

Inequality in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable

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Abstract

Great novelist Mulk Raj Anand has addressed socioeconomic issues in his writing. His passion is portraying contemporary India, complete with its corruption, untouchability, starvation, poverty, superstitions, labor troubles, and economic anxieties. The novel *Untouchability* focused on the underprivileged segment of Indian society that was deemed “Achhut” untouchable, meaning that upper-class individuals “Swarna Varga” were not allowed to touch them. Through the characters of Bakha, a sweeper, Lakha, the chief of the sweepers in the area, Solini, a Dalit girl, Charat Singh, a charitable man, and many more, the novel accurately portrays society. These figures represent Indian society’s spoilt and collapsing traditional traditions. But the book also shows how society may tolerate cruel, terrible behavior when it comes to the Dalit Vagra, as well as the kindness and compassion displayed by the author’s characters and the optimism that can be seen in the midst of despair thanks to Mahatma Gandhi’s teachings. The narrative also emphasizes how technology was developed and used to elevate humanity through cruel practices like manual rummaging.

Keywords: Untouchability, Orthodox, Rummage, Triumph.

Mulk Raj Anand holds a unique position in India, having spent four decades there during his career. He is a well-known English novelist from India’s pre-independence era and a famous novelist. He is the first English-language writer from India to reach a global readership. Through his books and short stories, he expresses his viewpoint on poverty and tyranny. In his debut book “Untouchable,” he is the first English novelist to use an untouchable as the main character. With this book, he established himself as one of India’s top English writers and gained recognition. His books focus on social issues like caste, religion, racial prejudice, isolation, and human misery brought on by social, political, economic, and cultural variables. The author has accurately depicted the real state of untouchables, particularly the circumstances facing sweepers, who are viewed as the lowest class of untouchables. The caste system has a significant influence on our society and has grown to be an integral aspect of Indian culture. His first book, “Untouchable,” paints a realistic portrait of Bakha’s predicament as a sweeper, a member of a lower social class. The novelist’s childhood friend served as the model for Bhaka’s creation. His mother used to treat his friend, a sweeper, rudely. Anand respected him for his attributes. His heart was deeply scarred by the insults and humiliations inflicted upon him by his family. Subsequently, he developed the character of Bhaka in his debut book, “Untouchable,” and spoke out against the immorality of

untouchability. This book showed how upper class people treat lower class people. The narrative of one day in Bakha's life is wrapped up in the book. In the hierarchy of castes, he is a member of the lowest caste, the scavengers. He's never been the typical sweeper type. Even bystanders appreciated his abilities to clean public restrooms and roadways. He begins each day by mistreating his father, Lakha, who works as a sweeper jamadar. The lower castes were consistently treated with denigration, insults, and disrespect by the higher castes. The common humiliation of the lower castes is embodied in the Bakha narrative. In the book, various forms of humiliation are discussed. Simply said, humiliation occurs when someone is treated disrespectfully by another person and their sense of individual dignity is not acknowledged. Whenever we discuss Hinduism, we always bring up the subject of its caste system. Hinduism is essentially split into four Varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudas. However, in practice, there are hundreds of castes and sub-castes within the larger society. For the author, literature serves as a vehicle not only for amusement but also for illustrating societal issues and the opposition to social change in society. The author's writing about the caste prejudice that occurs in our culture is excellent. The Hindu religion holds that God is extremely moral and that God is present in all things in nature, but not in untouchables. Untouchables were not allowed to see God or engage in devotion within Hindu temples due to the idea that doing so would pollute the gods. In this book, Bakha imagines himself seeing the God within the temple, but he lacks the courage to actually do so. Hindu gods were therefore considered untouchables by the untouchable for a long time. It is forbidden for untouchables to enter the temple. While not all Hindus were oppressors, the majority certainly were. As a result, the author constructed Bakha as a global paradigm of untouchables. Through the course of the book, the author takes aim at colonialism, imperialism, casteism, and feudalism. He is motivated by the goal and dream of successfully reestablishing a new social structure. In the newly formed colonial and post-independence India, the author has battled for the untouchables' freedom, equality, justice, and fundamental human necessities. The author has demonstrated a gentle opposition to all those societal ills that plague society, and the author believed that human dignity ranks first among all essential principles.

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