



PREDICTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MULK RAJ ANAND

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Abstract:

This research paper is a depiction of social system of Indian society where social exploitation of certain group of people becomes practice. This is due to the class and caste they belonged to. Mulk Raj Anand, the novelist, urges for social justice for these oppressed, deprived and ill-treated people by their own. His novels Untouchable and Coolie reveal caste exploitation as a prevalent gift for specific social groups throughout the ages. Poor, helpless, untouchable people are ill-treated by the upper class people and author like Anand predicates social justice for them by depicting sorrows and worries in their life. Author's urge for social justice in his novels has democratic principles as no violence has been emerged from his characters. Though on certain stages, the protagonist think for revenge, Gandhi's thoughts and belief on social justice succeed in changing their minds.

Key words: Lowered class, upper class, social discrimination, social justice, oppressed, suppressed, exploitation.

Introduction:

Mulkraj Anand is one of the earliest Indian English writers who pictured Indian classical culture, social values, moral values, as well as reality of Indian society and suffering of lowered class people. Being inspired by Bertrand Russell and M. K. Gandhi's thoughts and philosophy of life, Anand always wanted to portray people and their real lives in his novels. When we try analysing the novels that he has written, it brings out tresses of modern philosophy and massive pradimensions happened in Europe and Western life. Through his novels, especially in *Untouchable*, Anand talks about trials and tribulations of random privilege man in India. His works are mediums of presentation of philosophy, modernism and spirituality of Indian society.

Anand's long life of almost one hundred years has taught him many ups and downs of common man and deprived society members who always are in search of their identity in the society. For Anand, man in Indian society has to adjoin with certain cycle having a chain that develops in several stages. Caste is one of the stages within that chain and people belonging to lower caste have to suffer a lot while passing through this cycle of social system. Having experience



of social life of Punjab of Pakistan and India, Anand also attempted to compare two cultures with reference to social treatment for specific class in society. Therefore, his novels focused on realistic parameters of social system where men have to fight for justice. Vishnu Kumar (2022), calls him revolutionary writer of twentieth century as he wrote for untouchable and poor people of Indian society.

This research paper aims to predicate social justice in Mulk Raj Anand's novels. It also focuses on how social justice is important for untouchable and poor people of contemporary society. The methodology adopted in this research paper is qualitative content analysis technique. Quotes and content presented by Anand's in his novels have been analysed.

Concept of Social Justice:

Indian society is divided into castes and communities which create barriers and walls to differentiate the society on the basis of superiority and inferiority. In the context of India, social justice is the result of the social injustice of the caste system. Such social inequality poses a serious threat not only to the society but also to the Indian democracy. Under the traditional Hindu caste classification, backward classes and women have suffered for centuries as they have been deprived of opportunities for advancement, keeping them away from society and education. Social justice in the context of Indian society provides benefits, facilities, principalities, and special rights to such people who have not been given this facility for centuries. If opportunities are not provided to develop those neglected talents then social imbalance will continue in the Indian society.

The concept of social justice is broader than justice. The term 'social' associated with society; has a wide scope encompassing social issues, problems, and reforms leading to social and economic change. This includes efforts made for the advancement of the opposed and deprived section of the society. For this reason, it calls for social engineering in which efforts are made to change the society. Thus socio-economic change can be brought about in the society through law. The objective of social justice is to create political, economic, and social democracy and eliminate class and caste discrimination. It also combines the principles of socialism with the individual freedom provided by democracy.

The word 'social justice' is made up of two words; therefore, it has a specific meaning and clarifies a broader concept. According to John Rawls, 'social justice entails that all social primary goods-liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the basis of self-respect are distributed equally unless unequal distribution of any or all of these goods would benefit the least favoured.'



Need for social justice arouses on the ground of social discrimination. Social Discrimination is social in nature when it is by one social group against another social group be it on the basis of Race, Economics, Caste, Religion, Gender etc. Therefore, social justice plays an important role in mainstreaming the people who had to go into deprivation in the context of this kind of social discrimination.

According to Dr. Sarswat (2017) from the point of view of Indian society, the judicial system in India has been changing step by step. In ancient times the social justice was based on values or it was based on ethics, whereas, in modern era social justice process is based on laws and constitution. On the other hand, in post-modern times, this concept of social justice came under the process of distribution and this distribution is associated to socio-economic resources.

Therefore, social justice means fair and equal treatment for everyone. This includes equal access to opportunities, human rights, and benefits of growth regardless ethnicity, gender, religion, class, age, disability or socio-economic position. An agenda for social justice aims to eliminate discrimination and inequalities. It promotes the dignity of all people in the world of work that means decent jobs, fair wages, labour rights, dialogues as equality and social protection for all with social justice lasting peace and shared prosperity are possible.

Projection of Social Justice in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand:

Many facts are believed to be behind the way in which Mulk Raj presented the concept of social justice demand in his novels. But it is certain that the social situation in which Anand lived was different compared to today's social situation. He is called by status of Classics of Modern Indian English Literature for his attempt to strike a blow through literature against a society with different social discriminations.

Anand became known for his protest novel *Untouchable* (1935), followed by other works on the Indian poor such as *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaver and a Bud*. His novel *Untouchable* revolves around argument for eradicating the caste system. It depicts a day in the life of Bakha, a young 'sweeper' who is 'untouchable' due to his work of cleaning latrines.

Anand's revolt and warning lies within the presentation of his art, about the novels of Anand, Iyenger says that they come-fresh from contact with flesh and blood every day existence. We find no discrimination based on race and caste in our constitution still prevail this way or that way and therefore, social exclusion and exploitation of the lower class of the society, though their form and proportion may be different from the cases of pre-independence era. (Kumar Priye, 2018). Though Gandhi in this novel is introduced delivering public speech in an open area of the city, novelist hasn't made direct interaction with Gandhi as he does in his other



novels. But Gandhi's speech in this novel also demands for social justice on the ground of social equality, especially for untouchable people of the society.

The urge for social justice in his novels *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and Bud* enables readers to understand the background on which Anand structured his stories. The idea of social discrimination on the ground of caste and religion and his urge for social justice can best be understood when he wrote his autobiography and he narrates how his aunt was verbally dethroned on oral ground when she had lunch with a Muslim woman. This very incident was enough for him to write novels on such themes.

Anand's feeling for social justice and sympathy for the Dalits was so intense that in his first novel *Untouchable*, he presented miserable conditions of Dalit people or untouchable people of his society. His portrayal of protagonist Bakha itself indicates his notions of social justice towards untouchable people.

Bakha's words for his father Lakha, 'They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt' (*Untouchable*, 890) arouse feeling of a young man living in slavery of thousand years even in so called modern era or era of civilization and industrialization. This very feeling of Bakha has background when his sister, Sohini, was asked by a priest, Kalinath, to clean the temple and by means of that he misbehaves with her and the way people threw bread on him who were gathered over there.

In order to show injustice on untouchable people by their own social members, Anand choose democratic way for demanding social justice for untouchable people by using art of literature. He was optimist and was follower of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence; urges social justice for Dalit and other poor people by means of characterization. Therefore, the difficulty arises when we read, 'how perceive experience from the untouchable's point of view and how to enter such an alien individual a caste consciousness.' (*Untouchable*, 143)

In his second novel, whom people call, 'the epic of sorrow' or 'Odyssey', a *Coolie*, Anand narrated another angle of society where poor are sufferer. According to Anand, the exploitation of poor people, labours is not on the ground of caste, class, and race, but it is on the ground of oppressed and suppressed. Munoo, the man having extraordinary power with him, becomes helpless due to his hunger and poverty. Hunger and poverty of his life had already taken away lives of his mother and father. The brutality of his son-in-law and ill-treatment he received from his lady master was sinning picture of contemporary society where have's inhumanely treated to those who don't have.

Anand never seemed in drafting picture of people of ill-omens of the society but also drafted good characters like Prabha Dayal, who takes an orphan to home and his wife treats Munoo as



her son. Though he had such loving background in his few happy days, how can we forget his saying when he goes to say, 'I want to live, I want to know and I want to work.' (Coolie, 128). These very words of Anand's character seem a voice of poor people of the society who want justice for living, learning and earning. It is because social ethics allow everyone to live, to learn and to earn. Therefore, through Munoo's voice, Anand urges social justice for poor and suffering people. His novel Coolie calls social justice on economic ground as capitalist show no mercy for poor and exploits them severely.

Conclusion:

The novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie* have conclusive and narrative description of social problems based on social discrimination. Social discrimination on caste, class, gender, religion, and economics has been portrayed by means of suffering of characters in the novels. Social and Individual exploitation on the ground of these parameters and flush system of Indian society brings external and internal forces of dehumanization nurtured in the blood of Indian society. Introduction of Gandhi's philosophy by the author in these novels play enough ground for strengthening social justice. On the basis of the theory, it can be concluded that this research paper attempts to portray a real image of social injustice on deprived social elements. The only curse of there is that they belonged to such community where they are either called untouchable or oppressed. The social exploitation of Bakha and Munoo are the images of such real society and they hopelessly hope for social justice because they are human beings. They are the representative of thousands of poor, and untouchable people who always dream for social justice.

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