspect should be discussed in detail when the issue of representation of India in a foreign language by a writer like Mulk Raj Anand or by any other Indian English writer is taken into consideration.

This present research study proposed to look critically at the elements of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand. The study finds that Anand looks at the social realities of his time and depicts the real image of man in his fiction with his highly sensitised awareness of contemporary Indian life. He had full faith in the potentiality of man, and this is expressed through his humanism depicted in his novels, which are taken for this study. Anand, as a writer, championed the essential dignity of man in social, cultural, economical and political arenas, and whenever he saw any hindrance, he raised objection towards it. His protagonists are innocent and submissive like Bakha, Munoo and Gangu, or supporter of progress and Industrialisation like Ananta, or peasant revolutionary like Lal Singh. This is what makes Mulk Raj Anand’s contribution into the field of Indian English writing during colonial Indian quite remarkable.

### **Summary of the Findings:**

In the novel *Untouchable*, the protagonist Bakha suffers because of his caste, and because caste is related to birth, he cannot change it. It is observed that, Bakha, his



father as well as his sister and the other members of his community, are relegated to sub-human position because they are untouchables. Bakha's sufferings at the hands of upper caste Hindus lead him to the realisation of his position in the society. However, the problems confronted by Bakha and other untouchables of his society are not so simple to explain. They are deprived of the rights of living a free life. Their subjugation is not peripheral, it is deep and scathing, which makes the untouchables mute and helpless. They are really discontented and their fate is same with that of their ancestors i.e., to face the stigma of untouchability till the end of their life. They are aware that this curse is unending and their progenies are also not free from it.

Anand's portrayal of Bakha brings hope because Bakha is a real human being full of love for life. Unlike his father Lakha, who is more than acquiescing in accepting his position as an untouchable, Bakha is different from him as he questions his fate. He searches for the solution to his plight. He understands that the purity and pollution principle on the basis of which Bakha and his people are tormented and exploited can only be defeated by a scientific solution like flush system. When Bakha learns about this solution to their subjugation, his smoldering passion is subdued and he becomes hopeful of a better future. In *U*, caste is the visible element of social discontent. However, this discontent is latent within the hearts of the untouchables, only in Bakha, it is expressive. Though he is lonely in his pursuit, yet he has been searching for alternatives to alleviate them from the stigma of untouchability. He meets the Salvation Army colonel, listens to Gandhi's speech and understands the poet's indication for the flush system for the eradication of the menace of untouchability. He finds this solution from the poet most tenable and so he becomes hopeful of a better future without the scourge of untouchability.

In *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*, both the protagonists Munoo and Gangu are the targets of exploitation and humiliation. Munoo is a fourteen years old boy and Gangu is a farm labourer. Munoo is an orphan while Gangu is a landless peasant. Both are helpless on the face of merciless exploitation. Munoo is dependent on his uncle Daya Ram, but his uncle decides to send him to work in the household of Babu Nathoo Ram, the accountant of the bank in which his uncle is a fourth grade employee. Daya Ram is expecting financial and other benefits from Nathoo Ram, as he is a superior officer in the bank. Love and human consideration do not hold good due to the lure of money. Munoo's helplessness after the demise of his parents is not a matter of any consideration for Daya Ram. In Nathoo Ram's household, in Prabha's pickle factory, in Sir George Cotton Mills, and in Mrs. Mainwaring's household, everywhere Munoo is exploited in some way or the other. In every occasion, Munoo is a mute sufferer. He is seen as a coolie and his only capital is his labour. It seems the world is at competition to deprive him of his dignity as a human being.

Same is the case with Gangu, who comes in search of fortune from Hoshiarpur to Macpherson tea estate in Assam. However, in the tea estate, Gangu faces the inferno—he is stripped of everything he possesses by the ruthless machinery of exploitation. Gangu is a believer in Karma and he accepts every misfortune as an expiation of his previous misdeeds. Never ever, he dares to question his position in the world as a human being. His attempt to save the honour of his daughter brings his tragic end. Both Munoo and Gangu are passive to the demands of life because they act only as the cogs of wheel—they never attempt to go against the tide. There is discontent in their hearts because of the exploitation and oppression they face. Munoo escapes from the scene when he feels that the burden of exploitation is beyond the capacity of his toleration.

While living with Mrs. Mainwaring, he accepts his exploitation until the last moment of his tragic end. On the other hand, Gangu faces life with all the suffering. He does not search for any solution for his sufferings nor does he try to avert it. His attitude is that of resignation. Confidence is lacking in both the characters. Lack of education and belief in Karma are the two possible reasons behind such attitude towards life.

The Lal Singh Trilogy comprises of three novels *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters*, and *The Sword and the Sickle*. The Trilogy is different from *U*, *C* and *TLAB* in the sense that there is difference in the attitude of the protagonist towards life. Unlike Bakha, Munoo and Gangu, the protagonist of the three novels of the *Trilogy*, Lal Singh is full of life and vigour. He is educated in modern education up to class eight. Lal Singh's attitude to life is to challenge the obstacle. His peasant father instills into him the attitude of revolt against the British. At the beginning, he is naïve and immature and therefore he attempts to revolt against those customs and traditions which are familiar to him. His first attempt of revolt is targeted against religious norms of the society. Then he goes against village norms of not eating in the Mohammedan shop. Lal Singh has an indomitable spirit within him and involuntarily he caters to it. Of course, he also pays the price of such darings. Circumstances force him to enroll himself in British Indian army and then he goes to Europe to take part in the First World War. In the battlefield, Lal Singh never shrinks away from the act of valour.

When Lal Singh becomes a war prisoner in Germany, he befriends the revolutionary leader Barkatullah and learns about revolution. Returning to India, he finds himself jobless as he has already been decommissioned from his service due to his suspicious activities in Germany as a prisoner of war. Lal Singh's dream of working for the peasants comes to reality when he goes to Rajgarh to fight for the sake of the cause of

the landless peasants. Lal Singh's determination to fight for the landless peasants and tenants shows his uncompromising attitude towards life. While working in support of them, in Allahabad he meets M. K. Gandhi, the greatest leader of India's freedom struggle. He deliberates with Gandhi with conviction and courage. He finds Gandhi's solution to the problems of the landless peasants inadequate. According to him, Gandhi's perspective to bring about the end to the sufferings of landless peasants is larger one—as Gandhi considers that the independence of India will bring about the much-awaited freedom to every citizen of India. On the other hand, Lal Singh wants immediate result. He seeks the solution to the suffering of landless peasants. Count Rampal helps him in this regard. When the Count is arrested, Lal Singh takes the responsibility on himself and leads the peasants to revolt against the unjust British government. The revolt is crushed mercilessly and Lal Singh is imprisoned. In Lal Singh Trilogy, Lal Singh is capable of fighting against the injustice and exploitation. His journey is quite a remarkable one. From a naïve teenager to a fiery revolutionary—Lal Singh epitomises the true spirit of a revolutionary. His attempt to raise the spirit of revolution amongst the discontented tenants and landless peasants is sufficient to term him a true rebel.

In *TBH*, the protagonist of the novel Ananta understands the cruelties of life as he has the experience of working in the industries of big cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad. Such experiences help Ananta to be aware of the importance of unity amongst the workers in the work place. He understands the necessity of Trade Union and what it can do for the workers. When the young men of his thatiar community suffer from unemployment due to the establishment of a machine run industry for the production of utensils, he suggests for going to unite these young workers under a Trade Union.

Ananta knows the importance of machine for the development but at the same time, he is also careful about the security of his thatthiar brothers. He urges them to co-operate with the owners of the factory as he considers that in the present age development can be expedited with the introduction of the machine. He supports working in the factory protecting the rights of the workers. Therefore, when his friend Ralia destroys the factory, he tries his best to restrain him from doing so. He embraces death for the sake of the cause of development. He supports modern developments with the introduction of machine because he believes that it will harbinge the welfare of the common people. Ananta has close affinity with Lal Singh, because he understands the value of unity from the very beginning. His progressive outlook makes him a broad hearted man as the title of the novel suggests. Ananta's death acts as a revelation for the thatthiars—to work for the benefits of the fellow beings whole-heartedly.

Finally, it can be stated that Mulk Raj Anand realistically portrayed the glaring social issues of his time through his novels. He wanted to strike the conscience of his readers to understand the problems of the untouchables, the labourers, and the peasants who were suffering from inhuman treatment in the society. Bakha, Munoo, Gangu, Lal Singh, Ananta represent the society of their time. They are passionately engaged in their struggle with the society. Lal Singh and Ananta understand the value of unity and they do their best to bring their fellow beings within the fold of Union. They act dynamically and repeatedly express that the essence of life lies in the battle for achieving development for the sake of one's own as well as for the community's development. They undermine the hardship they will face while working for the greater humanity. Munoo and Gangu are passive as they accept their position in the society. Their discontent is real but reaction to such discontent is contained within them. They are

helpless on the face of cruel exploitation and accept death in a brutal society. It also brings to the fore the realisation that the situation in which they accept death must be altered for the sake of humanity.

### **Present Relevance of the Study:**

After seventy years of Independence, the Indian society is still suffering from the curse of untouchability, caste system, exploitation of labour, protests against industrialisation etc which are beautifully delineated in Mulk Raj Anand's novels. It is of utmost necessity therefore to look at these issues plaguing the Indian society. Before Independence, the British tried to change certain social practices of the Indians like untouchability, exploitation of the labour, poverty, caste system and superstitious beliefs etc. However, such half-hearted attempts were not sufficient to bring about complete change. Sometimes, such practices also helped in perpetuating the exploitation of the poor and disadvantaged masses.

Even after the Independence, the untouchables along with the other marginalised groups, which are now more commonly known by the term 'Dalit', have been still deprived of social, political, cultural and economic rights. In Independent India, untouchability is a crime, but the lower caste people are still discriminated and humiliated. The Indian constitution gives them various rights and benefits by encompassing them inside reserved categories such as Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and OBC/MOBCs. However, in spite of that, they are subjected to various atrocities ranging from psychological to physical causing irreparable damage to their lives. The stigma of untouchability is still a haunting experience for these people. Some studies are conducted to find out the existence of untouchability in different provinces

of India such as Mary Searle Chatterjee's *Caste, Religion and Other Identities*, I. P. Desai's *Untouchability in Rural Gujarat with Survey and Graphs* etc. with the outcome that it is still a grim reality. The Prevention of Atrocities towards SCs and STs Act, 1989 has not rendered much impact on curbing the atrocities on them. Bakha's dream of a society where there will not be any discrimination on the basis of caste and untouchability is still a distant dream in independent India. Anand's *U* still represents the agony of the life of the untouchables in India.

Like Munoo in *C*, Leila and Buddhu in *TLAB* who have been exploited of their labour during various engagements in household work, factory and tea estate, the issue of child labour is persisting in Independent India. Various laws have been passed prohibiting child labour but it seems there is deep-rooted design in exploiting children in towns and cities of India. Engaging children below the age of fourteen is a punishable offence. However, the law is flouted by the inhuman employers for financial gain. Menace of sexual exploitation of women is portrayed with all its ugliness in *TLAB*. Safety of women in work place has become a major concern for the Government and other responsible social organisations. It is very unfortunate that women are unsafe today on the streets as well as in their work place. Both *C* and *TLAB* are therefore still relevant in the portrayal of the exploitation of labour, state of child labour as well as the sexual abuse of women in work place.

Under the British rule, the Indian peasants suffered greatly due to the nefarious designs of the cruel landlords and the greedy moneylenders. However, the condition of the peasants has not changed significantly even after India became an Independent country. The poor peasants are suffering from various problems like drought, crop failure, and crop lost due to flood, debt burden, price crash etc. Landless peasants and tenants are

still working under the landlords by offering larger part of the produce. Their condition is pathetic because they never receive any benefit from the governmental schemes, as they do not possess any valid document in support of their status of being landless peasants. The difficulties of the peasants, which are portrayed in the Lal Singh Trilogy, are not obsolete today. The Trilogy offers a comprehensive picture of the Indian peasants of the Pre-independence period, which is very essential to understand their present condition. Like the coppersmiths of *TBH*, the peasants of various provinces of India are also protesting against the industrialisation for fear of being evicted from their inhabiting area. In this regard Mukulika Banerjee remarked : “S E Z (Special Economic Zone) is meeting with stiff resistance from the peasantry whose land is being acquired for Big Business Houses on the plea of industrialisation to generate employment” (as cited in Singh, 2010, p. 21).

Therefore, studying Mulk Raj Anand’s novels may help in having a better grasp of the situation of Pre-Independence India. Anand as a creative writer brought to the fore the evil and repugnant elements of the Indian society through his novels. Therefore, his novels can be considered the truthful representation of the Indian society of the early part of the twentieth century.

### **Scope for the Further Study:**

This study has attempted to find out the elements of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in the selected novels of Anand. The analysis is limited to the six novels, which were written before the Independence of India. To have a comprehensive understanding of Anand’s treatment of social issues during India’s Independence, other novels of Anand which were written after Independence can also be taken in to



consideration. One can also undertake a study of Mulk Raj Anand to explore the progress of the writer in terms of the rendering of his themes and ideas. Various research works have been completed on Anand as an Indian English writer as well as on his fictional works. However, a reconsideration of his contribution to Indian English Fiction can also be made even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by comparing his contributions to that of the other non-resident Diasporic Indian writers in Post Independence India. Indian writing in English has been greatly enriched by both the objective and subjective analysis made by both the resident and non-resident authors on the themes of Indianness and Indianisation. Therefore, a systematic and comparative study of the novels of such authors shall surely add to the existing research works in the field of Indian English writing. This way one can make a comparative study of the fictions of Mulk Raj Anand and Arundhati Roy or Mulk Raj Anand and Arvind Adiga.

Although Mulk Raj Anand's oeuvre need to be studied in its proper contexts—that is Pre-Independence India, the premises of post-colonialism may also be used to study Anand's fiction. Colonial representation of India and its people have been fruitfully explored in postcolonial discussion of the Indian nation and its political history. Therefore, any discussion of the Pre-Independence Indian authors, such as Anand, must thoughtfully interrogate the Indian English canon and its supposed role in the emancipation of the peripheral and the underprivileged at a historically important period in World History. While the very basis of Postcolonialism is a re-reading of British official history, it must also help in interrogating the representation of India and the oppressive social structures, in contrast to the representation of the same by the Anglo-Indian writers. Such a comparison shall be quite fruitful in the sense that it might provide certain useful and pertinent tools to conduct further researches on the Pre-

Independence writers like Anand. Unlike his contemporaries, Anand's major contributions have been his unique competence to critically observe the social constructs which are based on historical, economical, political, philosophical, and cultural premises with strong foothold in the Indian society for centuries. Therefore, the study of Mulk Raj Anand's fiction is quite enlightening in the sense that his novels help us understand the basic grounds of post-colonial theory and criticism even better, although he wrote in a colonial era.

Another way to explore the undeniable legacy of Mulk Raj Anand is to read his characters in line with the Subaltern. The term Subaltern, as propounded by the Italian Marxist Philosopher and thinker Antonio Gramsci, means 'of inferior rank', and refers to those people or sections in society who are subject to oppression in the hands of the powerful and ruling classes. As an important concept in Postcolonial studies, the Subaltern Studies historians wanted to use this term in order to start a systematic discussion of region wise subaltern themes in South Asian Studies. Thus, concepts like the Subaltern as well as 'History from Below' that have provided new interpretative frameworks, shall be quite useful to explore how the Indian English writers like Anand tried to interpret the Indian psyche as well as the Indian culture and society mostly classified in terms of two main groups—upper-caste and lower-caste. Thus, the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, such as *U*, helps to bring out an analytical study of the place of the subalterns, and their voices of protests against established norms that have been plaguing the Indian society even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Conclusion:**

The analysis done on the novels has revealed that due to the exploitation from various quarters, there emerged two types of reaction from the characters in the novels. Characters like Bakha, Munoo and Gangu are capable of understanding the atrocities perpetrated on them resulting in discontent within them. However, their discontent is contained within them only, because of the magnitude of the atrocities as well as the dominant social ambience they are compelled to live in. On the other hand, characters like Lal Singh and Ananta understand that in a exploitative society, where there is no scope for the marginalised, only one hope is left for them i.e., to fight against the exploitation by forging unity amongst the marginalised. However, from individual discontent, there may emerge individual protest and revolt, but that is not enough. An understanding of the necessity for unity and solidarity comes to Lal Singh at the end of the *Lal Singh Trilogy*, while Ananta has this realisation from the very beginning. Therefore, he repeatedly emphasised the importance of a union of the thathiars. From this analysis, it can be said that in all the novels under discussion, there is pervasive sense of social discontent but apart from the *Lal Singh Trilogy* and *TBH* in other novels i.e., in *U*, *C* and *TLAB*, this discontent does not culminate into active revolt. Only in the *Lal Singh Trilogy* and *TBH* there have been sincere attempts on the part of the protagonists to raise objection against the exploitation.

From the discussions provided on the novels selected for study in this thesis, it has become apparent that Anand's fictional concerns are predominantly the class and caste issues in the Indian society. He writes about the vision of a creative writer like the following:

He will stand as the interpreter of one human soul to another, and by his peculiar talent for revealing the unity in diversity of human nature, create real bounds of sympathy between nation and nation, one people and another, and in fact between every genuine layer of life seeking to understand another...He can transform his knowledge into a vision such as can claim the loyalty of men in his own locality, and across national frontiers and lead them to a universal awareness of life, thereby possessing them with the will to renew it and to change it. (Anand, 1986, pp. 87-88)

It has been already mentioned that Anand faced serious problems to find a publisher for his novel *U*. Similarly, finding an audience too was a problem for Anand. His subject matters were quite risky as even the Indians of his time as well as of the present are afraid of facing the alarming truths. Iyengar (2001) wrote that Anand's first three novels *C*, *U*, *TLAB*—were all banned by alarmed and furious British Bureaucrats running the Government in India, and the term 'Bolshevik' was hurled at him throughout the thirties. Therefore, despite Anand's sincere attempts at initiating economic and social reforms, his novels had had very little influence then and even now. The fact is that the politicians and intellectuals of the present day India have failed to give due emphasis on the issues of inequality and injustice following which the lot of the common and poor Indian masses has remained unchanged. Here comes the social role of literature as the fictional works of Anand can actually sensitise the common readers against the pressing issues of our times.

Anand's greatest accomplishment has been his energetic portrayal of workers belonging to the lowest class he elevates to the status of heroes. Munoo—a coolie, Bakha—an untouchable, and Ananta—a coppersmith can be seen as daringly original characters

whose problems, motivations and actions are exceptionally represented by Anand. As Iyengar (2001) writes: “In writing of the pariahs and the bottom dogs rather than the elect and sophisticated, he had ventured into territory that had been largely ignored till then by Indian writers” (p. 259). Mulk Raj Anand’s insights and insinuations are striking because for the first time they present in the English language novels a sensitive and provocative view of an Indian striving to stir his countrymen and outsiders to the plight of India in modern world. His emergence as a truly Indian novelist during the phases of India’s own emergence as a nation remains so significant in the history of Indian English literature.

Anand’s narrators eloquently but painstakingly exposes the genuine problems of India which were often overlooked by or beyond the grasp of the Anglo Indian writers such as Kipling and Forster. It may therefore be assumed that the distinctively Indian viewpoint available in Anand’s novels radically contrasts the narrower point of view found in the Anglo Indian novels of his time. Anand in his *Apology for Heroism* (1986) very boldly mentions:

I could not, of course, sense the suffering of the poor directly because I had always been comparatively better off. No, mine was a secondary humiliation, the humiliation of seeing other people suffer...So I sought to recreate my life through my memoirs of the India in which I grew up, with a view to rediscovering the vanities, the vapidities, the conceits and the perplexities with which I had grown up, indifferent to the lives of people around me. (pp. 76-77)

Similarly, in his article “The Sources of Protest in My Novels”, Anand stated the following which in a way sums up what he intended to achieve through his character portrayal in his novels:

My characters are not meant to be revised versions of old mythical symbols of the epics. I think that human being change, in a changing universe, even if ever so little. So old mythical characters like Sita, or Savitri, or Rama, are not eternal types, who must be repeated in new incarnations. My characters are conceived as human beings of a different historical age which is not the changeless samsara of tradition. They struggle in this life, on earth, in the here and the now, even as their struggles end in failures. Or they grope in the dark, and then emerge here and there, through our new contemplations and reveal the contours of the still mysterious universe, defined in the past through fear, but now being revealed through adventures in the heavens and on earth.” Therefore, Anand views that his protest novels are the sources of renewal of the human person. (Jain, 2000. pp. 73-74)

The novel *C* can also be purposefully read as Anand’s discussion of the racial-cultural differences in Pre-Independence India. In this regard, Hemenway (1975) observes that the Indians can be equally exasperating because of racial differences. Nearly every Indian willingly and unquestioningly admits his inferiority to the British masters, “However much the Indians resent the presence of the English in India, most of them have a servile admiration for the white official and enjoy the thrill of contact with him” (Anand, 1993, p. 86). Such a position proved embarrassing to the Indians and British alike, and it is the discouraged Mohan (the rebel rickshaw puller) who tries to tell the disbelieving Munoo: “You are superior to all these colonels and generals and maharajahs. But still you go on drawing their rickshaw” (Anand, 1993, p. 279).

C. J. George (2008) observed that in Pre-Independence India, the caste hierarchy mostly reflected economic disparity: the highest caste was the richest and the lowest

caste was the poorest. However, this is a fact that the Indian society experienced a structural transformation during the British rule. It gave a big blow to the existing caste system in India and created the base for the emergence of a new social class, strata and associations that finally laid the foundation of modern India. If the system of caste is cruel enough to create the 'untouchables' in society, so is the class system that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Novels like *C* and *TLAB* are examples of realistic works that depict the widening gaps between the haves and have-nots, the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled. The action of both these novels is based on Pre-Independence India, and the British characters in these novels represent the role of the British in contaminating the Indian society with the evils of class system. Mulk Raj Anand's interest in exposing the class system in such novels also lies in exploring the stresses and the strains generated in the Indian society as a result of the basic economic transformation brought about by the various acts of the British government (such as land reform bills), the penetration of capitalist and commercial forces into the Indian society, the establishment of modern Industries in India necessitated new class arrangements in the society. Mulk Raj Anand is successful in addressing all these issues fictionally.

Mulk Raj Anand's exceptional rendering of the psychosocial aspects of the characters in the novels undertaken for this study, has always remained invaluable source of inspiration for the subsequent researchers, when the question of representing India by an 'Indian' writer is taken into serious consideration. Although social discontent is quite visible in most of his novels, the spirit of rebellion rarely gets the required focus, following which the pent-up desires in the characters always remain within, further making the characters conformist throughout their entire life in politically difficult

times. Perhaps, this is what makes Mulk Raj Anand unique among the greatest stalwarts of Indian English literature.

## References:

- Anand, M. R. (1948). *The King Emperor's English: Or, the role of the English language in the free India*. Bombay: Hind Kitabs Limited.
- Anand, M. R. (1986). *Apology for heroism*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Anand, M. R. (1993). *Coolie*. London: The Penguin Books Limited.
- George, C. J. (2000). *Mulk Raj Anand: His art and concerns*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Hemenway, S. I. (1975). *The novel of India. Vol 2 The Indo Anglian Novel*. Calcutta: A Writer's Workshop Publication.
- Iyengar, K.R.S. (2001). *Indian writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Jain, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Creating theory: Writers on writing*. New Delhi: Pencraft International.
- Naik, M.K. (1982). *A history of Indian English literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Singh, R. (2010). *Mulk Raj Anand: His vision and work*. Jaipur: Ponter Pubs.
- Sridhar,V.(2004). From debt to death. *Frontline*. Retrieved from: <http://www.Frontline.in/static/html/fl2113/stories/20040702006901300.htm>



## Bibliography

*1st manifesto of progressive writers association*, adopted in the Foundation Conference

1936. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://pwa75.sapfonline.org/gpage4.html>

Agarwal, B. R. (Ed.). (2006). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

Anand, M. R (1942). *The sword and the sickle: A novel*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.

Anand, M. R (1945). *The big heart: A novel*. London: Hutchinson International Authors Ltd.

Anand, M. R (1948) *The King Emperor's English: Or, the role of the English language in the free India*. Bombay: Hind Kitabs Limited.

Anand, M. R (1951). *Seven summers*. London: Hutchinson International Authors.

Anand, M. R (1960). *The village*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

Anand, M. R (1961). *The road*. Bombay: Kutub-Popular.

Anand, M. R (1968). *Morning face*. Bombay: Kutub-Popular.

Anand, M. R (1978). *Gauri*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

Anand, M. R (1993). *Coolie*. London : The Penguin Books Limited.

Anand, M. R (2008). *Across the black waters: A novel*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks.

Anand, M. R. (1986). *Apology for heroism*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.

Anand, M. R. (1998). *Two leaves and a bud*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.

Anand, M. R.(1981). *Untouchable*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.

- Anand, M.R. (1968). The story of my experiment with a white lie. In M. K. Naik et al (Eds.), *Critical essays on Indian writing in English*. Madras: MacMillan.
- Anand, M.R. (1973). *Author to critic: The letters of Mulk Raj Anand to Saros Cowasjee*. Saros Cowasjee (Ed.). Calcutta: Writers Workshop.
- Anand, M.R. (1976). *Confession of a lover*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Anand, M.R. (1977). "Remembrance of some imperceptible feelings about Amritsar." *Art of Living*. June 1977.
- Anand, M.R. (1977). Cross roads in my life. *Art of Living*. June 1977.
- Anand, M.R. (1977). Why I write. In *Indo-English literature: A collection of critical essays*. Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan.
- Anand, M.R. (1978). Afterword to Mohammad Iqbal's *Secrets of the self*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Anand, M.R. (1979, September 17). The living and the dead: Experiments of a humanist with the faiths. *New Delhi*, 2(12).
- Anand, Mulk Raj. (1942). *Letters on India*. London: The Labour Book Service.
- Asnani, S. M. (1985). *Critical response to Indian English fiction*. Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Bakhtiar, I. (Ed.). (1964). *The novel in modern India*. Bombay: The P.E.N. All India Centre.
- Barns, M. (1937). *The Indian press: A history of the growth of public opinion in India*. London: G. Allen and Unwin Limited.

- Berry, M. (1971). *Mulk Raj Anand: The man and the novelist*. Amsterdam: Oriental Press.
- Bhatnagar, M. (Ed.). (1997). *Indian writing in English*. Delhi: Atlantic Publishers
- Bhatnagar, M. K., Rajeshwar, M. (Ed.). (2000). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand : A critical study*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Bhatnagar, V. D. (2001) *Readings in Indian English literature: Nation, culture, and identity*. New Delhi: Harman Pub. House.
- Bheemaiah, J. (2008). *Class and caste in literature: The fiction of Stowe and Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Prestige Books.
- Bhusan, V.N. (Ed.). (1945). *The moving finger*. Bombay: Padma Publication
- Buch, M.A. (1940). *Rise and growth of Indian militant nationalism*. Baroda: Atmaram Printing.
- Buchanan, D.H. (1934). *The development of capitalistic enterprise in India*. New York: Macmillan.
- Camus, A. (2000). *The rebel*. London: Penguin
- Chattarji, S, and Chakravarty, G. (Eds.). (2004). *An anthology of Indian prose writing in English*. New Delhi, Penguin.
- Chattopadhyay, B. (1996). *Rajmohan's wife*. New delhi: Ravi Dayal.
- Chaudhuri, A. (2008). *Clearing a Space: Reflections on India, literature, and culture*. UK: Peter Lang.
- Chaudhuri, A. (Ed.). (2001). *The picador book of modern Indian literature*. London: Picador.

- Choudhury, I. N. (1992). *Comparative Indian literature: Some perspectives*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Clooney, F. (1989). Evil, divine omnipotence and human freedom: Vedanta's theology of Karma. *Journal of Religion*. Vol.69. No.4 (October). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Cowasjee, S. (1977). *So many freedoms: A study of the major fiction of Mulk Raj Anand*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Cowasjee, S. (1992). The big heart: A note, In R.K. Dhawan (Ed.), *The novels of M.R. Anand*. New Delhi: Prestige Books.
- Cowasjee, S.(Ed.)(1973). *Author to critic: The letters of Mulk Raj Anand*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop.
- Das, R. K. (1934). Child labour in India. *International Labour Review*, Vol.XXVIII, No.6, Dec 1933, & Vol.XXIX, No.1, Jan 1934., Geneva.
- Das, S. K. (1991). *A history of Indian literature 1800-1910: Western impact Indian response*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Das, S. K. (1995). *A history of Indian literature 1911-1956: Struggle for freedom, triumph and tragedy*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Desai, A. (1948). *Social background of Indian nationalism*. Mumbai:Popular Prakashan.
- Dhawan, R. K. (Ed.). (1999) *50 years of Indian writing*. New Delhi: The Indian Association for English Studies.
- Dube, S.C. (2015). *Indian society*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.

- Fisher, M. (1985). *The wisdom of the heart: A study of the works of Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Gandhi, L. (2014). Novelists of the 1930s and 1940s. In A.R. Mehrotra (Ed.), *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English* (pp.168-192). Delhi: permanent black.
- George, C. J. (2000). *Mulk Raj Anand: His art and concerns*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- George, K. M. (Ed.). *Masterpieces of Indian literature*. (Vol I, II, & III). New Delhi: National Book Trust.
- Ghose, J.C. (Ed). (1982). *The English works of Raja Rammohun Roy*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publication.
- Gokak, V.K. (1979). *The concept of Indian literature*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
- Gokak, V.K.(Ed.). (1964). *English in India: Its present and future*. Bombay: Asia Publishing house.
- Gopal, P. (2009). *The Indian English novel: Nation, history and narration*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Goswami, K. (2009). *Mulk Raj Anand: Early novels*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Gupta, G. S. B. (1974). *Mulk Raj Anand: A study of his fiction in humanist perspective*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot.

- Gupta, G. S. B. (1999). Bhabani Bhattacharya's "So Many Hungers!": A study. In M.K. Naik (Ed.), *Aspects of Indian writing in English* (pp.209-221). New Delhi: MacMillan.
- Harrex, S.C. (1971). *The modern Indian novel in English*. Calcutta: Writers' workshop.
- Hemenway, S.I. (1972). *The novel of India. (The Indo Anglian novel. Vol.1)* Calcutta: A Writers' Workshop Publication.
- Hemenway, S.I. (1975). *The novel of India. (The Indo Anglian Novel. Vol 2)*. Calcutta: A Writer's Workshop Publication.
- Herman, A. (1976). *The problem of evil in Indian thought*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
- Hiriyanna, M. (1995). *The essentials of Indian philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass.
- Indra Mohan, T.M.J (Ed). (2005). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Iyengar, K.R.S. (2001). *Indian writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Jain, J. (Ed). (2000). *Creating theory: Writers on writing*. New Delhi: Pencraft International.
- Keyes, C. (1983). Merit-Transference in the Karmic theory of popular Theravada Buddhism. In Charles Keyes and Valentine Daniel (Eds.), *Karma*. Berkeley: University of California press.
- Khair, T. (2001). *Babu fictions*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Khan, S.A. (2000). *Mulk Raj Anand: The novels of commitment*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Khilnani, S. (1997). *The idea of India*. New Delhi: Penguin.

- Kohn, H. (1929). *A history of nationality in the east*. Translated by Margaret M. Green, New York: Harcourt Brace and Company.
- Kulkarni, J. (2006). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. Kanpur: Chandrolak Prakashan.
- Lindsay, J. (1965). *The elephant and the lotus*. Bombay: Kutub Popular.
- Marak, J.C. (2010). *Mulk Raj Anand: From literary naturalism to hopeful humanism*. Guwahati: EBH Publishers (India).
- McCutchion, D. (1969). *Indian writing in English: Critical essays*. Calcutta: Writers' workshop.
- Mehrotra, A.R. (Ed.). *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English*. Delhi: permanent black.
- Mehta P.P. (1968). *Indo-Anglian fiction: An assessment*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot.
- Mishra, P. (2014). R.K. Narayan. In A.R. Mehrotra (Ed.), *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English* (pp.193-208). Delhi: permanent black.
- Mukharjee, M. (1971). *The twice born fiction*. New Delhi: Heinemann Educational Book.
- Mukherjee, M. (2014). The Beginnings of the Indian Novel. In A.R. Mehrotra (Ed.), *An illustrated history of Indian literature in English* (pp.92-102). Delhi: permanent black.
- Naik, M.K. (1982). *A history of Indian English literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Naik, M.K. (1973). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann.
- Naik, M.K. (1999). *Aspects of Indian writing in English*. New Delhi: Macmillan India.

- Naik, M.K. (Ed.). (1968). *On Indian writing in English*. Madras: MacMillan.
- Namboodiripad, E. M. S. (1986). Half a century of Marxist cultural movement in India. *The Marxist*. Volume.04, No.2. April-June, 1986. Retrieved from <http://cpim.org/content/marxist-cultural-movement-india>
- Narasimhaiah, C.D. (Ed.). (1969). *The swan and the eagle*. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies.
- Nath, S. (2011). *Delineation of the disadvantaged*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- Nehru, J (1936). *An autobiography*. London: The Bodley Head.
- Nicholson, K. (1972). *A presentation of social problems in the Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian novel*. Bombay: Jaico Publishing House.
- Niven, A. (1972). The Lalu trilogy of Mulk Raj Anand, *The Literary Half Yearly* Vol.13, No.1. Mysore.
- Nururllah, S. & Naik, J. P. (1943). *History of education in India during the British period*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- O' Malley, L.S.S. (Ed.). (1941). *Modern India and the West*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Panandi, S. G. (1933). *Industrial labour in India*. Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd.
- Patil, Z.N. (2008). *Indian English fiction: A stylistic approach*, New Delhi: Prestige Books.
- Paul, P. (1983). *Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A thematic study*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.



- Pooma,K. (2009). *The mind and art of Mulk Raj Anand*. Perambalur: Mercury Publishers.
- Prasad, S. S. (1997). *The insulted and the injured: Untouchables, coolies and peasants in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. Patna: Janaki Prakashan.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (1923). *Indian philosophy* Vol. II. London: Longman's Green & Company.
- Rajan,P.K. (1994). *Mulk Raj Anand: A revaluation*. New Delhi: Arnold Associates.
- Rao, N.P. (1981). *Fundamentals of Indian philosophy*. New Delhi: Indian Book Company.
- Riemenschneider, D. (1967). *An ideal of man in Anand's novels*. Bombay: Kutub Popular,.
- Saini, B.S. (1975). *The social and economic history of the Punjab 1901-1939*. Delhi: ESS Publications.
- Savio, D. (2008). *Voice of the voiceless: Mulk Raj Anand and Jayakanthan*. New Delhi: Prestige Books.
- Sharma, R. (1971). *Punjab in ferment*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company
- Shelvankar, K.S. (1940). *The problem of India*. London: Penguin Books Limited.
- Singh, R.S. (1977). *Indian novel in English*. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann.
- Singh, R.S. (n.d). *Indian novel in English: A critical study*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- Singh,K. (1966). *A history of the Sikhs 1839-1964*. Vol.2 . Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Singh, R. (2010). *Mulk Raj Anand: His vision and work*. Jaipur: Ponter Pubs.
- Sinha, K. N. (1972). *Mulk Raj Anand*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Vergeese, C. P. (1971). *Problems of Indian creative writer in English*. Bombay: Somaya Publications.
- Viswanathan, G. (1989). *Masks of conquest: Literary studies and British rule in India*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Walsh, W. (1964). *A human idiom: Literature and humanity*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Walsh, W. (1970). *A manifold voice*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Walsh, W. (Ed.). (1973). *Readings in Commonwealth literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Williams, H.M. (1973). *Studies in modern Indian fiction in English*, Vol. I & II., Calcutta: Writers' workshop.
- Williams, H.M. (1976). *Indo Anglian literature 1800-1970: A survey*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Winternitz, M. and Jha, S. (1986). *History of Indian literature*. Vol. 3. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.