The study aims at focusing attention on the portrayal of the social discrimination in Indian English fiction. Particularly in the novels written by the prominent creative writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga. The term discrimination means unfavourable treatment of people. Social discrimination means, it is an unfavourable treatment of individuals or group with prejudiced attitude. That may lead to such treatment which is mainly based on the biased attitude which takes into consideration, one’s own marginalized position based on socio, economic cultural parameters like caste, class, gender, community, race and economic concept of rich and poor leading to subalternity. Thus the discrimination includes, caste, class, gender, all the exploited people, like sweepers, coolies, the downtrodden, weaker section of the society, women workers. The present study focuses on the aspects, like caste, class, and gender discrimination, in novels by Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Arundhati Roy and Arvind Adiga.

*Social Novels*: Social Novels are novels, which depict social conditions and dynamics of social change. Which affect the life of people and also
through light on social issues like poverty, oppressed, poor, downtrodden, marginalized and socially discriminated.

**Social Discrimination**: It is an unfavourable treatment of individuals or group and prejudiced attitudes that may lead to such treatment which is mainly based on the bias attitude which takes into consideration one's own marginalized position based on socio, economic cultural parameters like, caste, class, gender, community, race and economic, concept of rich and poor leading to *subalternity*; or treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit; partiality or prejudice; racial discrimination; discrimination against foreigners.

“Unfair treatment of a person, racial group, minority, ect; action based on prejudice; racism- discrimination on the basis of race, especially against blacks and other non-whites. Sexism-discrimination on the basis of sex, especially, against women”.¹

Discrimination- unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice, favouritism; racial discrimination, racialism, racism,- discriminatory or abusive behavior towards member of another race sexism-discriminatory or abusive behavior towards members of the opposite sex. Discrimination – prejudice, bias, injustice, intolerance, bigotry, favouritism, unfairness, inequality measures to counteract racial discrimination.

Discrimination is the prejudicial or distinguishing treatment of an individual based on their actual or perceived membership in a certain
group’s initial reaction or interaction; is generally looked down upon;

Etymologically the term discrimination appeared in the early 17th century in the English language. It is from the Latin discriminant ‘distinguished between’, from the verb discriminare, from discrimen ‘distinction’ from the verb discerner. Since the American Civil War the term ‘discrimination’ generally evolved in American English usage as an understanding of prejudicial treatment of an individual solely on their race, later generalized as membership in a certain socially undesirable group or social category.

Age- Ageism or age discrimination is discrimination and stereotyping based on the grounds of someone’s age. Caste-discrimination affects an estimated 250 million people world wide, based on caste estimate currently, there are an estimates 160 million Dalits or Scheduled castes (formerly Untouchables) in India. Religious-discrimination is valuing or treating a person or group differently because of what they do or do not believe or because of their feelings towards a given religion.

Gender- discrimination and sexism refers to belief and attitudes in relation to the gender of a person, such belief and attitudes are of a social nature and do not, normally carry any legal consequences. Sex discrimination, on the other hand may legal consequences. Social class discrimination is the actual behavior of those who treat others differently
depending on their social situation, that someone on the benefits is treated unfairly compared to that of someone who works for a living.

**Caste System:** The caste system is a form of social stratification. There is no comparable institution elsewhere in the world for caste system. Caste is a closely connected with the Hindu Philosophy and religion, customs and manners, food and dress, habits, occupation and hobbies. India is a classical land of caste.

The term 'caste' is derived from the Spanish (Portuguese) word 'castra' meaning 'breed', or lineage. The Portuguese used the term caste first denote the division in the Indian caste system. The word signify's race and kind. The Sanskrit word for caste is 'varna', which means 'colour' race and colour seem to be the basis of caste in addition to the division of labour and occupation. The popular equivalent of caste is 'Jati'.

Indian caste system is a system of social stratification and social restriction in India, in which communities are defined by thousands of endogamous hereditary groups called 'Jati's'. *A.W. Green* -"Caste system of stratification in which mobility up and downs the status ladder, at least ideally may not occur"². D.N. Majumdar calls it a -"Closed group".³

**Varna:** Early Indian texts like the Manusmiriti and the Puranas speaks of 'Varna'. Which means order, nature, type or colour. The roots of caste
based social structure and the humiliation of Dalit can be traced back in the Chaturvarnas. In Purusharthas, the people of the society, born out of the body of Vishnu. According to this mythology Brahmin was born out of head, Kshatriya was born out of arms, Vaishya was born out of abdomen and shudra was born as a slave solvent because he was born out of feet so that he was destined to serve the rest of the society. In Rigveda we can find earliest references of caste system the hymn dictates.

A) Brahmanoasaya mukhmasit
B) Bhurajanyah kruta
C) Uru todasay yadavaishya
D) Padabhayam sudra ajayat.

The 'Jati's' were hypothetically and formally grouped by the Brahminical texts under the four well known as categories (The vernas): viz Brahmins (priest, scholars, teachers) Kshatriyas (kings warriors, law enforcer’s, administrators) Vaishyas (agriculturalist, trades, merchants), and Shudras (menials, artisans, laborer, craftsman, service provider). Certain people like the Chandals (who deals with the disposal of dead) were excluded altogether and treated as Untouchables. The caste, like systems were also observed among followers of other religions in the Indian subcontinent including some groups of Muslims and Christians most likely due to common cultural elements.
In 2001, the proportion of Dalit population was 16.2 percent of India's total population. The Dalit population of India is officially recognized and protected by Indian government as scheduled castes. The term Dalit includes all historically discriminated lowest castes of India such as Shudras and Untouchables.

Traditionally in north Indian society, the political power usually rests with the protector Kshatriyas, the economic power with the Vaishayyas and Shudras, while the Brahmin’s as custodians and interpreters of Dharma, enjoyed much prestige were given many advantages by society even though they were economically poor.

The horizons, the people outside the caste system, had the lowest social status. The horizons were refined as untouchables. They worked in unhealthy, unpleasant or polluting jobs. The horizons suffered from social segregation and restriction and extreme poverty.

Romila Thaper opines “Untouchability derived from the fact that some people were considered polluting either because of their occupation as scavengers, such as Chandals and Doms and those who maintained the cremation grounds, or because they belong to primitive tribes such as NISADA and BHILLA. Their speech was alien and their manner of life was strange. Even the Buddhists despised of the Chandals. The inequalities of the city life further aggravated the degradation of these groups already declared impure on account of ritual population.”4
As R.S. Sharma, believes that, Untouchability developed sometime before Mouryas—“Against the background of a very low material culture of the aborigins, the increasing contempt for manual work, combined with primitive ideas of taboo and impurity associated with certain materials, produced the unique phenomenon of untouchability. This was particularly true of the work of chandals who dealt with corpses, with which were linked the primitive ideas of impurity and horror consequently it was felt necessary to avoid contact with such person. In later times the ideas of Untouchability extended.”

According to Prabhat Mukherjee: “Untouchability was the punishment the forest-dwelling rebels got for their insubordination and hostility to the Aryans, incorporated into the main economic activity prevailing at that time, that is agricultural, nor into any other form of production in society. only unskilled, unproductive, lovely and menials jobs were assigned to them. Thus, when they were forced to surrender, it was not clemency they received. Instead they were treated with utter contempt and were segregated as a residual category of people to be employed as and when necessary.”

The untouchables have been subjugated to several social disabilities. They were not permitted to live in and enter into settlements but for specific purposes and limited span of time. People of other caste could not use vessels touched by them and avoided their contact. They had to reside at the outskirts of the villages and towns and could not enter unannounced.

Dr. Mittal has given is own criteria, which shed more light on the
condition of the untouchables.

- Do not receive the service of the Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishyas.
- Are not served by barbers and Kahars (water carrier and palanquin bearing caste)
- Cannot serve food and water to higher caste.
- Cannot enter into temples, holy places etc.
- Cannot use well, ponds, roads, hostels etc meant for public use
- Cannot give up filthy occupations and adopt other one.

Also Kshiti Mohan Sen mentions five categories of the Untouchables:

“the water touched by a low caste is not accepted. Lower one the people who pollute earthen were by their touch. Lower than them are people who pollute even the metal vessels by their touch. Lower even than them are the castes who pollute a temple by entering into the yard. There are even castes who pollute the entire village or town they enter”

Socially our country India has since time immemorial been bewildered by the division of society into castes and sub-castes. Originally these castes were formed on the basis of the function allotted to them and performed by each group. The caste system has been practiced in the Indian society for centuries. The viperous roots of this evil system deeply and firmly planted in the Indian mind has poisoned the
healthy thinking of the people in society. Caste system originated in the division of function and the responsibilities of agrarians society of the Aryans. Originally, there were four castes. The Brahmins (priest) The Kshatriya’s (soldiers and feudal lords) The Vaishya’s (farmers and shopkeepers) and The Shudras (Bondsman and shopkeepers). The conquest of northern India by the Aryans the ab-origin population was the outcastes; It was his (Shudras) function to do the menial job: to remove human excrement. Further the more, the temples were forbidden to him and any physical contact with a caste Hindu was severely punishable. Disgraceful behavior towards the community during the lifetime of a caste Hindu could also mean degradation to the position of outcaste.

But in course of time the caste system become very rigid. People belonging to first three castes came within the fold of caste Hindus. Others outside this fold are regarded as untouchables.

Among the untouchables themselves there are gradation as higher and lowers. Sweeper class is the lowest in the hierarchy among the Untouchable themselves. Their touch or even their presence is considered polluting. They are not allowed to draw water from the public well, nor are they allowed to go near the shrines test, the deities like human beings, should feel defiled. In this caste ladder Brahmin’s are regarded as the top most class. They enjoy the privileges of their class. Among the Brahmins too those who follow the profession of priesthood have the best of the
both the worlds. They enjoyed the respect and beautiful alms from all other member of the society.

Thus outcaste, fulfilling the most menial of customs was degraded to the position of untouchability. Aryan culture depended upon enforcing racial exclusiveness, physically as well as spiritually. To carry out a such system, the segregation and the curtailment of inter caste breeding was required.

The caste system has been practiced in the Indian society for centuries. The vigorous roots of this evil system deeply, and firmly planted in the Indian mind has poisoned the healthy thinking of the people in society. Caste system was severely originated in the division of function and the responsibilities of the Aryans. Originally, there were four castes. Brahmins (priest), The kshatriyas (soldiers, feudal lords) Vaishyas (Business class) and The Shudras (bondsmen and artisan). After the conquest of northern India by the Aryans, the origin population was either driven to the south or enslaved. This element of the Hindus Aryans society was the outcaste hindu class. It’s function was to do the menial job, to remove human excrements. Furthermore, any entry into the temples was forbidden to its members and any physical contact with a caste Hindu was severely punishable. Disgraceful behavior towards the community of a caste Hindu could also mean degradation to the position of an outcaste. Thus this caste, fulfilling the most memorable of customs
was degrade to the position of untouchability. Aryan culture depended upon enforcing racial exclusiveness, physically as well as spiritually. To carry out such as system, the segregation and the curtailment of inter-caste breeding was required. The novels written in this period, throw an ample light on the deplorable condition of the untouchable, the atrocities inflicted on them by the caste Hindus and their humble position in the society. Few novels were written on such issues. Among them Untouchable is the famous novel by Mulk Raj Anand.

Social exploitation reaches its peak in the inhuman treatment meted. Out of a sweeper by, curse for untouchability is the culminating point of social injustice. Caste Hindus inflict various kinds of brutalities on the unfortunate untouchables, simply because they are untouchables. (untouchable-Anand). Caste Hindus inflict various kinds of brutalities on the unfortunate untouchables, simply because they are untouchables. (Anand). For caste discrimination themes we focus on the novels of Mulk Raj Anand-'Untouchable', (1935), and 'The Road'. Arundhati Roy's-'The God of Small Things'(2007). Aravind Adiga’s- The White Tiger

Another kind of social exploitation, we experience ‘the class discrimination’.

Class: Class is a principle type of social stratification found in modern civilized countries. If the caste system is found to be unique to India, the class system is universal in nature. Class is a social
stratification in which people are grouped into a set of hierarchical social categories. Class in common parlance, “Class”, is usually synonyms with “socio Economic class, economic or educational status.”

The term ‘class’ is etymologically derived from the Latin word ‘classis’, which was used by census takers to categories citizens by wealth, in order to determine military service obligation. The common strata model of class divides society into a simple hierarchy of working class, middle class and upper class. Class is a person’s economic position in a society. Upper class members of the upper class generally wield much greater political power than members of the lower or middle class. The upper class is the social class composed of those who are wealthy, well born or both.

Middle class-The members of middle class are the most contested of the three categorization. The broad group of people in contemporary society who fall between the lower class and the upper class. Lower class (as working class) are those employed in low paying wage jobs with every little economic security.

Lower class, working class people often live in decaying crime-ridden urban areas with the low standard of. Lower class (occasionally described as working class), are those employed in low paying wages jobs with very little economic security. The working class is some times separated into those who are employed but lacking financial security, and
an underclass – those who are long term unemployed.

The ‘class’ has different contextual meanings. In common parlance, the term social class, is usually synonymous with ‘socio economic class, defined as people having the same social, economic class defined as “people having the same social economic status’ e.g. “the working class”, “an emerging professional class”.


Gender:

In the mid 1970s feminist adopted the word ‘gender’ to describe the socially, constructed differences between men and women. Then gender has been used as a conceptual category with very specific meanings. According to the W.H.O definition-“Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women, “gender”, refers to the socially constructed rules behaviour, activities and attributes that given society considers appropriate for men and women. In other words ‘Male’ and ‘Female’ are sex categories, while ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are gender categories.
Here is another version of the short answer by (UNISEF)- sex’s biological females have two X chromosomes and males have one X and one Y chromosomes. Gender on the other hand, is a social construct that describes what is feminine and what is masculine.

Gender has three similar points.

1- ‘Gender is a socially constructed concept.

2- The construction of ‘gender’ is complex and is influenced by culture, the roles women and men are expected to play, the relationship among those rules and values society places on those roles.

3- The content of ‘gender’ can vary within and among cultures and overtime.

Gender study is a field of interdisciplinary study which analysis race, ethnicity, eternity sexuality and location. Gender study has many different forms, Simoe-de Beauvoir said: “one is not born a women, but rather becomes a one. It is civilization as a whole that produce this creature .....which is describe as feminine”. The term “gender” should be used to refer to the social and cultural construction of masculinities and faminities. Gender study closely examine’s the role that the biological status of being male or female have no social construct of gender. Gender is an important area of study in many disciplines, such as literature literary theories, drama studies, film theory, contemporary psychology, psychoanalysis, Women studies, Men studies. Women studies is an
interdisciplinary academic field devoted to topic concerning women, feminism gender and politics, Feminist theory, women’s history, social history, etc. Men’s studies-is, an interdisciplinary academic field devoted to topic concerning men, masculine, gender and politics.

The ancient Greek who worshipped both gods and goddess were convinced that, men were the measured of perfection, while the women were fundamentally imperfect. The philosopher, Aristotle holds that, women are naturally lacking in intelligence and rationality. Their bodies lack the necessary warmth that make for human intelligence. Being natural fools, women do not deserve to be citizens who could participate in public affairs.

Christianity maintain that, God created man first and women next (from men’s rib, in fact) and therefore, Man is the exemplary human, where as Women is a secondary and dependent being. John Milton writes; ‘eloquently that God created man in his image. He for God only; while women was created as an after through from Adams rib. Not being in God’s image women was to realize ‘God in him’, that is man. Islam to believe that men were created to rule over manage the lives and affair of women ‘men are in charge of women in so far as God has made the one excel over the other and in so far as they spend of their property’.

Worshipping women as mother, while devaluing them in every other sense, thus became a way of displaying as well as managing fear
about female power and sexuality. All these views denote gender discrimination. We focus on these aspects in the social novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Arundhati Roy and Arvind Adiga. Mulk Raj Anand’s, *Gouri-The old Woman and the Cow*, Arundhati Roy is *The God of Small Things*, kamala Markandaya’s – *A Handful of rice, Nectar in a Seive*, and Aravind Adiga’s- *The White Tiger* all these social novels deal with the social issues that exists in society, like in the form of oppressed, marginalized, down trodden and discrimination.

The present thesis focuses on social discrimination in the form of caste, class and gender. It has four chapters. Beginning with the *Introduction Chapter*, *Chapter-I* – is *Review of Literature*, deals with the background and is a thorough review of literature along with the motif behind the realistic social novel writing, it mirrors the purpose and reformatory attitude developed and achieved by the prominent creative social novelists in Indian English literature and Social novels, novels of social realism. *Chapter – II – Social Discrimination in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Kamala Markandaya* – analyses various themes of their novels, their creative and social commitment and reformatory zeal which aims at focusing on the establishment of egalitarian society with a view to build a just society by providing equal opportunities of meaningful living. *Chapter- III – Social Discrimination in the Novels*
of Arundhati Roy and Arvind Adiga - their creative output in the writing of social novels tries to magnify the social ills prevalent in today’s society which is sprouted from socio-cultural, economic, caste, class, gender, and political disparities and prejudicial differences which constantly suppress the life conditions of the Subalterns. Chapter-IV – is Conclusion which sums up all the consolidated major ideas and findings discussed and argued in the previous chapters and arrives at conclusion. It is followed by an exhaustive select bibliography.
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