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The Representation of Indian Society in Mulk Raj Anands Select Work

Shreyasi Kakkar

UG Students of BA(Hons) English, Department of Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Lucknow, India

ABSTRACT: Mulk Raj Anand is one of the foremost Indian writer who has written in English and he stands in line with Raja Rao and RK Narayana. One of the notable works of Anand is Untouchable. In this novel Anand has basically dealt with the downtrodden of Indian society and treated as Untouchable his work Untouchable and Coolie are considered to be masterpieces in Coolie, he talks about the economic status whereas in his writeup Untouchable he basically talks of caste system as one of the basic feature of Indian society where the status of a person is determined by birth. In a way we can say the theme of coolie is an extension to the novel Untouchable

I. INTRODUCTION

“Untouchable” is a novel by Mulk Raj Anand, which was published in 1935. This whole novel revolves around a young man who is the member of the lower caste. The novel explores the themes like caste discrimination, poverty and topics like social injustices in India during the time of 1930’s. This novel also talks about the time of pre- independence in India and the subject of humiliation and hardship that was faced by Bakha (Untouchable) and how arrival of Mahatma Gandhi one day ushers the idea that could change Bakha’s life forever

With immense skills and vitality. Mulk raj Anand powerfully narrates every incident that takes place in Bakha’s life in a single day

The novel Untouchable was the very first novel to present the sufferings of Dalits. The novel was inspired by his aunt’s experience being treated like an out caster after eating with a Muslim women

Major theme covered in the novel is untouchability. It talks of the lower caste sufferings faced by them by the common people of India

The depiction of characters in his novels are real and living. It gives us an insight to the sufferings of lower castes in a very realistic manner.

By means of his novel untouchable Anand for the first time raises the voice on behalf on the downtrodden also known as Dalits. This novel revolves around Bakha the main protagonist of this novel who is also an untouchable. This novel depicts the events of a single day in the life of Bakha. Bakha throughout the novel faced the discrimination in the so-called caste-based society. He belongs to the sweeper caste

The author has also highlighted the social conditions and structure of the lower caste people which also depended on their poor economic conditions. His work untouchable can be viewed as a call for the change in the conditions of the lower caste. In this was we can say that he gave a call for protest against the oppressors so that they can change their behavior towards the lower caste people.

The novel Untouchable works on the doctrine of equality, justice and freedom in society. In this way we can view the novel Untouchable as a precursor to Gandhian and Ambedkar’s ideology of removal of Untouchability in India

II. NARRATION OF MK ANAND’S LIFE AND WORKS

He was born in 1905 in Peshawar Pakistan. He passed away in 2004. Anand wrote more than 200 novels and several collections of short stories to his name. His stories usually depict the struggle of India’s lower caste and was notable for its social realism and humanism. He was a part of India’s independence movement and was involved in various political and social causes existing in India during those times throughout his lives. He was also called as the father of English fiction. Inspiration behind his writings were the experiences faced by his family due to the rigidity prevalent in the Indian society. His writing style was epic, dramatic or episodic.

M K Anand deeply influenced by Gandhian ideology and it reveals prominently in his works.

He also drafted the very first manifesto of the literary association. His pen name was Nawab

Rai. He was deeply influenced by John Ruskin and William Morris he is also known as Indian Charles Dickens

Mulk Raj Anand was given several awards notable ones are

- International peace prize- 1953



- Padma Bhushan -1967 □ Sahitaya Academy Award-1971

Few of his notable works are

- Coolie
- Untouchable

III. SOCIAL ISSUES IN INDIA

The novel Untouchable was published in 1935. This novel has a background of the time when Hindu society used to practice Untouchability. The whole Hindu society was divided in two castes that was upper caste which comprised of (Brahmin, Shatriya, and Vaishya) and lower caste which consisted of the shudras. This novel talks about an untouchable who belonged to a lower caste and all the problems faced by them at various levels. This novel shows and depicts the miseries faced by an untouchable for example discrimination, humiliation and taking free service like cleaning the temple in return to allow them to take some water from the well. During this time the behavior of the society towards the lower caste was very harsh and discriminatory With the establishment of the constitution in 1950, India ended untouchability, and since then numerous anti-discrimination laws and social welfare programs have been implemented

Representation of Indian society in the novel Untouchable

The novel is about Bakha son of Lakha who belonged to a town called Bulashah. Bakha was a very intelligent boy with unassuming demeanor. This novel begins and talks about Bakha who was obsessed with the clothes of English men and wanted to dress like one of them and he tries everything possible to get clothes like them. He was dreaming it when his father came to wake him up yelling and abusing him. The relation between Bakha and his father is not good and reason behind his father's abusive and rude behavior towards him behind after his mother died. Lakha is a very lazy man he always sends his son to do all his works that is sweeping and cleaning the latrines on his behalf.

He used to work under Charat Singh who was a hockey player bakha used to clean his washroom neatly and pleased by this Charat Singh rewarded him by giving him a new hockey stick. He was a good person and he never treated lower caste people as an outcaste. After reaching home bakha wanted a glass of water but the container was empty so his sister

Sohini asked him to wait so that she could get him water from the well nearby. Pandit Kali Nath allowed Sohini to take water on the condition that she would clean the temple. On the way bakha went to meet his friends and bought bidi when suddenly an upper caste men came running towards him and accidentally, he touched bakha and yet he started shouting using abusive language and managed to collect an abusive crowd. in the meantime, a business man came and save bakha but while he was going back the upper caste man slapped him. He felt extremely bad a humiliated that his heart touched directly having excessive emotion in one go.

SOCIAL AND MORAL INJUSTICES OF SOCIETY

Later while roaming he reached the temple of the village found that the priest of the temple (kali Nath) who has called his sister sohini to clean the temple trying to misbehave with his sister. Because she refused, he started putting allegations on her that she has polluted him. "The brahmin priests' allegation towards Sohini, and the charge of polluting the temple is a revealing example of pollution by touch.

Bakha asked his sister to go back home and went out to get food for the family while roaming he slept on a platform and when he woke up, he saw a lady giving a roti to a monk he went to the lady and asked one for himself the lady asked him to clean the entire area near her house. Bakha thoroughly clean the area the lady instead of giving the roti in his hand she threw it on the floor. He went to the field and started playing hockey with his new stick Bakha was playing well so the higher caste person didn't like it so he threw a hockey stick on his legs in another incident a child got hurt from a stone bakha took the child to his residence but the mother of the child started cursing for polluting the child

M.K. ANAND'S HANDLING OF THE NOVEL AS A WEAPON OF SOCIAL REFORM

After the whole day ordeal Bakha sat under the tree feeling very dejected and humiliated in the meantime Colonel Hucklings came and asked him to adopt Christianity as there is no caste system in their religion M K Anand wants to depict, that novel writing is not only a piece of art but it should also have some purpose like social reforms. Anand can be distinguished from other authors as far as his selection and treatment of human problems based on caste is concerned

NOVEL AS AN EPIC OF SUFFERING

The novel Untouchable is a description of caste-based sufferings. Before Anand no other writer has dealt with such a bold topic which in a way challenged the attitude of high caste Hindus by choosing to write on the exploitation of a



sweeper caste and the atrocities inflicted upon them in those days. We can say that Untouchable is an epic describing the violation against human rights as if the lower caste were not human beings

THE RELEVANCE OF ANAND'S NOVEL- 'UNTOUCHABLE' IN TODAY'S TIME

A relevant question that arises even today is whether Anand's novel Untouchable is relevant in today's time. The novel is relevant in today's time also because it puts forth the reason why it became necessary to eradicate "Untouchability" through legislation making a Constitutional amendment. Its relevance can be understood by the mere fact that even today after so many laws we come across atrocities against lower caste. The novel Untouchable is a saga of injustice and exploitation of lower caste Hindu's. Even today some members of higher castes refused to touch utensils that come into contact with the Dalits. The main work of sweepers includes removing the human waste from the toilets it is therefore necessary that the inequality in the forecasts must be rooted out. The book is also important because Anand's early novels plead the cause of the oppressed and show glimpses of the cruel and unkind behavior of the oppressors has a great sympathy for the poor suffering people his novels have social realism and reveal deep humanism. His "Untouchable" is a very good example of deep- rooted humanism

IV. CONCLUSION

Untouchability is an act of discrimination based on caste which is being practiced in India since long. It is an evil practice where the lower caste people get targeted by upper caste communities. In spite of various Legislations we come across so many cases of caste discriminations in newspapers and other media platforms as well. Instances of untouchability can be seen in not allowing entry in temples, refusal to render services and denying basic human rights. Derogatory terms like "bhangi, chammaar" are used to insult them. Article 17 of the Indian constitution empowers to make untouchability a punishable offence. Due to the legal provision's untouchability has largely declined in the country. But still there is a long way to go because it is still prevalent in rural India for this, we will have to work to give education to all castes and classes.

To conclude we can say that Anand has been a great reformer and revolutionary. He was a pioneer to initiate and stimulate the thoughts of political people which could bring changes in the legal system. Untouchability as a novel therefore has been a tool for the upliftment of lower caste

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