Mulk Raj Anand was born on 12\textsuperscript{th} December 1905. He is notable for his depiction of the subaltern conditions in traditional Indian society. He was born in Peshawar, now in Pakistan. He studied at Khalsa college, Amritsar. Before moving to England where he attended university college of London as an undergraduate and Later in Cambridge university, graduating with a Ph.D in 1929. His father was a coppersmith. He matriculated and rose to the position of the head clerk in Dogra Regiment of the British Army. His mother came from peasant family. He wrote number of articles for criterion and other journals. In 1932 he returned to India from Europe. Then he lived in Sabarmath Ashram with Mahatma Gandhi. He prepared the first draft of untouchable in Sabarmati Ashram, edited it as per the direction of Mahatma Gandhiji which is considered as Mulk Raj Anand’s Magnum Opus. His works are:

\textit{Untouchable} (1935), \textit{Coolie} (1936), \textit{Two Leaves and Bud} (1937), \textit{The Big Heart} (1945), \textit{Seven Summers} (1951), \textit{Private Life of Indian Prince} (1958), \textit{The Old Woman and the Cow} (1960), \textit{The Road} (1963),
Death of a Hero (1964), Morning Face (1970), Across The Black Waters

- Mulk Raj Anand is one of India’s most popular short story writer. He has seven collections of short stories.

The Lost Child and other stories (1934), The Barbers Trade Union and other stories (1944), The Tractor and the Corn God and others stories (1947), The reflections on the golden bed and other stories (1953), The power of darkness and other stories (1959), Lajwanti and others stories (1966), Between Tears and Laughter and other stories (1973).

Mulk Raj Anand is a popular Social novelist of contemporary society. The entire thinking of the novelist’s was sarcasm, realistic novel writing. Anand’s commitment for social revolution through his social ideology is remarkable. The rise of the rural novel, which is also realistic in characters, is another remarkable features of his writing. The urban writers cared little to portray the appalling and inhuman condition of the life of villagers. The peasant’s poverty and exploitation were exposed in Anand’s novel Coolie-1936, and The Two Leaves and a Bud. Anand employs the picaresque method in Untouchable Commenting on early character, Anand says-

“All these heroes as the other men and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me because they were the reflection of real people. I had known during my childhood and youth”.¹
The glaring disparities between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have not’s compelled him to think about the amelioration of the underdog. In the course of the time Anand became a champion of the poor and the exploited, in his novels and short stories. He is against these de-humanising and barbaric distinction. Anand writes its significance in his literary career:

“This is the source of my novels, in so for it reveals that, in my work, life has a direct, intimate and organic relations with writing, that creating of art to me means the way to gain insight into myself and other so that we may file up these awareness and become intensely human, understand each other, extend consciousness and love.”

Also Anand says:

“I had to do it without being high minded or low minded. My heroes and heroines could not be heroic in the epic sense to the Ramayana, Mahabharata or Iliod, in our tragic age, but I had to Launch upon the eternal quest”

For Anand’s socialism was the panacea to cure social evils, misery ugliness and inequality. His humanistic learning was strengthened. Anand skillfully correlates nationalism, socialism and humanism in his novels. As M.H. Williams says:

“M.R. Anand was able to unite nationalism with socialism into one Humanitarian movement a single revolt against oppression.”
Anand has always written to glorify the essential dignity of man and to inspire compassion in the hearts of men for the oppressed and downtrodden. According to him:

“The modern writer must go straight to the heart of the problem of our time, the problem of human sensibility in the present complex situation the tragedy of modern man”\(^5\)

Realism and social purpose are the themes present in all the novels and short stories of Anand. Anand believes that novel is an appropriate medium to express a writer’s concern for humanism. It essentially deals with the problems of life of man in a comprehensive and convincing manner. Srinivas Iyengar say’s;

“As a novelists addressing himself to the tasks of exposing certain evils, Anand has been as effective almost as Dickenson himself”\(^6\)

Anand primarily deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for better life. He has always been conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables the peasants, the serfs, the Coolies and other suppress member of human society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the object-ness apathy and despair in which they have sunk. According to Saros Cawasjee:

“Anand is deeply concerned with social problems and that he is committed to the eradication of the evil which infest modern society. Is this a deplorable aim of an artist? As untouchable a propaganda because
it is reveals the exploitation of the poor by the rich? Propaganda is a term given currency by the bourgeois critic and loosely used in India to capture any work where the author’s intention is plain”

In these novels Anand describes that discrimination done on the basis of caste and class. The social discrimination generates social tensions and disturbs the cultural balance of society. It is callous and inhuman.

The themes of the novel, the thematic pattern in the novel revolves round; 1 The rigidity of caste system
2 The tyranny of class system
3 The religious bigotry
4 Status of women, in Indian society, as discriminated, these are the major points focused in his writing especially novels.

The novel Untouchable opens with a description of the outcaste colony, Where they were living without any facilities, since thousands of years. Their colony is portrayed thus in the novel. The out caste, were the lowest stratum of Indian society, they suffer extreme economic and physical deprivation. He paints a stark picture of the condition in which these people live.

“The outcaste colony was a group of mud walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate, from them.
There lived the scavengers, the leather workers, the washer-men, the barber’s the water carriers, the grass cutter and other outcaste from Hindu society. A book near the lane, once with crystal clear water, no soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odor of the hides and skins of dead carcuses left to dry on its, banks, the dung of donkey’s sheep’s, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes, and the biting, choking pungent fumes that oozed from its sides. The absence of a drainage system had, thought the rains of various seasons, made of the quarters a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink. And altogether the ranports of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in. (p-1 untouchable)

These people live out of city in a separate colony. But yet they have not the Pucca houses they had at least the equipment of basic needs of their life, not even a kitchen, Hearth, even a small room to take shelter, and even relevant equipment in home. The colony consists of a group of mud walled houses clustered together in two rows.

Bakha the hero in the novel and his family live in a twelve feet by five dark dingy, one room house. As professor M.K. Naik says:

“To make a sweeper the hero of his novel was are revolutionary departure for an Indian writer of the nineteen thirties. First, Indian fiction in most of the Indian languages was the new (and till continues in
a large measure to be) a fiction about middle classes for the middle classes by middle class writer.”

The only furniture is two string cots one of which is broken, one string cots one of which is broken and a land chair also broken and lying out side. There are few other articles in the house two old quits, the carpets on which Bhaka sleep on the floor, his second hand army blanket, an earthen pitcher for water an earthen cooking pot a few other, utensils mostly earthen and the tools of the latrine cleaners trade; a shovel, basket and brush which when not in use “doctrine” the outside of the forest wall. Two brocks, which stand in corner for building a fire between them serve as the cooking stove and the corner itself is used as the kitchen. All these description about Bhaka’s home denotes his economical status. They were so poor that they have not a proper house and basic things in their home.

_Caste Discrimination:_ In Indian society, since time immemorial is a caste based group where the upper caste exploit the lowest caste. Caste played very important role in Indian life.

Ambedkar has written about its function;

“Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible virtue has become caste ridden has morality has become caste bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation to the needy. There is no
charity but it begins with caste ends with caste. There is sympathy but not her other caste”.

This was the crude reality of Indian society even at the end of the twentieth century. In this caste hierarchy, Untouchable caste are at the lowest level. Anand has given the highest priority to the lowest in his literary works.

Anand’s Untouchable is a story of the lowest caste ‘Bhangi’ the caste was considered untouchable even among the Untouchable caste. Earlier Hindu society was condemned Untouchables as the dirt of the society. Hindu society did not consider Untouchables as human beings at all- This inhumane discrimination is the shameful drawback of Indian society. The author has realistically depicted the truth.

According to C Paul:

“In his two novels untouchables and Coolie, Anand deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for a better life”.

Bhaka cannot understand why he should be regarded socially so inferior, when he discharges his duties extremely well. He had worked in the barraks of Europeans and also had known that the sepoys did not hesitate to touch him. But caste Hindus treated him differently.

“The outcaste were not allowed to mount the platform surroundings the well because if they were ever to draw water from it the Hindus the
According to Prof. Iyengar;- 

“with his first novel Untouchable Anand inaugurated the literature of oppressed, for the novel is still the examples of Dalit Vagnaya. Anand allowed the bottom dogs to enter the scarsed precints of the novel in all their reality which become significant and drew the attention of the critics”

The opening scene of the novel describes the economical condition and social status of the lower caste people in Bulandshahar. It also describes the economical and social discrimination of people as human. In out caste colony all the surviving class and living inside of this colony. It has lack of the basic facilities like pucca house hygienic, food and cloth.

As R T Robertson- pinpoints in his article, “Untouchable as Archytypal novel”

Bhaka is both isolated from and bound to his culture; it will not allow him fully to participate in the society and cannot realize him from participle in the society and cannot realize him from participate in the society and cannot realism him from it, because of the essential service he performs for it”.

After finishing his morning service when Bhaka came home. He badly needs the tea. But there is no tea available, to prepare tea there is no
water in house, so his sister Sohini went to bring water to prepare tea her brother.

“looking dazedly at the utensils lying about in a corner, he felt he wanted tea. But as he felt he wanted tea. As he survived the room he heard his father still snoring under his patched quilt. His father was not in the room. He saw that his sister was trying to light a fire between two bricks. She was blowing hard at it lifting herself on hanches as she crouched on the mud floor. Her head almost touched the ground but each puff from her mouth succeeded only in raising a sport to smoke and was beaten back by the wet wooden. Sticks that served as fuel. She sat back helpless when she heard her brother’s footsteps. Her smoke irritated eyes were full of water. She turned and saw her brother real tears began to flow down her cheeks.(p-13U)

Sohini was struggling even to prepare a cup of tea for her brother. There were no proper utensils in home. They were very poor. There is a very little cooking done in the house. The Extent of it seems to be important subject in the novel. They were not preparing food in home. Sweepers and Lantern cleaners depend on the people for food when they work for food. It is part of their wages.

The outcastes are at the mercy of the Hindu not only for food, but even for water. After morning hard work of cleaning the public lanterns, Bhaka the sweeper boy, went home. He was thirsty and hungry and felt
like having cup of tea. His sister, Sohini, told him that there was not even a drop of water in the pitcher, she took pity on her brother and went to the well to bring water. The outcaste were not allowed to mount the platform surroundings the well. Because the Hindus of the three upper caste would consider the water polluted. They had no well of their own because they could not afford it. They could not draw water from it. They had to depend on the mercy of their superiors to pour water into their pitchers.

When Sohini reached the well, she saw there was none to give them water. She though that she would have to wait her turn for long. She anxiously felt for her brother who was tired and thirsty. Since no passerby was in sight, she patiently and resignedly sat with other untouchables. Gulabo, the washer women was also there. She was a fair complexioned, middle aged women who had been very beautiful in her youth. She was jealous of Sohini’s blooming beauty. Now Sohini being the lowest caste among the out caste would naturally be looked down upon by Gulabo. The delicate features of her rising beauty had added fuel to Gulabo’s fire. Gulabo hated the very sight of her innocent, honest face, though she would not confess even to herself, that she was jealous of the sweeper girl.

“Go back home, said Gulabo mockingly. There is no one to give you water here! And, at any rate, there are so many of us ahead of you!”
Think of it! Think of it! Wanton! And your mother hardly dead. Think
of laughing in my face, laughing at me who old enough to be your
mother. Bitch! Are you Bitch! Do you take me for a buffoon? what are
you laughing at slut? are not you ashamed of showing your teeth to me
in the presence of men. You prostitute.?p17(Untouchable)

Gulabo thought herself superior to every other outcaste because she
claims a high place women’s status is lowest to caste class, and gender
hierarchy with men. Sohini is lowest among the lowest.

Sohini bore all humiliation and insult patiently. Pundit Kalinath the
temple priest appeared there and all of them prayed to him to draw water
for them. The priest Pandit Kalinath drew water with great difficulty and
all out-caste ran towards the well. Gulabo said that she was the first to
come at her request fell flat on the Brahmin’s ears. He recognized
beautiful Sohini in the crowd. He called her and poured water into her
pitcher. He told her to come and clean the court yard of his house in the
temple.

“oh, you Lakhas daughter”, come here, he said “you have been patient
and the reward of patience, say the holy books, is supreme. Get away,
you, noisy curse, get out of the way!”(p.21)

“Hut pundit ji!” Said Sohini hesitating to receive the favour. not because
she divided the brahmin’s admiration but because, she was afraid of all
those who had come before her. P-21
Look why do not you come and clean the courtyard of our house, at the temple, called the Brahmin’s as the girl withdrew. Tell your, father to send you from today (p-22U)

The rest of the Untouchable had begun to appeal to a new comer, Lachman, to help. He was a Brahmin who had come down in status because he worked as a water carrier and did other Hindus odd Jobs in the houses of other castes Hindus.

After the morning tea Bhaka has to do the unclean work, to clean upper caste night soil from their lantrines. This disgusting job was imposed on this caste. It was only the job open for them. Anand has aptly presented the truth. Anand drew a realistic and sympathetic portrait of the poor of his country.

As E.M. Froster–says in preface to Untouchable

“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 Bhaka. 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.”

Untouchable, sweeper and latrine cleaners depend on the people for, food, when they work for food. It is part of their wages. But in given to them virtually as alms, when after the days work of sweeping in town,
Bhaka goes to house to get the food that is his due wages. In comparison with their cleaning job, they were not given the proper reward of their job. Some time the caste Hindu gave them the remaining of their food left after they have taken, even for that food untouchables had to beg. In this novel Bhaka begs for the food as a reward for his work. It is to be noted that, even after doing their job, they did not get their wages. They have to beg for it.

“bread for the sweeper, mother, Bread for the sweeper….. the sweeper has come for the bread. Mother! the sweeper has come for the bread. p-59

The women of the house, after yelling at him, throws down a chapathi. Bhaka picks it up and wraps it in his duster. The outcaste often get the only leaving of their employers, the caste Hindus, Perhaps on the festive occasion. They receive some decent food. Untouchables could not get enough and hygienic food as a result frequently they became the victims of any disease. They could not get medicine due to untouchability.

It was the plight for untouchability that they had to beg for their reward. They were not given anything until they did their job. They were totally had to depend on the mercy of upper caste. Anand realistically presents this fact. Here Bhaka begs for food. When he could not get response from the house for food, so he sat down on the doorstep. At that
time a sadhu also came for the food by begging (Bhiksha) sadhu were considered as holy person present in India, though they did nothing useful and create for the people, except “the preaching.” A women of the house gave him the food and treated him with respect after all, he was so called holy person. On the other hand Bhaka was badly treated. She said Bhaka had defiled her house by sitting at the doorstep. Saying thus:

“Bread for the sweeper, mother, bread for the sweeper”, he called, standing at the door of the first house. His voice died down to the echo of thak, thak, thak, which store into the sweeper has come for bread, mother alley. Bread for the sweeper, mother, bread for the sweeper, mother ….. the sweeper has come for the bread , mother ! the sweeper has come for the bread”.(p.59)

At first the mistress of the house put the food into the holy man’s bag, the second she handed over to Bhaka, The sadhu added kindly. “My child, you should not sit on peoples door steps, like this.” (p-63U)

A sadhu has not told to the woman to give some thing for getting food, even in mercy. “Untouchable had to do clean the drain a bit and then one can have the bread”. As a reward of his job, a pancake was flung at him.

We witnessed the worst situation of Bhaka in the streets of Bulanshahar. With his own money he buys jalebis from the sweets shop but the owner of the shop has thrown it at him, as if he was a street dog.
It was believed by the upper caste that by the direct touch of untouchable, touchables would be defiled. After getting Jalebi’s in his hands, Bhaka was lost in his own world, thinking of the taste the sweet syrup. Unknowingly he touched the caste Hindus consequently both his Jalebi’s and felicity mixed into dust.

“Bhaka crossed the street to where the Bengali sweet meat seller’s shop was. His mouth began to water for the burfi, sugar candy”. (p-36)

Eight annas in my pocket, he said to himself dare I buy some sweets? If my father comes to know that I spend all my money on sweets; he thought and hesitated, but come, I have only one life to live. He said himself,” let me tell of the sweets; who knows, tomorrow I may be no more’. (p.36)

So he went the sweetshop to buy sweets.

“He caught the jalebis which the confectioner threw at him like a cricket ball, placed four nickel coins on the shoe board for the confectioner’s assistant who stood ready to splosh some water on them, and he walked away embarrassed. Yet happy. (p.37)

After purchasing the sweets, Bhaka was very happy. He moved forward. While he was moving, reading the boards, enjoying the Jalebi he has taken, suddenly he struck and awaken by the harsh sound.

“it was wonderful to walk along like that, munching and looking at all the sights, lowyer and medical men, their degrees and professions etc. He wished he could read all the luridly painted boards”. (p-38)
“keep to the side of the road, you low caste vermin! He suddenly heard someone shouting at him. Why don’t you call, you swine, and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me. You cockeyed son of bowlegged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself. (p.38)

By listening these words Bhaka stood amazed, embraced.

He was deaf and dumb. His sense were paralysed only fear gripped his soul, fear and humility and servility. He was used to being spoken to roughly. But he had seldom been taken. So unawares, the curious smile of humility, which always howered on his lips in the presence of high caste men now became mere pronounced. He lifted his face to the man opposite him, best down. Then he stolen a horried, glanced at the man. Though his face to the man opposite him. The fellows eyes were flaming and red-hot.

“You swine you dog why did not you shout and warn one of your approach! he shouted as he met Bhaka’s eyes. Don’t you Know, you brute that you must not touch me.”p-38

No lalla Ji, it is not true ‘I have erred now, I forget to call, I beg your forgiveness. It won’t happen again it won’t happen again!( p-39)

Then a Mohammaden interfered and says : Leave him never mind, let him go come along, tie your turban! consoled the tanga-walla, who bring a mohammadan and thus also an untouchable from the orthodox hindu point of view, shared the out caste’s resentment to a certain degree’ p-39
Bhaka felt that everyone was looking to him. He bore that shopkeeper’s abuse silently and went on a little later he showed down, and quite automatically be began to shout : posh, posh, posh, sweeper coming!(p-42)

He knew I was being abused. Not one of them spoke for me. The cruel crowd! All of them abused, abused abused. Why are we always abused? The sentry inspector and the sahib that day abused my father. They always abuse us, because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. I was tired of working on, I hate It too that’s why I came here I was tired of working on the latrines every day. That’s why they do not touch us. The high caste. The tanga walla was kind. He is muhammadans. They do not mind touching us, the out caste who are not sweeper. For them I am a sweeper, sweeper untouchable! untouchable! untouchable! I am untouchable! (p-48)

E. M Froster rightly hold the view that;

“the sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may become, free but the sweeper is bound for ever born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolation of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes other when he touches them. They have to purify themselves and to rearrange their plans for the day. Thus he is a disquieting as well as a disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public roads and it is his duty to call out and worn them he is

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Later on he had to announce his arrival by shouting “posh, posh, posh sweeper is coming”.

This was the crude reality of Indian society even at the end of twentieth century. In this caste hierarchy, untouchable caste are at the lowest level. Anand has given the highest priority to the lowest in his literary work. For Anand, literature is not only the means for entertainment but for the social reform. He says about the role and responsibility of the writer. M.K Naik says;

“The writer must go straight to the heart of the problem of our time the problem of human sensibility in present complex, the tragedy of modern man”.

It was included in Hindu minds that untouchables were born to suffer the brutality of caste Hindus. If untouchables did something wrong they had to suffer the harsh punishment. If they did not do anything wrong, yet they got the same reward. Anand has presented the incidents of hockey playing while playing hockey. Bhaka has not learned any one, but he was badly treated. He helped the injured boy of upper caste and brought him to house. He showed humanity by helping the injured child. But he was bitterly treated by the boys mother.

In the caste hierarchy, Brahmin’s were at the top. According to the Hindus Scripture they were considered the ‘Bhoo Deva’ the God of the earth. They might be considered the Bhoo-Devta because of their supreme
knowledge in every discipline. However, later on their knowledge was not considered only the birth remained the criteria for their supremacy. Their utterance was considered the *Brahma Vakya*. Mulk Raj Anand focused on the oppressed downtrodden and bring their problems to the surface so that an average reader might be able to understand the light of the innocent creation who suffer for no fault of their own, but simply because they are the outcaste as they are born in that particular class of untouchable. Pt. Kalinath is the example of it. In the morning, he poured water in Sohini’s pot, while doing it; he has also seen, her blooming beauty. So he told her to “*come and clean the court yard of our house at the temple*”. When she went to clean the courtyard of the house at the temple the pundit behaved abnormally. He was controlled by his unquenchable lust. When she did not surrender to him, “he shouted, polluted polluted”. Actually it was not he, but Sohini was polluted by his lustful touch. Pt. Kalinath’s utterance was “*Brahma Vakya*” because he was Brahimin and priest, belong to higher strata of caste system. So none could doubt about him and none heard the untouchables. Anand has presented the fact that nobody has listened untouchables, even though they were right. As a result, they usually become the victim of upper castes lust. The sufferers are not the victim of upper caste lust. The sufferers are not the victim of fate or god but of society which is man made. Social forces play the role of villain. The sufferers are not the
victim of fate or god but of society which is hand made. Social forces play the role villain.

According to Hindu religious belief and scripture, God is everywhere, in dead (stone idol) and things, in animals and in plants in trees also but not in untouchables. Untouchables could not see worship or touch to Hindu gods in Hindu temples, otherwise the Gods would be polluted. Anand realistically presents this belief. Here Bhaka wishes to see (Hindu) God’ but when he imagined the consequences of his attempt he could not dare. For Untouchables, thus Hindu God’s remained untouchables.

Untouchables were not allowed to enter the portals of temple because their contact would defile the house of God, the creator of all. After the experience of facing humiliation for touching some caste Hindu in the market. Bhaka went to sweep the temple courtyard. He was filled with the fear of some unknown and mysterious fear as he entered the courtyard of the temple. Bhaka surveyed the heap of dust and leaves which he had come to clear. He threw the basket and the broom on the ground and was ready to begin his job.

As his curiosity became more and more acute, he dismissed his conflicting thoughts and moved towards the stairs. Again and again his curiosity, Propelled him to go to up the stairs. He strengthened himself and climbed up five stairs out of fifteen with a great difficulty. He
climbed up a few more stairs and from a safe distance he saw the
spectacles of the worshipers. All of a sudden he heard a loud cry ‘polluted
polluted’. He also saw the figure of a woman. Sohini, his sister behind the
shouting. Like this we are encountering the class and caste discrimination
in Untouchable.

*The Road* is another novel on Untouchability. People in the village
of Goverdhan produce plenty of cattle milk and large amount of
vegetables. But selling milk and sending it to the city, Gurgaon, is a big
problem as there is no transportation facility. The government, aware of
this serious problem faced by the villagers, decided to fulfill their
aspiration by building a road connecting the city to Goverdhan. The work
he started. The villagers are very happy that soon vehicles would be able
to visit their village. They would have an era of economic wealth
prosperity. Bhiku and other untouchables also get chance to work in the
road construction.

The landlord Thakur Singh who has become rich by exploiting the
untouchables, cannot tolerate the idea of Bhiku and other untouchables
drawing high wages just like the upper caste hindus for taking part in the
road construction. The caste feeling soars up. The upper class Hindus
refuse even to touch the stones quarried by the untouchables. But the
village headman Dhooli Singh, inspired by the teaching of Gandhiji,
decides to treat the untouchables as children of God or Harijan’s. He
courageously joins hands with untouchables in the road construction. The landlord Thakur Singh becomes furious. By his instigation, the village priest excommunicate Dhooli Singh. Soon The landlords son, Sanju a merciless ‘Goonda’, translates into action his father’s fury with the untouchables, by burning their huts. Dhooli Singh’s son Lachman, who is in love with landlords daughter Rukmani, also joins hand in the arson organized by Sanju against the untouchables, in the hope that it would please Thakur Singh the untouchables, and one day he would be able to marry Rukmani. On the other hand, the contra tempts celebrates the magnanimous heart of Dhooli Singh with sorrow and he decides to help the untouchables to build their huts. He generously permits them to occupy his own house till their huts are built. Dhooli Singh’s wife becomes angry at his behavior of freely mixing with the untouchables and getting “polluted”, and so she leaves him. But Dhooli Singh stands all these ordeals with fortitude. When the government authorities come to know that the road, instead of uniting people, divides families, threatens friendships.

The novel *The Road* deals with the display of the familial relationship in the life of downtrodden Laxmi and Bhiku. She narrates the ideals of Mahabharatha. She inculcates in him values such as work is worship and respect to the higher caste Dhooli Singh a head of the upper caste family brings crisis and domestic disharmony. The caste acquire a
new meaning in determining the familial relationship’s in a new democracy. The lambarder Dhooli Singh, a caste Hindu employs the untouchables to work for the construction of a road. Thus Dhooli Singh joins his hands with the chamars. The landlord, Thakur Singh, and other Hindus refuses to touch the stones querred by the chamars. The landlord, Thakur Singh instigate the village priest to excommunicate Dhooli Singh. At this movement the father son relationship in the family of Dhooli Singh sours up. Lachman, son of Dhooli Singh, hates his father and joins hands in the arson prepared by Thakur Singh’s wife gets angry with him on account of freely mixing with the untouchables.

Lachman participation in the arson is with the hope that he would be able to marry, Rukmani, the daughter of Thakur Singh. Besides, Lachman was threatened by Rukmani’s brother, Sanju that he would break the betrothal on Lachman’s rejection to born the huts of the untouchables. However in this situation, Dhooli Singh encourageously welcomes, the affected untouchables and gives them everything they need.

In the family of Thakur singh, the son of Thakur Sanju, burns the houses of untouchable and brings crisis in his own family. The intensified crisis between son and father makes Rukmani disguised against father and brother for bringing about the catastrophe in the life of the untouchables and that of her own. On burning the cottages of the outcaste people, Sanju’s father despises him and angrily suggests him to stick to
the caste Hindus. His mother holds him responsible for the dejection of world would be son in law.

Rukmani’s feels worries and helpless and behaves like a widow, even before she is not yet married. When Thakur Singh feels frustrated on account of the violation of Dharma. Similarly Bhagwanti, Thakur Singh’s wife feels restless after Sanju leaves the house on burning the huts of the outcaste people and wonders like an orphan. Her worry about her son is captured in following words;

“She condemned if Sanju had his way in the morning. And who would cook for him there in the open field and whether he has a clean tunic and dhoti to change into after his bath. (The Road) p-94

These relations are of greater significance in rural ethos than that of the urban one where nuclear family’s are the core of life.

In the Road, Anand express the existence of social evils in the form of casteism. The Road is about misery and suffering of the outcastes. We come across with the only one references to the nature of Indian agriculture. Dholi Singh a caste Hindu, inspired by the teaching of Gandhiji, narrates that the former like him has participated in the work of road construction when the land does not yield good crop. Dholi Singh, forgetting caste differences, struggles to get money to survive against the drought.
When it comes to money we have to earn enough cash to survive against the drought. This is the new Dharma as I understand it not prayers! How much does a peasant with ten across like me earn money how? It is a hard business the land we must face our rankedness, the naked truth of our moneylessness! (The Road p-58)

*The Road* depicts a rural women as a dumb, meek, and submissive creature, the women in The road does not struggle to extricate, herself from the trauma in her life. In the Road, the village women are like humble as a cow. They accept their existence passively. They did not object for their identity in the society. She does not emerge as an awakened women with fresh leaves of life like Gouri.

Bhiku’s mother Laxmi, hesitates to break the customs and traditions. She is aware of her low social status in the next birth. So to respect the high caste Hindus, becomes her second nature: her son Bhiku protest against the treatment meted out to him by the high caste people preaches him about the relation of past life deeds and death. The landlord Thakur Singh is profoundly influenced by the religion however he is naturally inclined to believe that the burden of the deeds, because their events deeds in the past make them to hardworking, humiliation and suffering.

Anand depicts the consciousness of faith in the caste superiority and pride of the high caste people who directly relate themselves to the
Gods. Bhagwat Geeta reminds Rukmani of their caste superiority and caution her to be away from the inferior caste people.

Those dirty men beware of their looks! And landlords of village of Govardhan.

We are of the ahir Kshatriya caste Rajputs desended from Bhagwan krishana. (The Road.p-16)

Rukmani with an unshaken faith ruminates over the Karma and the Dharma and its effect on birth in a particular caste. She thinks;

“According to the faith, the lower caste people were Darlinisayan, lowest incarnations of God, who had the divine in them but who had to assume countless before they could enjoy completement and become thrice born. Pandithji teaches Dharma and double vision; They ought to suffer before they can rise to a higher caste in the next life or recognize the divine. The temple teaches them Dharma. They cannot enter the house of God or will never allow them there. But they can make dry offering for the preservation of the Homa, which may emancipate them…. The calm of this village and the progress of all the souls, depends on us. The foolish act on our part will bring the end of kali yuga nearer which will recoil on those whose stars are in collision…..”p-41

In The Road Anand has expose the hypocrite priest, pundit Suraj Mani. We find contradiction in his behavior. Once he despises the untouchables to continue to query the stone, stating that the road would
become inauspicious by their touch. We see his real nature when he rejects stones touched by the untouchables, and on the chamar boys.

However the priest tells people that, Dholi Singh’s act of joining hands with the untouchables is a violation of Dharma. He persuades the people to perform a purification ceremony.

The untouchable in The Road suffers traumatic miseries due to their caste status. They become perpetual victim of physical and mental tortures. They are forced to live upto the subhuman level. These people are deprived of the principles of equality of status. In this connection Srinivas Iyengar aptly reflects;

“He had first seen his heroes as pieces of trembling humanity and loved them before he sought to put them into his books”. p-335 (The Road)

Bhiku mother, Laxmi, in the moments of strong dislike for the out caste status, emerges with a radient hope to get victory over the high caste. People by accomplishing the supreme morals. She is found prohibiting her son from entering the temple as upper caste are against. Such an act, she advises her son to accomplish Universal spirit and love. (p.135).

Love them even if they hate you. The mother answered proceeding ahead. Love, them as lord Krishna loved the whole world, love whole world. Love the Old and young. Love the cattle, as shyam .....Then through our good deeds shall we rise from our low caste and be born into a higher, caste.
The village priest convinces the villagers, that the cause is just. He reveals Lord Krishna’s advice to Arjun, Thus reveals what man has made of man. It throws the light on the Untouchable and their relationship with the higher caste. The act of burning of the cottages of the untouchables by upper caste people reveals the nature of caste hierarchy, Lachman’s confession is appreciated. It also denotes the caste hierarchy in Indian society.

The novel *The Road* reveals wild urge of the high caste people who oppressed the low caste people. The low caste people are hated by the high caste landlord and his fellow men, hate is the answered with love, companion and complete surrender by the low caste people.

The low caste people are deprived from entering the temple. The outcaste, like chamars are not allowed to enter the holy shrine. The priest Pt. Suraj Mani joins hand with the Hindus to prohibit the Untouchable to enter the temples. Sanju the son of the landlord, Thakur Singh threatens Bhiku and his mother and blocks their way to temple.

In this case, in *The Road* Lambarder Dholi Singh, from the high caste, is the only console for the Untouchables Hindu. Thakur’s son Sanju convinces Dhooli Singh would be declared outcaste for his association with the outcaste, Sanju threatens;
‘To be sure we will declare him (Dhooli Singh) outcaste any how …. 
And there is only one thing ….leave him and come over to us with your mother and Mala…..’ p34(The Road)

When the chamars built a road to carry milk from the village to the town, Thakur’s sense of contempt for the low caste is obvious. Thakur does not satisfy himself to let the untouchables take benefit of the wages on account of constructing the road. He determines to create rift between the high caste and the low caste to reap the harvest of wages. With the priest he provokes that the road would be inauspicious if the untouchables built it. He becomes furious for the anticipates that the peasants should break the stones and earn wages. George remarks;

The high caste people favour the low caste people, for the time being and then pull them into the vicious circle of extreme exploitation. Thakur singh has provided his land for the untouchbales refuse to stop the road construction, furiously enough, Thakur singh determines to drive them away to let them suffer. Thus singh intervenue on his behalf to pundithji. p-148 And for these chamars, they are living in huts, built on a plot which our family has given to them in his village, they can be asked to go. Let Dhooli Singh and the sarkar find them houses, else where, out the villages. (The Road.p-39)

As the high caste people realize that the out caste are extricating themselves from the grip and control of the high caste people, they throw the outcaste into intolerable suffering and pain. The untouchables, yearn
to win sympathy and concern of the high caste people though their hard work. They never protest against the dehumanized conditions imposed on them by the high caste people. Bhiku the chamar, hard working, profound tranquility of mind, he endure and injustice, evil and violence from the upper caste without protest. He hopes to be liberated from the man made miseries though more work. So work is worship for him.

Once Saros Cowasjee asked Anand why he wrote The Road on Untouchable. Since he had mirrored the caste hierarchy in Untouchable. Anand explained like this;

“Well was laid of shock to me where I went to live in Haryana, 20 miles from Delhi In the human empire of Jawaharlal Nehru’s to find that the out caste not only in the south India, but in mixed north were still confined to the limbo of oblivation. There was something tragic comic to me in the fact that the caste Hindus would not touch the stones quered by the untouchable to make the road, because the stones had been touched by the untouchable. “I mentioned this to the great Nehru; He did not believe me ….. I said I would prove it to him by Haryana, 20 miles from Delhi showing it to him in the enchanted honor” (The Road)

The road deals with the caste hierarchy and the caste homogeneity. The land lord Thakur Singh is the representative of caste hierarchy, he prosper to be a rich man by exploiting the untouchable. However, Dhooli Singh, who is deeply inspired by the teaching of Gandhiji, treats the
untouchables as fellow men. He creates opportunity to construct the road. So that the untouchables can draw wages. So he is excommunicated by the upper caste people for joining hands with the untouchables and helping them.

Some times, the priest even brings to the conscience of the people of high caste that their disapproval of depriving the untouchables to work on the road is wrong.

“And our people, were wrong in openly refusing to breake the stones touched by the harijan’s”p-40(The Road)

The untouchables in *The Road* suffer traumatic miseries due to their low caste status. They are forced to live upto the subhuman level. Anand regrets that these people are deprived of the principles of equalities of status.

Bhaka belongs to the lowest caste in the hierarchy of caste among the low castes. There are leather workers, the washer men, the barbers, the water carriers, the grass cutters, the sweepers and other outcaste from Hindu society. This description denotes the surviving class people are living in a separate colony. This very clearly denotes the caste and class discrimination. The conflict among them is reflected in Gulabo’s bahaviour towards Sohini.

The scenes dealing with Munoo’s life in industrial slums of Bombay offer a realistic account of the working of the capitalist system.
Anand has fictionalized the condition of the Indian labourer in factories and plantation industries under the British rule. The condition of the Indian laborers in factories and plantation industries was miserable. They had no fixed time for work. Women and children employed in factories were paid extremely low wages. The laborers had to work and stay in most unhygienic condition. In various countries of the world, attempts were made to reflect the life and historic role of the working class. It depicted subject of social concern, the proletariat struggle. Anand's early fictional writings reflect the social political and economic condition of Indian society. His novels reflect the evils of India society.

*Coolie* is Mulk Raj Anand's second novel. *Coolie*, published in 1936. It is a companion piece to *untouchable*. *Coolie* depicts the sad, pathetic life of Munoo 14 years boy. The novelist presents the real world of the lowest men in society. His approach to the social problem is quite realistic. It exposes the miserable condition of coolie’s in India. *Coolie* is a true manifestation of misery of the poor in the society. *Coolie* is concerned with the relationship of an individual to the surroundings environment. He is humiliated and insulted. David Cecil observes:

“A struggle between man on the one hand, and on the other, the omnipotent and indifferent fate is the interpretation of human scene”.

The novelist presents the real world of the lowest men in society. His approach to social problem in quite realistic. It exposes the miserable
condition of coolies in India. The next novel which sets the tone of the author’s answering faith in the author’s dignity of the million particularly the socially tyrannized underdogs is Coolie. Coolie is a novel, beautifully expresses the struggling, starving mass. It is a satire on the tragic denial of the workers, domestic servants coolies, rickshaw puller, etc. who are tortured and tyrannized by so many evils like industrialism, communalism, and colonialism

Coolie (1936), presents the picture of an orphan boy Munoo. He is despised by the society, rejected by his relatives and oppressed by his masters. He tries to avail changes of process. But his ill fate produces obstacles in his way.

As Philip Henderson remarks:

“Coolie takes us into a world in which comradeship of man for man exists only among the very poorest people, with nothing to hope for, their common humanity is all they possess”.

Anand presents the theme of the exploitation of the underprivileged in depth in Coolie. It’s range is wider and more comprehensive than of untouchable. As Iyengar observes; 

“If untouchable is the microcosm! Coolie is more of the macrocosm that is Indian Society: Concentration gives place to diffuse and comprehension, with several focus of concentration on Coolie. Coolie is verily as cross – section of India, the visible India, that mixture of the
horrible and the holy the inhuman and the humane, the sordid and beautiful.”

When novel begins, we find that Munoo, a boy of fourteen years. He is studying in class five in a rural school of village, Bilaspur, situated on the kangra hills on the bank of the river Beas, in Himachal Pradesh. Munoo in the company of his friends, he grazed his cows all days. He sits under the shade of a large Banyan tree. There he enjoys the fruits of the season. His happy life comes to an end when his uncle Daya Ram wants to take him to Shamnagar, a town ten miles away from their village. This novel portrays the class discrimination between rich and poor and the working class.

Munoo is a hero of the novel. Munoo is a universal figure. He presents the miseries of the poor and the downtrodden. Social conditions, like exploitation and poverty determines the life of Munoo in the novel. Coolie is human tragedy caused by, poverty, exploitation cruelty, greed and selfishness. It is a society who discriminate people as have’s and have’s not. Who is responsible for the tragedy of Munoo. His uncle Daya Ram and aunt Gujri wants therefore, that he must earn his own living.

*Munoo* is an orphan boy. Munoo’s father died of shock because he could not pay the debt to his landlord. His mother worked hard to earn enough to support him. Munoo could not forget the way in which his
father suffered. His mother worked hard every day. He had heard the landlord had seized his father’s five acres of land. He knows, how his father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment. His father left his mother a penniless beggar.

“The central theme of the novel is the tragic denial to simple landless peasant of the fundamental right to penniless. The terrible destiny of being a victim of exploitation in indeed. Munoo’s dubious bright right.”

In-spite of sad memories, and ill treatment of his aunt and uncle, Munoo is happy. His happy life comes to an end, when he went to Shamnagar for seeking some job for their livelihood.

Munoo goes with his uncle Daya Ram, a peon in the imperial bank of Shamnagar. Munoo went there to work as a domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathu Ram. Bobu Nathu Ram is the sub-account in the Imperial Bank. While going to Shamnagar, his uncle Daya Ram say’s as –

‘You will be looked after well here. You will get plenty to eat in this home. And Babu said he would pay us five rupees a month. I will show you my room near the office. Come down there on your day off. Don’t forget to do your best for the masters. You are their servant and they are big people’. (P-24 Coolie)
While he was a servant in Babu Nathu Ram’s house, Munoo desires to mix up and play with the children Leela and Sheela forgetting his identity of a poor, domestic servant as his status. He join with the children Leela and Sheela.

“He sat in the sitting room. Uttam Kaur shouted on him. As what is this noise? What is the right to be in the sitting room? What is this row going on? What right has he to join the laughter of his superiors? Your place is here in the kitchen you must not enter the sports of the Chota Babu and children. You must get on quickly with work in the house”. (p-34 Coolie)

The whole day she takes the work from Munoo. She ill treats him. She gives less to eat. Munoo is unable to bear the ill treatment of Bibi Uttam Kaur. When Munoo says the treatment of Uyttam Kaur to his uncle Daya Ram. He says;

“you are their servant’, said Daya Ram. You must not mind what they say. You must grow up and work. You have had too easy a life at home. Your mother spoiled you. Your aunt was too kind to you. (p-45 Coolie)

When Bibi Uttam Kaur given him less to eat. Munoo never had any money himself. Because the Babu handed his pay of five rupees to his uncle. Even his uncle Dayaram who took him to the accountant’s house does not show sympathy for the poor boy to give some money to eat. He was fed-up by this and went to his uncle to ask some money to eat. His
uncle Daya ram also ill treats him. He had taken his salary without giving a penny to Munoo. Uncle says;

“Son of a bitch Daya Ram shouted. How can I can get you the clothes you want and shoes. But you have not got any clothes. I am wearing the ragged tunic which Bibiji gave me, you have not bought me any shoes”.(p-61Cooie)

You impertinent little rouge! So you dare to ask me for accounts. Son of a swine! This is the reward I get for keeping you so long, and in finding you a job! Money! money! you want all the time ! “He beat him rudely. Where were you eating the dung at meal time then? Why did not you come here earlier if you wanted food? And do not they give you any food there?” (p-61 Coolie)

On his return Bibiji gave him two Chapathi’s and a spoonful of lentils and vegetables. He had to eat with his hands being considered too low in status to be allowed to eat off the utensils. The insult stung him. He could hardly swallow his food.

Life in the Babu’s house soon resolved itself, for Munoo, into the routine of domestic slavery. He did not settle down to it easily. My uncle brought me here to earn my living. He could probably get me the job of chaprasi, like himself. These people were superior to all the hill people. Later Munoo thoroughly convinced of his inferiority he accepted his position as a slave, and tried to instill into his mind. He promised himself
again that he would be a good servant, a perfect male servant. This description denotes as master and servant, as class discriminated. The root cause of Munoo’s tragedy is poverty. He realizes in his first episode at shamnagar. His uncle said

Money is indeed, every thing, Caste did not matter. I am kshatriya and I am poor, and Verma, Brahmin, is a servant boy, a menial, because he is poor. No caste does not matter. The Babu’s are like the sahib logs, all servants look alike; there must be two kinds of people in the world: the rich and poor”,(p-69)

The cruel, inhumane and humiliating treatment of the family make him run away. One day he ran away from there. In the train he discovered lying under the bunk by a passenger named Prabha. He was also a Coolie and an orphan like Munoo. But now he is a Seth, the owner of a pickle factory at Daulatpur, in Partnership with Ganpath Seth. Prabha Dayal, as he strained to drag his bundle from the bunk of a third class carriage in the slow train which jerkingly ran from Shamnagar to Daulatpur. Seth Prabha Dyal said

“Come, come now, be brave lad. Wipe your eyes. We will take care of you. Look, we are almost nearing Daulatpur.”(p-79 Coolie)

Seth Prabah Dyal felt tender towards the boy. He had, recognized a kinship with Munoo, as a son. Then he thought.
“They must have been poor’, but, then, all his folk and poor. He recalled the images of his own father and mother, who had died at Hamirpur during his absence in the city of Daulatpur: His earning as a Coolie had not been enough to procure them all rice twice a day.”(p-80 Coolie)

He was also a Coolie and an orphan like Munoo. But he is a seth, the owner of pickle factory at Daulathpur, in partnership with Ganpath set of Daulathpur. He provides him employment in his factory.

“Munoo soon got used to life in this primitive factory, it was a dark, evil life. He rose early. He had had his full sleep out having gone to bed long after midnight. He descended to work in the factory, tired heavy – lidded, hat and limp. But he had learnt to be efficient. His first job was to shift the cylinders from the ashes.” (p-107Coolie)

Prabha Dayal feels an affinity with poor Munoo. Prabha himself was a hill man from the hills of Kongra. Munoo works in the pickle factory. He lives with the family of Prabha dayal. By the God’s grace he has found a sympathetic employer and a roof over his head. Prabha Dayal’s wife treats him kindly. Soon Munoo is accustomed to life in the pickle factory. He has to work hard from early morning to late in the night, in the dark suffocating atmosphere. He lives with the family of Prabha Dyal.
Prabha takes him to Daulatpur. He provides him employment in his factory. Munoo is afraid of Ganpath an account of his bad behavior with workers. Ganpath behaves towards Munoo.

“You spoil him, Prabha. You have no idea of running a business, these swine do not do any work, but laze around eating raw fruit all day. They won’t work unless you give them with the rod.”(p-113). And this is the busiest season of the year. When we cannot afford to lose a moment, especially as I am going on tour, collecting your money”. (p113 Coolie)

It is only when Ganpath is away that the worker have a good time. They sign and cut jokes. Munoo realizes that he cannot work there, because things became worst.

“Get away, low hill dog!” shouted Ganpath

Go to yours coolies! you dirty coolie; stop howling, dog, and don’t follow me. I tell you that I have made up my Mind, I am though with such scum as you. You are not my class. You belong to the street, and there you shall go. I spit on you.”(p-126 Coolie)

Like this the misunderstanding goes between Prabha Dyal and Ganpath about the cash of pickle factory Munoo faces the ill treatment from Ganpath. Then he decided to leave pickle factory. Prabha also ill treated by Ganpath. As

“Forgive me, oh forgive me’ Prabha wailed. I am only a humble workman, a coolie. I did not know that Ganpath would go away and leave me like this”. (p-129 Coolie)
Munoo realizes that he cannot work there. So, he decided to go to the vegetable market. He has heard, good wages are there. In the morning he goes to the railway station to work there as a Coolie. The policeman chases him away for he has no license and cannot work there. Munoo runs away in terror till he reaches the mall road, With English shops and bungalows. It is entirely different world for Munoo to realize. The wealth and elegance of the English part of Daulatpur is used by the novelist to heighten the contrast of poverty and degradation of the teeming million of India.

There Munoo is attracted by the beating of drums advertising the circus. He decides to go to circus and enjoy the show. Munoo could enjoy the show free of cost through a hole in the tent with the help of an elephant driver of the circus. The elephant driver persuades Munoo to go to Bombay along with the circus team. Munoo manages to go to Bombay along with the elephant driver. As soon as the train arrives in Bombay, the elephant driver comes to him and shows him a way. So that Munoo may go out of the station unnoticed. Moonu imagines like this,

“Now that I am actually going to Bombay. What shall I do there? I know nobody and how shall I find the work which bring thirty rupees a month” I would hate to be a beggar in the streets like the Bikaneris.

By chance Munoo meets Hari Har, his wife Laksmi and his children.
He helped Munoo to get a job in the factory. Munoo gets a job in the textile factory. The exploitation does not end here. He is not happy with the state of affair going on in the factory between the management and the workers. He wants to be away from there.

“In Bombay, he starts working in Sir. George white cotton Mills owned by a British man. He lives in a slum with his fellow worker, Hari. The author presents a truthfull picture of the dwelling of the have not’s of the slums:” The mud floor was at a level lower than the pathway side, overgrown with grass which was nourished by the inflow of rain water the cottage boasted not a window nor a chimney to let in the air and light and to eject the smoke”.(p-202 Coolie)

The bigger the city is, the more cruel it is to the sons of adams. He saw the class discrimination as: one side the rich people, who sat on angrezi chairs by marble tables and eating drinking and chatting. He felt he would like to drink a soda bottle now. But the clothes of the people who sat in the shop, as he saw from the wide open door, were clean. They looked to be rich babu’s or merchants and he felt he was only a dirty coolie. But a bottle of soda water only costs an anna and I have a rupee tied up in the end of my linen cloth. I can go and buy one. He told himself.
In the mill Munoo’s shirt is torn into tatters by the wheels of the conveyer belt and Hari’s son gets his right arm grazed by ignorantly touching the belt of a machine in the springing shed. By saving the life of Harihar’s child from the dangerous road accident Munoo comes closer to Harihar, his wife Laxmi and his children who remains his friend and companions throughout his stay in Bombay. Due to Hari’s help he gets a job as a coolie in Sir George White Cotton Mill and meets the great exploiter the Chimata Sahib, the head foreman, Jimmie Thomas. He is known as the intermediate between the employer and the worker, the illegal commission agent or broker who takes a handsome commission from every worker for the gift of job.

When they reach the mill, they beg for jobs to Jimmie Thomas, the head foreman of the mill. Finally they were given a job at rate of 25 each for Hari and Munoo, 5 % Rupees for Hari’s wife and Rupees 2.50 each for children per month. The difference in the wages describe the discrimination of wages from men to women and children. All gives him a lot of pain and despair. Hari’s son had a accident in mill. There is no doctor at the mill. The chimta Sahib has given me leave to take the boy to the hospital in the town. But of course, I will lose my job now. The Sahib is very angry that I have not put in full time on the first day of my work in the weaving shed. He is deeply moved by the accident of Hari’s
son. He begins blaming himself to be an unfortunate and ominous orphan who brings misfortune to each and every one who comes into his contact.

“Am I really ominous …..my father died when I was born, and the my mother, and I bought misfortune to Prabha, and it seems I have brought misfortune to Hari now. If I am ominous, why don’t I die? My death would rid the world of an unlucky person. I would like to die. It were better to be dead; yes better to be dead because this town has turned out wrong. It is so hard working here and my aunt’s mud hut in the hills, was better than the damp show but in sahib’s lane. (p-219 Coolie)

He also saw the class discrimination in Bombay also. Every day Munoo get up early in the morning for his factory between the management and the workers. He wants to be away from there. The announcement that the mill will go on short time and there will be no work for the fourth week in every month with immediate effects, fans the fire of discontentment among the coolies and the communist leader’s fully exploit the situation. The communist leader says from the dais;

“We all are human beings and not soulless machine, 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”.267 Coolie

Once again we are seeing the discrimination between owners and factory workers to gain skill, to gain shelter and full time work for better
life. Munoo hears the speeches made by the leader of red flag union. Munoo is impressed by sans’s speech:

_There are only two kinds of people in the world: The rich and the poor and to become 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 welfare are honoured and admired by the whole world and by themselves. The meek and the gentle, wretches that you are swindled out of your rights and broken in body and soul are respected by no one.

The meeting is in full swing suddenly it is abruptly disturbed by the tricky rumours that Muslims are kidnapping Hindu children and are being kidnapped by the Muslim and then the meeting which is called to take a strike decision soon turns into a wild crowd frenzied with communal passion. Munno watches the bloody and insane Hindu Muslim riot with at rambling and fearful heart. Now the entire atmosphere, filled with the war situation. Cries of ‘Alla ho Akbar’ and Shivaji ki jai. Several are killed many are wounded and the rest flee for life. Here we are seen, to control the working people union, few people spread the rumor as Muslims are kidnapping Hindu Children here the matter his caste discrimination Munoo by escaping by the riot he goes towards the Malabar Hill. He begins to climb the slopes on which the bungalows of the sahib’s are located by palm trees. He moves up tired. Unfortunately
he stands in the middle of the road and contemplating the scene. He is suddenly knocked by a car. Mrs Mainwaring an anglo Indian lady was is in the car. She asks her car driver to put him in the car. They took him to Shimla with them.

Mrs Mainwaring is Anglo–Indian. She is a divorcee. She is remarried several times. Her husband Guy Mainwaring is posted with his regiment in Peshawar. She is at Simla along with her little daughter circe. Munoo is the just boy and just the right servant. She keeps him as her domestic servant. Sometimes she exploits him sexually. One of his duties was to pull the rickshaw, whenever Mrs. Mainwaring used to go out of her shopping and for social visit, pulling of rickshawa uphill the roads was very strenuous for him.

As a result of heavy work Munoo coughs frequently and blood comes out with his spittle. He caught and spits-out blood. When the doctor examines him he found the cause to be severe one. He was found to be suffering from tuberculosis. Mrs. Mainwaring is caring, frequently visits him, brings him gifts and fruits. She regards that she had over worked the poor boy.

In spite of all possible efforts of medical treatment his condition deteriorated. Thus the novel Coolie revolves round another social evil of the system of class. It describes the effects that the pervasive evil of class
system has on a poor hill boy named Munoo, who is forced to leave the idyllic hills to make a living in the plains.

As M.K Naik says;

“The author’s compassion for the exploited and downtrodden is pure and intense but does not degenerate into blend hysteries or dull preaching, are aspects of exploitation is presented in coolie. This is exploitation of the Indian by the white man and poor by the rich”.

_Coolie_ is the novel written with a purpose. Coolie is a powerful indictment of modern capitalistic society, and its tragic exploitation of the poor. Munoo, the hero of the novel wants to live, but the society, does not allow him to live. He dies of exploitation, poverty and hunger. He is the victim social force. The tragic denial of life to Munoo is caused by his poverty, which is the sole cause of his tragedy. Class consciousness, class discrimination is the main theme of the novel. The novelists has felt the pulse of Indian society. He goes deep into the heart of the poor and the downtrodden. He selects the lowest classes and the labour classes to represents them in his novels. Munoo is a victim of poverty, exploitation, man’s greed and selfishness. The root cause of Munoo’s tragedy is poverty who is exploited by the rich. Like Baboo Nathu Ram, Bibi Uttam Kaur, are middle class people. The rich like Ganpath, and Mrs Mainwaring also exploited him.
In coolie the characterization is optical. It has an interesting variety of characters not in terms of colorful humanity. But also in terms of the class to which they belong. The have not’s such as Munoo, Dayaram, Mohan, Hari and Prabhadyal are after all coolies. The middleclass people like Baboo Nathu Ram, Bibi uttam Kaur and Dr. Premchand. Rich men of upper class society like Ganpath, Todarmal have been depicted. The real aristocracy is represented by Mrs.Mainwaring. She exploit’s Munoo both physically and sexually.

Munoo is an archetypal figure, a true representative of toiling, suffering, staining millions of India. Anand has focused attention on the wretched plight of the teeming millions of India. Who are exploited at all hands, are made to work hard, hardly to get two meals a day grow sick and exhausted and vanish permanently. Coolie is based upon the aspects of class struggle social injustice and psychological conflict of the rich and the poor.

Mulk Raj Anand is the angry young man who cannot tolerate exploitation of one man, or of one class by another class. He is an enemy to all kinds of exploitation, be that economic, social or political. Thus Anand attacks in his novels the evils of exploitation of one man, by another man, and one class by another class. The poor victims had to accept to work under the most unfavourable and unpleasant conditions imposed on them by the master.
Anand writes about this unfortunate class of people.

“when one looked at the lot of the less privileged population, for instance in a country like India one notice how they had been deliberately kept at a level of subhumanity. They were supposed to be sub human. They worked from down to dust, old and young, male and female for their masters and they were treated like dogs”. 24

Munoo emerge as a symbolic articulation of the pain and pannery of the downtrodden and the exploited masses of Indian society whose life, longing and lot provides him much suffering a little pleasure. Abuse, humiliation injustice and hatred, trauma and tension poverty and, perversion all make his life unbearable and hellish.

“Anand believes that poverty is a cruel evil and cruelty is itself a deadly evil. we see in Coolie how these evils of poverty and cruelty crush a bid of youth before it could bloom to any extent. Mrs Mainwaring too, have only contempt for Munoo. They slap him, Kick him and abuse him. Let alone the rich and the privileged, even a hotel server treats him as if he were a laper, an untouchable. All because he is poor.”25

Poverty misery injustice, exploitation, discrimination and hated remain his faithful friends from his birth to death through Munoo, Anand has focused attention on the wretched plight of the millions of poor people of India. Who are toiling suffering, staining
and dying of dangerous deaths, bearing the burden of life, being exploited at all hands.

Two Leaves and the Bud:

The novel- two Leaves and the Bud (1937), is the story of the peasant Gangu, The hero of the novel is an older version of Munoo. The innocent Munoo displayed in Coolie is replaced here by experience. With the hope and that his unfulfilled aim to preserve his family from starvation may be realized. This journey of Gangu and his family Sajani, with their daughter Leila and son Budhu, has been arranged by Buta Singh, the sardar and coolie catcher of Macherson Tea Estate Assam. His family who are taken into indentured labour on the Macherson Tea Estate fleeing from drought and the starvation of their village in the Punjab plains. Gangu and his family arrives in the lush greenery of the Assam hills to slave their English Master. Gangu the peasant with blind hope is exploited by the village moneylenders. He is afraid of the moneylenders because he has been victimized by them. In the drought, he along with his wife and two children was forced to migrate for survival. He prefers to be a labourer in a British owned tea plantation. Buta the sardar of the tea estate, tempts Gangu to be a labourer. He misguides Gangu that the Sahib of the tea estate in nice to his employers.

Gangu, the innocent peasant believes. Buta’s promise of fabulous wealth and thinks that the tea estate must be a veritable paradise. Gangu
has been tempted with a piece of land free of cost, a temptation which he hardly can discard. But he is unaware that he is getting into the labyrinth of unending suffering. On reaching the tea plantation Gangu realizes that tea plantation is an unbreakable jail. Who beat abuse and exploit them. After a week of hard labour in the Estate, the amount given to Gangu’s whole family is less than 8 Anna’s; three anna’s for him, two annas for his wife and daughter, and three piise for his child. It reminds him that in his village he alone used to earn 8 Anna’s a day by working on the landlord’s land. This made him sad with the thought that, a liar Buta has been in all his talk about high wages. About free gifts of land and so on. The difference in wages of coolies denotes the gender difference.

Gangu and his family arrive in the lush greenery of the Assam hills to slave their English Master. Gangu the peasant with blind hope is exploited by the village money lenders. He is afraid of the money lenders because he has been victimized by them. In the drought, he along with his wife and two children was forced to migrate for survival.

As Gangu sits beside Buta in the moving train he feels that life is a journey, a journey into the unknown. He enquires;

“Are the sahibs kind, brother Buta Ram?”(p-4 The TLB)

Then the sardar replies as “Just like mai-bap”(mother and father) p-5 (The TLB) This he is able to confirm within a few hours of his arrival in the Tea Estate from his neighboring in the line, named Narain. The
Coolie Narain tells grandly that he came from the princely state of Bikaner because of a famine which killed two of his children. It is better in Assam, he says because he eat a little food here every day. In a straight context of corruption cruelty, deception, cheating and betrayal. English people were very different to Indians

You will soon know, brother, said Narain, ‘First water after words mire! 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”p-38(TLB)

Within a week of their employment in the Tea Estate, Gangu becomes a victim of malaria. “I should not die”, he muttered in his breath. “till Leila is married and Budhu grown up.” Next day he was recovered but his wife suffered by the malaria. They suffer by the cholera. The Medical officer visits Gangu’s hut and checks Sajini. And malaria plague in estate. His wife’s death brings him into contact with the Manager of the plantation, Mr Croft-Cook; when Gangu asks loan for his wife’s cremation. Gangu’s sadness is augmented by the worry that he had no money to buy a red cloth and to make bamboo hearse. He then recalls what Buta had told him that the Manager Sahib like a mai-bap. who lend money when the coolies are in need. Then he goes to the Babu
of estate Shashi Bhushan Bhattacharya to talk to the Manager Sahib in Angrezi to get loan. Since the babu wants commission for his service. Then Gangu says;

“Babuji, I promise to give you some of the money which the Sahib may give me if you talk to him in Angrezi and get me the loan I want ….. My wife died last night. And I have been ill. Take pity on me.”p-112-113

(TLB)

The tea plant owner instead to help his employer he kicks Gangu. Then Mr. Croft Cook he kicks the Gangu and says like this;

Get out! Get out “exclaimed Croft Cook, turning perplex get out! you have been spreading inflection all over the place! did not you know that you were under segregation ? By whose orders did you come here?”.

Gangu’s wife Sajini, dies soon after they arrive to estate. Gangu’s attempt to raise a loan for his wife’s cremation. When Gangu’s wife is dead, and the body lies decomsing in the heat of his small house. He was bewildered, lost and lonely. He makes efforts and in the process is beaten and abused. He comes to Buta, who had brought him here on false promise;

The Sahib’s will not give me a loan; Gangu said I had just been there. He beat me for coming out of Quarantine. Oh, friend Buta Ram, if only I had Known things were going to turn out way. I would not have come here”. And he took his hand to his eyes, to wipe the tears that he welled up in them with the reproach against the sardar that he had suppressed into pity”. p-195 (TLB)
The novel gives us more information through the tongue of Narain an old Coolie there to complete the picture of white man’s atrocities on them.

“when they want you, they can force you to remain when they do not want they can compel you to leave” p-195

Previously there used to be a roll call in the night. The railway trains refused to carry coolies if they left plantations without permission. On one occasion when the coolies insisted on leaving and when they fell asleep on the railway platform,

“A company of Gurkhas charged the sleeping crowd with bayonets and butt end of their rifles”. (p-213TLB)

To crown all Narain described an early experience of his own. Once the coolie held a peaceful demonstration in protest and the crowd began to swell. At once at the request of the estates authority RAF squadron was dispatched by the government from Calcutta to rain bombs on the unarmed helpless coolies in order to quell the mutiny. The government helped the white men to maintain their supremacy everywhere. The novelist here combines the direct narration with the happenings of incidents together with the reminiscences of an old coolies, Narain to give us a complete picture of the white Man’s atrocities on the poor coolies in big cities.

In Two Leaves and The Bud, Anand continued to explain the Indian Society. The story is about a poor Punjabi peasant. He is brutally
exploited in a tea plantation and killed by a British official who tries to rape Coolies daughter.

A small gift from the idealistic English doctor Jhon De La Harve enables to perform the last rites for his wife, and with the inborn fatalism so characteristic of the Indian peasant he accepts his fate. If Hunt is guilty of sleeping with the coolie women, what are we to say of the warder who procures for him his own wife to ingratitude himself in his master’s favour? If craft cooke does not keep his promise of giving Gangu a piece of land to cultivate rice. What must we think of the clerk Shashi Bhushan who wants a share in the latter’s meager earnings?.

Gangu is occasionally made to suspect it in a manner which does not seem true to his character. Though the earth is brought and sold and confiscated. God never meant that to happen, for he does not like some persons to have s comfortable living and the others to suffer from dire poverty. He has created land enough to maintain all men, and yet many die of hunger and most live under a heavy burden of poverty all their lives, as if we the earth were made for a few and not for all men! But it is not long before life on the plantation is disturbed by two dissolute women; one of them is the mistress of Reggie Hunt, the Assistant Manger, demonstrate his ruthless power by ordering to beat them up.

Their peaceful protest is mistaken by the whites as rebellion and the air force is called in to impress the coolies, the might of the British
Empire. Peace is restored with the visit of the Governor. As the coolie pick the tea leaves once again to the reform of the song Two Leaves and The Bud. …..Two leaves and the bud depicts the Indian coolies, exploited, starving, cheated dirty, diseased, as the true hairs of one of the worlds great civilization.

Ananad describes the miserable life of tea plantation coolies in the tea estates of Assam. Anand describes the miserable conditions of coolies with contrast to the luxurious life of white Managers. White Managers are cruel, they exploit the coolies and their women folk. The novel is a scathing condemnation of white man’s atrocities on the poor Indian plantation workers. Comparing The Two Leaves and The But, with the previous novels. K.R. S. Iyengars says;

“If untouchable has a sort of piercing quality that is akin to the lyrical, if coolie with its enormous range and multiplicity of action and character has an almost epic quality, Two Leaves and The Bud may be said to be essentially a dramatic novel” 28 p-268-269

The characters in the novel can be divided into three groups;

1) Exploiters, upper class.
2) Victims, poor working class,
3) Social commentators.

Raggie Hunt, Croftcooke, Hith cook, Major Barbara, Shashi Bhshan Bhattacharya are from the upper class, exploitations. They not only
exploit but also glorify their exploitation. The victims in the novel are Gangu and other coolies. They belong to the lower class or working class of people. The social commentators are Jhon La Harve, Narain and others. Like this Two Leaves and the Bud depicts the class discrimination, sufferings of the Coolies. Life of a plantation laborer is equaled to the life of a slave innumerable such lives are painted. The plantation masters like croft–cooke, Reggie Hunt those are the white men and their superior civilization. Gangu, Narain and other coolies are like naked suppression of cheap lives of the marginalized.

_Gouri-The old Woman and the cow (1960):_

Woman as mother and protector, women as inspirer and cherisher, women as the motivating force – Shakti protecting good and destroyer of evil – women as the chaste, suffering wife, woman as charmer some of the faces familiar in literature. The image of women in Indian-English novel is complex and multifaceted. But the Indian-English fiction reflects how a girl is unwelcome in the family and explore the reason behind the traditional view. Few novelists like Mulk Raj Anand and Kamala Markandaya, turned their attention to the realistic problem of the poor people and the treatment of women.

Mulk Raj Anand shows motherhood bestowed a peculiar dignity on woman. Women is suppressed in India. Anand is aware of her innate capacity. According to Anand, woman humanism, deserved to be treated
on an equal footing with man. Woman can no longer be considered as a mere childbearing machine. She is never allowed to stir out of the four walls of home. Woman is as important as man in the social reconstruction gendered discrimination attributed to women in Indian society.

*The Old woman and the cow (1960)*, Gowri is the singular novel of Mulk Raj Anand which figures a heroine. Mulk Raj Anand presents in the Old Woman and The cow, the Indian peasant’s wife. A wife who consciously rebels against the sita image, from Indian myth, tries to free herself and live an independent life. Gowri is the only novel in which Anand spins the plot around a woman character. It also celebrates the birth of the new woman in Indian English Literature.

The novel opens with the description of Gouri’s marriage ceremony. Panchi reach the piplan Kalan on the bank of pony to possess the girl. He had in curiosity and imagine to see the girl how she looks;

“Panchi tired to imagine what the girl Gouri was like was she fair or was she dark ? Beautiful or ugly or just plain ? And in his fantasy, below the defencing rear of the Angrazi music, arouse certain brief vision of how he would take her into his arms, as the hero always took the heroine in the film he had seen in the Hoshiyarpur town”. P10

The opening scene of the novel, is describing Gouri’s marriage ceremony. It exposes the absurd and ridiculous proceedings, that have become part of an Indian marriage; the loud music, the uncontrolled
crowd of invited guests for the feast, children fishing for copper coin, the quarrel over dowry complaint over the quality of jewellery ceremony of showing. The marriage here is a most rigid type of arrangement. The marriage prevalent in some parts of India in which the bridegroom is not even allowed to have a glance of bride before the ceremony is complete;

“Panchi was anxious only for one thing, that when the four turn were finished and the whole embarrassing ritual of the marriage and the customary feast were over, he would be able to left the red dupatta which enshrowded the girl face to confirm the rumor that she was not ugly but was as light skinned as her mother. Sometimes rumor made an ugly bride into a beautiful one. And he was a trifle afraid that the praise of Gouri may be false. But many people reported that she was fair” (p-21GOWC)

In marriage ceremony as Panchi has taken the turn around the five with Gouri tied to him from behind her apron. Then totally he is anxious,

“To confirm the rumor that she was not ugly, but was light skinned as her mother.” (p21GOWC)

When the Gyration around the fire and the whole embarrassing ritual of the marriage and the customary feast are over, ceremony of showing starts. While the females attending on the bride prolong panchi’s curiosity by her allowing Gouri to lift the dupatta.

“overcome by a sudden and wild impulse to satisfy his curiosity he suddenly pulled aside the jhund of her dupatta and saw alight wheat brown face with regular strong peasant features and the bloom of innocence on it”. p29 Within
a few time Gouris mother, Laxmi comes in with ceremonial tear in her eyes. She asks her daughter to get ready to go to her husband’s house. She also advises Gouri to be like sita.(p-157GOWC)

After the marriage, Panchi continue to stay with his guardians. His uncle Mola Ram and aunt Kesaro. When Mola Ram away, Kesaro used to doubt upon panchi, Kesaro secret attachment to Panchi, for economical and emotional social, reasons hatred against any woman coming between her and Panchi. So she calls, as God’s curse for his marriage the unlucky woman, Gouri. She says the famine drought and poverty that have accompanied panchi’s marriage. In the influence of Kesaro, Panchi’s admiration for the cow like gentle, Gowri slowly vanishes. She suffers under several oppressive forces. The atmosphere of the joint family does not make room for the free love between her and her husband. Also Kesaro refuses to loose her hold on panchi and continues to give Gouri the ill treatment of the traditional crooked mother in law. Even Panchi ill treats Gowri. When Panchi, young man of chota piplan gallops to piplan kalan with all enthusiasm to own Gouri. “The prospect of the prize of a girl. Whom he could fold in his arms at night and kick during the day, Who would adorn his house and help him with the work on the land”. Panchi hopes that Gouri would be obedient, obedience which is the most essential quality of a wife. (p-169 GOWC)
Panchi after having gone through a conventional marriage wants his wife to lead a conventional life. He forces Gouri to submit to his impatience and pettiness without any protest. Her duties are to cook, to clean, to please her husband libidinous desire and to submit herself humbly to his male chauvinism and physical violence.

Mulk Raj Anand is saddened by the fact that, the average Indian woman only has the status of a slave, subordinate to parents, husband etc.

But Gowri’s mother-in-law always dislikes her. An understanding and sympathetic mother-in-law is an extremely rare phenomenon and for most Indian women marriage means getting trapped in a horrible den where they get nothing, but physical and mental torture. In a joint family, the misery of a women begin’s from the moment she incurs the displeasure of the very often mother in law’s ill treatment of the daughter in law is due to fear and jealousy. Kesaro, taking the role of a ruthless mother-in-law continues her hatredness. Complain against Gouri. She abuses Gouri as,

“a whore from Piplan, a filthy woman, sweeper woman shameless”.etc

p-94

She blames her for going out of home without putting the dupatta on her head and accuses her of being free with young man like Rajguru, the son of subedar. Kesaro arouses jealousy and fire in Panchi. One day it explodes and he slaps her many times.
Panchi and his uncle Mola Ram are not able to pull on smoothly for long. Mola Ram asks Panchi to leave the barn he occupies. One of Panchi’s Muslim friend, Rafiq chacha the potter of the village. He offers a part of his barn for panchi and Gouri to stay.

“Away from the joint family and undisturbed by Kesaro, Panchi and Gowri come closer. He slowly begins to understand her love and affection for him. One day the wicked Kesaro visits them and poison panchi’s mind against Gouri. She speaks to Panchi about his horoscope”; “Our house would break up with the coming of an inauspicious girl…..”(p-95 GOWC)

Hearing these words, Gouri picks up unexpected courage and held Kesaro by bun and pushes her out of the barn. After the departure of Kesaro, the idea of Gouri’s bad stars injected in him by Kesaro continues to posses Panchi. Later, when the whole village affected by drought, Panchi believes that Gouri has inaspecious stars. He blames her for helping Hoor Banu to take the drunken chacha home. When he is caught red handed for stealing mangoes for Gouri, she became an indirect cause. Panchi feels that, Gouri is responsible for all his misery and misfortune. Kesaro’s accusation of Gouri to liaison with Rajguru in his absence arouses suspicions in him over the character. One morning she tells him slowly:
“Now the rains will have to come, because I am with a child and we shall soon have another mouth to feed.” (p-101 GOWC)

Instead of getting excited by this new, he was in biggest confusion and doubts, one day he kicks her shouting:

“go, go get out of my sight go to your mother, the whore. She falls at his feet, begged with hands joined before her head: do not send me away:” (p-102 GOWC)

Gouri’s mother in law, Kesaro tries to draw her husband away from her. She walks towards her home to protect her womb against any further violence from him. When she reach home her mother Laxmi welcomes her with crocodile tears. But her uncle Amru bluntly speaks against her return. In the middle of the night, he awakens Gouri. He asks her to get ready to go to Hoshiarpur. He has made a deal with a rich sahukar there, Seth Jwala Prasad to offer her to the Seth’s elder brother. Seth Jai Ram Das.

“in lien of cash and the wiping out of the mortgage on their two houses as well as the cow, Chanderi. p-125

There her uncle sells her to lecherous sahukar at Hoshiarpur, whose name is Seth Jai Ram Das, a rich banker in Hoshiyarpur. Gouri is betrayed by her mother, who “sells her daughter rather than sell the cow, because of the cash nexus involved ..... In the village life, the cow which gives
milk is more valuable to the mother than the daughter. Laxmi sells her daughter to a merchant. She thinks it will give a certain amount of money?”

Laxmi seems to have accepted the evil design of Amru to save her cow, the only source of their livelihood. Gouri Protested refuses to go as she still loves her husband panchi. Amru drags her forcefully and accompanies with Seth Jwala Prasad and Gouri to Hoshiyarpur. After Gouri is brought by force to Hoshiyarpur, she suffers from an acute fever. So Seth fetches Dr. Mahindra the doctor, while examining her, comes to know from Gouri, that she sold to the Seth ji by her parents. Seth is ready to give her everything. But she is not willing to accept nothing from him. Her only desire was to go back to her husband. Seth become desperate with desire, in struggle Gouri pushes him and violently she warns him:

“I am guarded by the goddess ! so do not come near me, or you Will burn”.(p-145 GOWC)

She cannot run away as her fever has become more acute. When the Dr. Mahindra comes again to examine her he finds her condition is deteriorated. He sends the ambulance to bring her to his nursing home. When she is recovered after two days, Seth Ji comes to take Gouri away. But the doctor refuses him the permission as she is not willing to go with him. She wants to be restored back to her husband.

At a critical moment panchi realizes his wrong headedness towards Gouri, one day he arrives at piplan Kalan to bring her back. He meets
Laxmi at her house. He asks for Gouri. Laxmi tells him to find her from Amru. At the same time Dr. Mahindra advises the Seth to free her.

Panchi rushes with anger to the house where Amru is. In the fight between Panchi and Amru. Panchi gets wounded and collapses. The Sub-inspector of the police, Ganda Singh arrives. Panchi’s uncle Adam Singh reports what happened. Ganda Singh, instead of arresting the real culprits, takes Laxmi into custody. He orders her to bring back her daughter-in-law immediately and she can be restored with Panchi as to keep the matter out of court.

Adam Singh volunteers to go with Laxmi to Hoshiarpur to get back Gouri. They come to know that from Seth Jai Ram, Gouri has refused to come home after her treatment in Dr Mahindra’s hospital. The Doctor has employed her as a nurse. When Laxmi meets Gouri in doctor’s presence:

“She saw her daughter Gauri, dressed in a simple white dhoti escorting a Young patient to the door. She stood transfixed for a moment with her eyes dilated wide…..”(p-222 GOWC)

The doctor after giving Gauri’s wages allows her to leave for good with her mother and uncle when they reach chota Piplan, Rafique Chacha and Hoor Banu are there to welcome them. Panchi has been recovering from his injury.

The next morning Gouri sets about putting her house in order. In the next Afternoon Rakhi, the old Muslim midwife of the village and a
friend to Kesaro visits them. She shamelessly begins retailing the village Gossip. Unable to bear her talk Panchi fling her out of the house into the familiar sound of Kesaro’s call from outside the barn Panchi does not allow her to come in. So she spreads the news to the people in the lane about the arrival of the prostitute from Hoshiyarpur. The gossip of the villagers about Gouri’s life in Hoshiyarpur, begins to obsess and oppress him. And suddenly the devil in him starts to work. The gossip of the villagers about Gouri’s life in Hoshiyarpur begins to obsess and oppress him. And suddenly the devil in him starts to work.

“Tell me the truth, bitch? .....what is the proof of your purity?.....p-262

Then he starts to kick her. Then unable to bear his cruelty, any more she makes her mind to go away from him for the good. By weeping she tells Hoor Banu:

“He is weak spoilt by Kesaro. He pretended to be a lion among the men of the village. But really he is a coward! They are telling him that Ram turned out Sita because everyone doubted her chasing during her chastity with Ravana! I am not Sita that the earth will open up and swallow me. I shall just go out and be forgotten of him ……(p-263 GOWC)

Sorrowfully she fixes her eyes for a moment on Panchi and then rushes out through the direction of Dr. Mahindra’s hospital. Here we see a mild meak innocent girl who has changed by the experience and she
decided to leave her husband for the sake of her child and herself. Now she is transformed.

The villagers accept all misfortunes as part of their Karma. Gouri, like all village women, believes in karma. But the education she has received by coming into contact with the enlightened Dr. Mahaindra makes her realize the foolishness of believing in it. She tells Rafique Chacha.

“when I first came to this house, I worried so much about what the village would say, I had no tongue in my mouth. I only did the house work and lay down to sulk and weep on that little cat.

Doctor Mahindra says: “where there is poverty there is a money lender, a priest and a landlord – and God is ‘Education’ Guari said Quoting the big Doctor, education will make us master of our fate”. (p-240 GOWC)

The villagers are blinded by superstition. They mistake superstition for religion. To such a people. Kesaro tell the story of Gouri’s misfortune. They have had bad luck. Kesaro is the champion of hate against Gouri based her story on the horoscope and bad stars of Gauri, which gradually begins to work on panchi.

“the idea of Gouri’s bad stars continued to possess him because the circumstances which were said to have been created by her arrival continued to grow worse: drought seemed to become permanent, the
rains would not come; more birds were found with the heat in fields: and well were drying up completely: and the cattle was dwindling through the owners taking their cows, buffaloes and bullocks were driven away from villages further from the valley towards Hoshiyarpur town to sell them to the slaughter house.” p-98 (owc)

Panchi who was in the beginning proud of Gouri’s calm and innocent appearance and her cow like meekness, forms a completely different picture of her under the influence of superstition planted in him by Kesaro: She has ruined me …. My aunt Kesaro is right when she says that this bride is the incarnation of Kali, the black Goddess who destroys all before, her breath and lays bare whole villagers. Like Kali mai in the temple of Dharamshala who wears a garland of skulls of round her neck …. (p-33 GOWC)

Beaten by panchi an insulted and abused by kasaro, Gouri finds her life in piplan kalan a, hell. When she returned home with the hope of getting affection and happiness, again superstition drags her to greater misery. Her uncle Amru, bluntly tells Laxmi about her:

“Her husband has turned her this unlucky girl who must have brought him troubles, as she brought difficulties to us”. (p-107 GOWC)

Amru affected by superstition, that misfortune will overtake them if she stays there with them, he goes to Hoshiyarpur and finds a market for her. It is money, the modern God that presides over all our social
intercourse, that turns Amru and Laxmi heartless enough to carry out their evil design of selling Gauri.

As Alastair Niven says: ‘Mahindra’s role is to impinge upon Gouri ‘s conscious to be the agent of her awakening. From the movement he enters the book his abstract function is clear.’

Dr Mahindra tells Laxmi how man’s madness for money has brought falsity and wretchedness into the life of the village:

“…… we tie as many oxen and cows and buffaloes to the hotter as we can, and when we have no money we sell our daughters ….. I am not blaming you I am just saying those blaming you I am just saying those Banias who buy and sell, have brought falsity into the life of the village”. p-111(OW&C)

Man should certainly fight against poverty, but poverty should not make us inhumane. Rafique chacha’s attitude to life should be a model to the poor. He is rich in-spite of his poverty. He maintains goodness in the face of all miseries. He tells panchi:

“Never give up faith, son ! there is still life in us ! this is not happening to one person, the drought ! Thousand are suffering the pangs of hunger our crops, fields, stock have all gone. People are selling their daughters. So the damage to the land is nothing like the damage to men themselves.”p99

The life of Rafique Chacha illustrate that a dignified approach to life and hard work are the solutions to poverty
The removal of the disabilities of the Indian women and their freedom from various forms of oppression has been an unending process. Though the law of the land does not admit of inequality on the basis of sex, old social and psychological habits. The reactionary resistance of the orthodox section of society Militate against the low minority of the Indian village women are still martyrs to the conventions of our society in which they are born. The conventions of our society are cruel to women. Conventions are intended to give advantages to have many rights and freedom from which women is excluded. They adopt different standards to judge the individual and social conduct of man and woman. Mulk Raj Anand presents both devoted wives who are docile as well as revolutionary women in the novel. The old women and the cow, Anand shows the Indian peasant wife, a wife who is consciously rebels against the Sita image tries to free herself and live an independent life. It was a new path and identity for women.

As M.K.Naik observes:

“The novel presents an Indian rustic girl being transformed from a docile cow into a tiger under the impact of modernity and being virtually reborn as a result of it”, 31 p-77

It is the only novel in which Anand spins the plot around a women character.

As Balram Gupta observes:
“Mulk Raj Anand has re-crated the Indian classical myth of Ramayana in a modern context to suit his purpose of answering the question of human destiny of Indian woman in a period of transition” - 32p76

Mulk Raj Anand a pioneer of social renaissance in India, felt the breath of downtrodden and dalit and he expressed his deep felt anguish through his short stories and novels. He has to penetrate into the internal conflict of those, weaker section of society, which have been dragged in the margins of invisible identity in the name of caste, class, gender, and social status. The suffering born out of caste system deeply influenced the conscience of Mulk Raj Anand. It became a compulsive urge to share the anguish of the community of Dalit’s in the novels- Untouchable and The Road. Anand construct the plots of these two novels in the context of the prevalent caste practices.

Mulk Raj Anand in his speculation on daily consciousness categorically accepts that besides social a path and poverty, the allocation of occupation also contribute to increase the misery of dalits. They are forced to do adhorable tasks and are subsequently concerned and humiliated for those castes determined occupations. Bhaka in Untouchable silently murmurs;

“they would ill treats us even if we shouted. They think we are more dirt, because we clean their dirt.”p-87 (Untouchable)
In *The Road*, the priest and other Hindu caste people hate Untouchable sweeper, chamers who mend the skin of dead animals. The practice of discrimination, physical violence wretched existence and corruption, negation of human sentiments, injustice and torture make Anand to share the pain of dalits with uncompromising sympathy. Both in *The Road* and *Untouchable* Anand constructs the experience of life of dalits to justify that corrupt and inhuman social practices inevitably ruin the foundation of civil society.

Anand has deep insight into the life and reality of village and cities, which he is thoroughly acquainted. The social conditions, hierarchy and harmony economic barriers, familial customs and traditions and religious practices portraits in his novels are portrayed in his writings.

The Writer focuses his interest on human predicament. He depicts the man’s problem in man himself, in his selfishness, in his incapability for tenderness. The theme of suffering of course is integral to growth. Life is pain pleasurable game. The thematic concern in his novels mainly focus on caste system class system, religion and the status of women. The caste system, though seemingly related to the Indian milieu, has universal dimension which needs to be recognized. The class system-a perennial theme in literature is in a way inseparable from the caste system so far as the Indian context is concerned
Kamala Markandaya:

“Women are forgiving, kind and affectionate; women are God’s highest creation, his own shadows while men are God’s common work. Women are lights and their shadows.” *(Bankim Chandra Chatterjee p295-296)*

Indian English Literature occupies a prominent place in world literature. The writers of Indian English Literature, have contributed significantly and abundantly to modern world literature in English. Their works represents an artistic and imaginative perception of the changing phenomenon and the shifting values of contemporary Indian life and reality. They manifest in their novels contemporary society its cultural ethos and glorious heritage.

Fiction by Indian women novelists occupies a prominent place in Indian English Literature. They have made a substantial contribution to the growth and the enrichment of Indian novels in English. Their novels are essentially concerned with the gender discrimination and other problems related to women who are exposed to both physical psychological abuse in male dominated Indian society. From analyzing the character and the inner mind of the Indian women from the view point of feminine sensibility and insight the women novelist, depict how women struggle not only against aggressive male dominance, but against the social, cultural and religious oppression prevalent in contemporary society.
Women novelists illustrated how legend, myth, orthodox attitudes, traditional beliefs strengthen the patriarchal practices which have made women inferior creature and mere objects of pleasure. With the keen understanding and observation of contemporary Indian society women novelists deal with women’s aspiration, hopes and social insecurity. They portray the inner conflict. The prominent among these novelists are Kamala Markandaya R.P.Jhabwala, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Santha Ramarao, Vimala Raina, Bharti Mukherjee, Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.

Kamala Markandaya is the pen name of the novelist. Before marriage she was Kamala Purnaiyya. She was born in a well to do, orthodox Brahmin family of Mysore, south India in 1924. After a short period of schooling in Mysore, Kamala entered Madras University at the age of sixteen. She soon took to writing and journalism. She left the university without taking her degree. She migrated to England in 1948. She married John Taylor. Now she is finally settled in London. She is a prolific writer. Kamala Markandaya is undoubtedly, one of the major creative woman novelist in the common wealth scene. A.V. Krishna Rao’s opines:

‘Markandaya’s contribution to the Indo-Anglican fiction lies essentially in her capacity to explore ..... vital, formative areas of individual consciousness that project the images of cultural change and in her
uncanny gift of inhabiting the shifting landscapes of an outer reality with human beings whose sensibility becomes a sensitive measure of the inner reality as it responds to the stimulus change.\(^3\)

She has authored ten novels viz.


Her short stories are;

*The Plan (1965), Return Ticket, In the history of Indian-English fiction Kamala Markandaya occupies a very high place. She was awarded the National Association of Independent Schools- Award (USA) in 1967 and the Asian prize in 1974. Nectar in a Sieve (1954).*

Nectar in a Sieve is a saga of the sufferings of the peasants of India. It is a story of a peasant couple riddled with economic factors, social evils, and natural calamities. In this novel a peasant women Rukmini suffered due to the hostility of nature and industrialization. She is compelled to lead a life of uncertainty hunger and degradation. Due to the evil forces of Nature they starve and face miserable poverty.

The title of the novel has taken from Coleridge’s line from an Epigraph to the novel. Work without hope draws Nectar in a Sieve and
hope; without an object cannot live Nectar in a Sieve deals with the life story of Rukmani and Nathan. The background of the novel is suffering agony of rural India. The poverty and hunger of Indian villages and disintegration of rural life by the onslaughts of modern Indians have been inextricability woven with the life and suffering of Rukmani and Nathan. The story is narrated by an old widow, Rukmani.

‘My three sisters were married long before I was. Shanta first, a big wedding which lasted for many days, plenty of gifts and feasts, diamonds earrings a gold necklace, as befitted daughter of the village headman. Padmini next, and she too made a good match and was married fittingly, taking jewels and dowry with her’. (p-10 N.S)

She is the daughter of village’s headman. Her three elder sisters were married long before. Shanta and Padmini were married with all due pomp and show. They were given rich dowries diamond earrings, a gold necklace and many other gifts. People of the surrounding villages were invited and there was a big feast.

“But when it came to Thangam, Only relations from our village came to wedding and not from the surroundings districts as they had done, before and after only jewel she had was a diamond noses screw only the people of her father’s village were invited. There was not much feasting ‘what for you? My mother would say, My last born, my baby? Four dowries is too much for a man to bear’ I had to acknowledge that his
prestige was much diminished. Perhaps that was why they could not find me a rich husband and married me to a tenant farmer who was poor in everything but in love and care for me”.p11(N.S)

By the time Rukmani reached the marriageable age, her father lost his power, influence and became poor. She dreamed of a grand wedding. When, her brother told her the truth. She was frightened.

Our relatives, I know, murmured that the match was below, my mother herself was not happy. But I was without beauty and without dowry and it was the best she could do. A poor match. (p-11 N.S)

So Rukmini was married to a farmer who did not own any land. He worked as a tenant farmer. She was married below their position. It was poor match. Only the relatives were of the view. Her house was a small thatched mud hut with two rooms only one room served as a store. The other one for everything else.

“This is our home,’ my husband said,’ come, I will show you’.

Two rooms, one a sort of store house for grain, the other for everything else.

A third had had been begun but was unfinished, the mud walls were not more than half a foot high. It will be better when it is finished’, I wanted to cry. This mud hut, nothing, but mud and thatch, was my home. It was nothing’. (p-13)

Rukmani wanted to weep on her economical condition and her home. But she made herself to accept this as her life. Rukmani was
deeply touched by her husband’s kindness and she could not forget it. She was happy to be with him. He was not the owner of the land that he worked on but there was hope and the possibility of his owning the land. One day if the crops were good. They saved grain from each harvest. They had their own bullocks and a goat. In the beginning, Rukmani could not do even the simplest things well. But her husband had great patience. He was never angry with her. He never complained about her.

Rukmani was glad that she married below her status. If she, had married above her husband might not have been so kind and loving. “Her neighboring Janaki and kali showed to Rukmani how to milk the goat, how to plant seed, how to churn butter from milk, and how to hull rice.

She became pregnant. Nathan did most of the work. He did not allow her to work in the filed. But she worked in garden she got great pleasure out of it.

A daughter was born to them. But Nathan and Rukmani were disappointed.

“we called our daughter Irawaddy … soon she become Ira, Nathan at first paid scant attention to her: he had wanted a son to continue his clan and walk beside him on the land, not a infant who would take with her a dowry and leave nothing but a memory behind”. p-27

But later Rukmani again conceived and had a baby boy
“Ire was seven when my first son was born, and she took a great interest in newcomer, my husband was overjoyed at the arrival of a son.” p-33

This denotes that once again the discrimination in their children as son and daughter.

‘My father and my mother come on the tenth day from the birth he invited everybody to treat and rejoice with us in our good fortune’. p-34

Rukmani and Nathan had five children in quick succession. They were Thambi, Murugan, Raja, Selvam and Kuti. More children meant that food had to be divided and shared. Now Rukmani had to sell her vegetables which previously they used to eat. p35

Rukmani was even able to save a rupee or two every month for Ira’s dowry; But they never went hungry. They grew their own plantations and coconuts. There was always food in the house. At least bag full of rice and a little dhal if no more. Nathan and Rukmani were able to make the basic need of food for them and their children. This description in the novel denotes how economic condition of the poor tenants in village.

“the following week I sold almost my whole basket to him, keeping only a little for old granny”. p38(N.S)

But suddenly a change came in the life of Rukmani and Nathan. It is the construction of a tannery in the village. The laborers had been
brought from far and wide. They were given good wages two rupees a day which was a large amount.

The tannery disturbed the economy of the village. They bought rice, vegetables dhal, sweet meets fruits other necessities of life at high prices. The prices went up. The poor people like Nathan and Rukmani suffered.

“every day far two months the line of bullocks carts came in laden with bricks and stones and cement, sheet of tin and corrugated iron, coils of rope and hemp. Day night women twisted rope since they could sell as they made and traders waxed prosperous selling their goods to the workmen. they were very well paid, these men some of them earning two rupees in a single day, they bought lavishly; rice and vegetables and dhal, sweetmeats and fruits around the maiden they built their huts, for there was no place for them, and into brought their wives and children making a community of their own. At night we saw their fires and by day we heard noise, loud ceaseless, clangour and din, chatter, sometimes a chanting to help them get a heavy beam into position, or house a load of tin sheeting to the roof. P-42 (N.S)

The tannery soon started producing. They could not ignore it. Rukmani hated the tannery.

It had disturbed their peaceful and simple life. Ira was growing up fast-she was beautiful. Her marriage was arranged at a 100 rupees dowry.
“She is endowned with beauty”. It will make up for a small dowry in this case”. p-52 (N.S)

Nathan says but we could not afford these. Nathan would have nothing. We cannot pay. Rukmani had saved from the day of her birth so that she should marry well? Now she brought out the stores she had put by month after month rice and dhal and ghee, jars of oil, betel leaf area nuts, chewing tobacco and copra.

The monsoon broke in early. Then it arrived with great with great force. It rained hard and continuously. The house was saved because it was constructed on high ground.

The cooking become difficult. There was water all over the floor. The rain and the storm caused much havoc and captured it all. Lightening fell on their coconut tree and struck it down. There was destruction all around.

“it rained so hard, so long and so incessantly that the thought of a period of no rain provoke a mild wonder. It was nothing had ever been but rain. The water pitilessly found every hole in the thatched roof to come in, dripping onto the already damp floor. If we had not built on high ground the very walls would have melted in that moisture. p-57(NS)

Trees were uprooted, Vegetable and plants were damaged. The paddy fields were totally submerged under water. Kali’s hut was blown away. Dead bodies of men and women children, birds and beasts, floated
in the streets. The whole scene was one of confusion, disaster and destruction.

“for hunger is a curious thing :at first it is with you all the time, waking and sleeping and in your dreams and your belly cries out insistently, and there is a gnawing and pain as if you are very vital were being devoured and you buy a movement’s respite even while you know fear the sequel. So that you think of food many times a day and each time a terrible sickness assails you.p-87 (NS)

The tannery building remained safe. But the workers huts were destroyed. The paddy was completely destroyed; there would be no rice until next harvesting.

“many of our neighbors faced much worse than we had. Several were homeless, and of a group of men who starved under tree when the storm began see had been killed by lightning”. p-59 (N.S)

The tannery caused havoc in the life of village. Somebody’s land was swallowed up. The farmers become landless. The number of the employees in the tannery went on increasing. They brought their wives also.

“The officials of the tannery had increased as well. Apart from the white man we had first seen who owned the tannery and lived by himself there were some nine or ten Muslims under him. They formed a little colony of their own, living midway between the town and open country in bricks cottage with white washed walls and red tiled roofs. The men
worked hard, some of them until late at night, their way of life was quite different from ours. p-68 (N.S)

Arjun, Rukmani’s son was in his early teens. She reminded him that he was a farmer. A farmer must work on his land. It was an honorable work. He should not work as a labourer in a factory. But Arjun did not listen to her advice. He had grown up and so he must share the responsibilities with his father. Rukmani had no choice, she had to accept his decision. In order to get a job he wanted to take the help of Kunti’s son who worked in the factory. Arjun and Thambi joined the tannery against the wishes of their parents; but they proved to be good sons. Both of them had seen their parents working hard for the family. They knew how they had suffered. They gave a fair share of their income to their parents. So the economic condition of the family improved. They had better things to eat. They were able to put up the roof of the hut again. For the first time after many years Rukmani was able to buy clothes for the children, a sari for herself and dhoti for Nathan.

“yet they were good sons, considerate of us, patient with others, always giving us a fair share of their earnings. With their money w began once again to live well”

“I bought clothes for the older children, a saree for myself, and although he protested I bought for my husband a dhoti which he badly needed, since the other was in rags and barely covered his lions”. p-75 (N.S)
Nathan was deeply rooted in the soil. He loved earth he cultivated. To him mother of earth was the best creation of God. He wanted to make his sons good farmers like him. But they started earning in tannery. One rupee a day. Rukmini one day went to the factory. The guards at the gate told her that her sons were dismissed. They had demanded higher wages. There was a strike against the anti-labour policy of the employers. The workers declared that they will not start work until their lunch hour was restored and their wages increased. The employers dismissed the leaders of the striking workers. Arjun and Thambi and Kali’s sons were among those who were dismissed. One day they announced that labour was required in cyclone, and they had decided to go there. Nathan accepted their decision. They were grown up. They should be allowed to choose their way. But Rukmani had objections she said money is not everything. One should not leave one’s country for the sake of the money. In Arjun’s view two things were important – money and work. All the sons were leaving her one after another. No one had love for the land.

The fate of the Indian farmers depends on weather. The weather in India is always erratic. Either it rains too much causing floods, or it does not rain at all causing a draught resulting in famine, bringing hunger misery and poverty for the people. Both Nathan and Rukmani now planned as to how they should pay the landlord. They had to sell almost everything. They had mud pot’s brass vessels, the tin trunk two shirts,
two pounds of dhal a handful of chilies, the bullocks with the plough, Rukmani bridal sari Nathan’s dhoti and the seed. Every thing was sold to save the land soon their store of rice came to an end.

They started eating whatever they could get prickly pear, a sweet potato, something a crab, bomboo shoots, a stick of sugarcane. At last the stage came when they could find nothing to eat. They had to eat grass which caused cramps in the stomach and vomiting. Ira was very gentle to kuti their youngest brother. She gave him her own share.

One day Raja was brought dead by the workers of the Tannery. He was beaten by the guards on the head, as he was found stealing a piece of skin. Nathan, Rukmani, Selvam and Ira were all worried about kuti. Ira was forced to sell her body to keep her family alive, particularly kuti. Ira’s money kept the family alive. Nathan’s pride as a respectable former was hurt. Kuti was able to get milk. Soon their crops was ripe and abundant it. It was as if nature is making at their loss. Every husk was filled. The paddy stood firm and strong. The thick harvest had made them work hard. They made plans for storing and marketing their rice. Nathan hoped to clear off his debts, Rukmani plan to grow vegetables again in their court yard.

One day Shivaji came to tell them that the landlord had sold his land to the tannery. He gave Nathan two weeks to vacate the land. It was a great shock to them. The tannery swallowed their piece of land.
“the land is to be sold “ he said, we are to move. Shivaji came their morning. He says there is nothing to be done”. the tannery owners are buying the land. They pay good prices”). It is our land, we have been here thirty years.”(p.179).

“Shivaji tells me there is profit to make. The landlord has completed the deal, papers have been signed. We must leave. Where we shall go? What shall we do?”. (p 179N.S).

Now they were landless, old and week. Rukmani blamed the tannery for all their troubles.

They decided to go to Murugan in the city.

“third son, Murugan who was a servant, married a girl from the town in which he worked.”(p175).

Ira was happy in village. She did not wish to be burden on her parents. Selvam took the responsibilities of looking after Ira and her child.

Rukmani made careful preparations for the journey. She took mats, placed the cloth bundle, which contained two ollocks of rice, some chilies, tamarind and salt. The two wooden bowls. Most of the vessels she had brought on her marriage has been sold to pay their debts.

“I knew then there was no more than a handful of rice left”. (p117) “most of the cooking vessels I had brought with me on my marriage had been sold to pay debts, of the remainder. I left two Ira and other I put aside for ourselves”. p189 (N.S)
They traveled to the city in a bullock cart. It was a long and tiring journey, a journey of hundred miles. They searched their son in Coil street. They passed the night in temple. In temple they lost every thing their belonging and money. The novelist has given us a picture of heart rendering description of hunger and poverty. In the city poverty is harder to bear there. In temple there was a huge crowd of beggars and handicapped people. The weak and poor had no chance of getting food.

Rukmani took food and shared with her husband. They found Murugan’s house Murugan’s wife Ammu lived in a godown at the back of the bungalow she told them that their son had left her for gambling and for other women. Nathan and Rukmani sought shelter in the temple. Rukmani describes the grim struggle for survival in the city. Rukmani and Nathan were not welcomed by the destitute and beggars gathered in the temple.

Their presence meant less food for others. Hunger had killed their love and sympathy for others. It was a hard struggle for life. When they reached to the place where Murugan was living in city. Then they came to know that their son had left his wife Ammu two years earlier.

Nathan wish to die in his own village. But they had no money to pay for the fare to the village. They must earn it. So that they would go back to the village and there in peace.
One year passed in this way, still Rukmani had not earned enough to go back to the village. Puli—a leper boy advised them to work as stone breakers where they would get much higher wages. They were supposed to break the stones to the right size. It was hard work. They learnt the art slowly. Their fellow workers were friendly. They were at the temple. They made eight annas a day. They thought they would be able to return to the village in forty days. Rukamni earned two annas—after working all day to write the letters then puli—asked her,

"have you no wish to earn more?"

“There is a stone quarry”.

Anyone can go and work and be paid by the results—so much for each sackful.”

That was the precisely the difficult to break the stones to the required size. There they learn the skill. Their fellow workers were friendly. They were not hostile and insulting like the beggars at the temple. They made eight annas a day. They thought they would be able to return to the village in forty days. They did not wish to die in a place where they were not born. Where no one knew them. Nathan was sick. But he did not stop—working. When Rukmani came back after delivering her bag of stones. Nathan was lying on the road. She had no shield for him. Nobody gave anything and nobody had anything to give. Nathan dies.
She had suffered misfortunes and seen the death of her children and her husband. Commenting on Markandaya treatment of women characters in her novels Jameela Bagum observes:

“In exploring the feminine consciousness of Indian women Markandaya has sought to fuse her own imaginative conception of traditional images. With the bare changing realities of existence. Her woman characters are memorable in the they portray…………….an in depth study of the human psyche caught in the net of social, traditional and spiritual values”.\textsuperscript{5} p.23

The Indian society can broadly be divided or classified in to three hierarchical levels;

`a) The working class
b) The middle class
c) The upper class

While the very soul of the working class and the middle class is vastly diverse in terms of life-style, attitudes and social, functions.

The Nectar in a sieve contain symbolic portraits of the starving millions the exploited working class who struggle desperately for bare substance both in the rural and the urban areas.

\textit{Nectar in a Sieve} is a vivid record of hunger rural peasantry, whose life is affected by the existing social institutions and rituals. Such as child marriage widowhood, negligence of female child, slavery, landless
homeless, casteism and illiteracy. The novel centers around the acutely suffering poor tenet farmer Nathan and his wife Rukmani. The narrator of the tale. They represent thousands of uprooted peasants under the pressure of industrialism and landlordism and working class. Among the rural folk, there is a clear dichotomy between the upper class, the landlords, and the poor tenet farmers and laboring class on the other, Rukmani gives a graphic picture of the farmers life of hardships of fear and of hunger.

People generally learn to live out this misery with calm acquaintance unto the onset of real disaster on the land as well as the rural economy when a tannery is set up in the neighboring area, it starts expanding by a acquiring cultivable lands of the village.

The ruthless landlords and the merciless money hardly care to come to the rescue of the starring poor farmers. As a result they are evicted from their beloved land. When all their saving is consumed, Nathan and Rukmani approach Hanuman, the rice merchant who heartlessly rejects their prayer for rice. Then they come to Biswas. The money lender, for rice in exchange of their two silver coins, but then he demanding, more “take it or leave it. I can get double the sum from the tannary.” This is the curse that the tannery brings to the poor villages.

The only protesting and rebellious voice against social inequality and injustice is raised by the compassionate English missionary doctor

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Kennington. He expresses his disgust at the all the Indian poor peasants passivity. He asks Rukmani why do you keep this ghastly silence? why do you not demand cry out for help to do something. But the villagers cannot cope with the changing social situations.

The industrial resurgence snatches not only their land and property but also their sons. Promising them employment and better financial prospects. The exodus of the rural people to the urban area contributes to the congestion in the cities, polluting of the environment and imbalance in the distribution of population and economic wealth.

The picture of social inequality, gender discrimination class discrimination exploitation of the poor and unhealthy consequence of urbanization has been painted in Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a sieve. As A.N Dwivedi and Neraj Banerjee comment on;

“Kamala Markandaya’s realistic study of such pitiable figures at best, she is a novelist of sensitive individuals place in certainsequent situation and of their ensuing actors and reactionary in the given social and cultural context”. 7

Kamala Markandaya shows that not only Nathans family but the whole community undergoes similar affections the working class, suffers mostly for the economic disproportion, malpractices adopted by the crooked and the social changes difficult to be accepted by the tradition bound rural people.
Hari Mohan Prasad comments on Rukmani Nathan as –

“it is an epic of the India life at the grass root, a full view of the village world where peasants grow and live, suffer and endure and emerge more dignified more human in their elements with their tottered rags, their dying means and their obstinate clinging to the soil like the stump withered at all over but its roots develop in the earth”.p-98

*Gender Discrimination*: In this bleak picture of Indian social life of the darkest zone is the neglected poor women. In the male dominated society a women, however, sacrificing is not allowed the right to freedom of speech and human dignity. The women labourers are paid lower wages than men. They are subjected to exploit and expression because of their ignorance and innocence.

A daughter becomes a burden of the family because of the dowry system. Rukmani herself is the victim who is given in marriage to a landlords labour because her father is unable to find a better groom for lack of wealth. Rukmani has to face the wrath of the money lender the threatening of the landlord for eviction from land and indifferent attitudes of the city dwellers. Kenny established the hospital for poor. He is civilized man.

The rebellion that arises in a woman’s heart against working condition is many a time smothered by the authority of the male in the family or by the pressure of circumstances. This is found in Rukmani, a
straight forward and hardworking peasant women of *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), by Kamala Markandaya.

Rukmani works hard and is proud of the way of her life. She is happy and satisfied to work in the peaceful south Indian village. But the starting of the tannery disturbs the rhythm of her life. She is unhappy to see her life. She is unhappy to see her sons drawn to the tannery. All her rebellion is crushed into sorrow, though she remains beside her husband in all the dully painful period of her stone cutting work, in the city. It is her social way of facing calamities that itself impresses on our minds. *She is the only working women in the entire novel who was a rebellion is not against natural calamities but against man made conditions.* However, inspite of her being spiritually vocal on several matters at the beginning she frequently surrenders to the male dominated traditions. In spite of her strong disapproval of her children working in the tannery. She accepts meekly what her husband decides about them because the man is the head of the family. The father is authorized to decide about the children. As Premila Kapoor say’s- “In the last fifty years or so India has witnessed profound changes in almost every aspects of her life. Since the advent of Independence in August, 1947 the pace of change has greatly accelerated.”

The reason for the woman’s submissive role as Dr. Radhakrishnan points out is that-
“centuries of traditions have made the Indian women the most patient women in the world, whose pride is suffering.”

In this bleak picture of Indian social life the darkest zone is the neglected poor. Women in the male dominated society a women, however sacrificing the painstaking is not allowed the right to freedom of speech and human dignity. The women labourers are paid lower wages then men. They are subject to exploited and oppression because of their ignorance and innocence. Rukmani’s daughter Ira gets married to a peasant boy at the age of fourteen. But she is abandoned by her husband five years after their marriage because she fails to beget a child. Thus she is thrown to a life of degradation and debasement. She does not mind getting corrupted adopting prostitution with the hope of feeding her little brother Kuti.

As a writer she understand’s women’s position in contemporary society. Markandaya shows how social and economic factors affecting women more than men. Shanta Krishnaswamy observes:

“Kamala Markandaya portrays the double pulls that the Indian women is subject to: between tradition and modernity, between Indian and western ways of living and values, between her dignity as a human being and, her duties as a daughter, wife and mother, between marrying for love and un-marrying for family, between her nurturance.”
The novel ends with the return of the native, a glorious figure of the mother sorrow. The sight of her village gives life and enlightenment to her starving and withered spirit. The novel achieves the triple goals of

1 De-establishing gender and there by showing that gender is neither normal nor abnormal.

2 Advocating the need for change in the mindset of women to acquire confidence and conviction in themselves.

3 Subverting the patriarchal meta-narrative of gender relation which have now been proved to be exploitive and suppressive of a women

_A Handful of Rice_ is a novel which portrays the starving millions, the exploited working class who struggle for bare subsistence both in the rural and urban areas. _A Handful of Rice_, is considered as one of her master piece. Published in 1966. This novel deals with starvation exploitation and man made scarcity. As K.R.S. Iyengar comments –

“The theme of Markandaya’s novels is nothing less than the quiet desperation in which most people in a city or in the country side are condemned to live, and the pettiness and the horror, the pity and the heroism, which come into play in their lives”.\(^{12}\)

A Handful of Rice ‘is the story of the urban poor. It deals with the story of migration from the rural to the industrial urban centers. As Uma parameshvaran rightly obsreves:
“It is easy to wring tears of pity for the plight of the peasant, underfed, uneducated, exploited and easier still to rouse anger and contempt for the superstitious and slow moving masses. They stand there vulnerable and open to every attack, be it indifference, contempt or emasculating charity. But to evoke admiration even envy, for the simple faith and unanswering tenacity they hold needs sympathy and skill. Kamala Markandaya has both.  

Ravi the protagonist, joins the exodus to the city is the village has nothing to offer him, but disappointment the city has. The city has nothing great to offer. Ravi in his struggle for survival meets a gang of anti-social group led by Dandekar, the under world don.

He steals from a tailors shop and is caught, held up and punished by the tailor Appu and his wife Jayamma.  

Ravi also gets a secure foothold in Apu’s house. He works as an apprentice in tailoring.

“The business meanwhile was thriving, was gradually taking on more work, even nibbling at smaller contract that hitherto he had had to turn down. They had two in hand now: one was stitching nurses aprons for private home, and the other was making quelled milk jackets for ladies for a small shop that had recently opened in Mount Road”. p-67

Soon he is involved in love with Appu’s daughter. Nalini, gets married to her and become s part of Appu’s family. After the marriage he
decides to lead a respectable life as Appu’s son in law, terminating his old criminal associations.

After Appu’s death he assumes the dignified position of the master of the household. But the heavy burden of the entire family, the cost of maintenance of the family and of the in-laws, high price of all commodities, force him into heavy debt.

The aprons were easy but dull. The shop supplied the material and the pattern all that had to be done was cut out and sew. Ravi grew heartily tired of this. The jackets were another matter. He loved the feel of silk, the quitted diamonds that came up in little puffs, the tiny stand away embroidered collars. But he had to work slowly on these: if he did not his diamonds became squares, or the needle jammed in the wadding.

Ravi liked making jackets. The jackets are beautiful. They sell like hot cakes. Said Appu, especially the beaded one and his old man’s hands that trembled to light a match firmly placed in position.

I wonder who buys, said Ravi. It is the memsahib’s said; Apu, They buy. Who else could pay such good money. How much? Eighty rupees a dozen –Apu said you work up to my skill, lad. p-68

Ravi resented stitching aprons as he feels exploited by the shopkeeper who pays him eight rupees per dozen as stitching charges where as the shopkeepers himself gets from customers one hundred and twenty five rupees per piece. Apu has patiently tolerated the injustice.
Ravi expresses his disgust and disappointment at his poor and underprivileged condition.

“The city was crowded, rents so high, that even men with decent incomes searched for years, squashing themselves and their families on to which ever relatives managed to secure foothold in some house. I was a little easier or single man, but even sharing a room would cost ten or twelve rupees a month; too big slice to take out of the twenty he earned.”

Ravi is enraged with the rich ladies who scold him using all insulting and abusive words – He cannot sleep at night thinking of the injustice and humility afflicted on him. Coming back home he beats up Nalini mercilessly.

Nalini silently suffers her aggrieved husband’s anger with downcast looks, heavy heart. Day by day his financial position deteriorated. With his meagre earning and rising price he can hardly meet all his household expenditure. He cannot repay the loans, cannot repay for light and water. He cannot buy medicine for his sick son Raju. Who dies of inadequate treatment.

After Raju’s death, Ravi feels helpless worried and depressed. He thinks of Damoder who might advise him or help him in his disaster. But Damoder’s sheer’s at him
“Go back to your village. It is more your size, you are not fit for anything else”

As Srivastava opines;

“A Handful of Rice” a pathetic cry of protest of hungry and anguished half grown child grouping for a path halting through the labyrinthine lanes of quixotic dreams and ugly reality rural plenty and ugly realities but reaching nowhere.”

Ravi has agonized by a state of ambivalence between need for money and free him from Damoder’s grip. He is condemned as a coward, unsuccessful man, unfit for city life. He feels convinced that with violence as a weapon nothing positive can be achieved. Thus, the novel ends with a note of defeat and despair, Ravi accepts defeat by withdrawing himself from Damoder’s impious world of glamour and luxury. He restrains himself room undertaking violent rebellious action.

Ravi sarcastically points out how the traditional pattern of honest leaving lead them to go without food, without wealth and health. He is not only affected by the rural. Poverty but also moral sickness. A.K Srinivasa Rao aptly remarks on this moral depravity:

“Markandaya is not content with mere fatalistic poetic explanations of human misery; nor is she satisfied with a survey of the surfacial situations of inequality that continues to plague for social injustice and
economic society. She seeks to probe rather deeper into the moral dilemma that individual is forced to face in a developing country.”

The disintegration of Ravi’s family is a personal calamity but his rage against social disintegration, *class discrimination, against exploitation of the poor* highlights the moral chaos of urban life. Ravi’s family disintegrated with the growing success of the textile shop, Ravi develop the spirit of rebellion at a time of transition when Indian villages are tossed by Industrial winds and menaced by urban influences. As Koi Nicholson remarks:

> “in the depiction of the Mahanagar and the paddy fields Mrs. Markandaaya is for by the best exponent . In A Handful of Rice and Nectar in Sieve she has, with pointed clarity, portrayed life in its more gruesome and degrading from undoubtedly her realism is to purposeful, and her intention is to a waken polite society to the real problem.”

As Margaret P. Joseph rightly assess the situation ;

> “destroyed by a false society represented by the people who think he has no feeling, who give him no privacy, who pin him down actually and metaphorically who give orders, who have money. His harsh treatment of Nalini, his incest with his mother in law are indirect result of this frustrated rage against society.”

In *Nectar in a Sieve and A Handful of Rice*, Kamala Markandaya is concerned with the poverty and hunger of working class. In a Handful of Rice, Ravi goes to city leaving behind the native land and his parents. But
he is disillusioned and disappointed when all his attempts to overcome hunger debt and economic insecurity turn futile. In his own village his father has to endure poverty due to the corrupt money lender’s, the black marketeers, and the defective land and food distribution system. It is in the city that Ravi observes the big gap between the rich and poor:

“The cost of just one of those motor cars that purred along the marina he felt, would keep him and his family over half a life time. How he wondered with a burning curiosity did any one ever earn so much? He never would, not if he sewed a dozen shirts in a dozen hours every day of the week for a dozen years”. p-14 (HR)

In *Handful of Rice*, the protagonist, Ravi goes to the extent of theft due to poverty and starvation. *A Handful of Rice* is journey of a poor young protagonist through different voices of life. All the talents of Ravi dry up in the scorching heat of poverty and starvation. He struggles but facts to get even a handful of rice.

“He struggled to reach the grain ,this  time at least, and he clenched the empty hands and watching with frantic ages as rich help dwindled and the empty sacks flopped and sagged and were snatched up and filled or jump away full on shoulders that could bear them.” p-235(HR)

Ravi is a young man. He represents many unemployed young men dreaming to lead a happy and respectable life:
“if I had a wife, he thought as he ate, She would cook for me, it would be like this everybody but what had he to get himself a wife ? I will buy her a little house, small but nice, new shiny, aluminum cooking vessels.”p-11

The miserable condition of Ravi disintegrates his family:

“His mother was dead. His brother and sister, who with their progeny would have provided the coherent, were gone, forced out by the relentless pressure of their existence, in the upsurge of revolt that had begun to dismantle the old pattern of family first in one village, then in other”,p-57

In this novel Kamala Markandaya recapture the theme of her first novel, viz starvation and poverty. The story centers around Ravi a rustic boy who migrate to Madras in search of a livelihood, joins a group of rouges before he is rescued by an old tailor. He takes Ravi as an apprentice under him and marries off his own daughter Nalini to him. After the death of his father in law, the burden of the family falls on Ravi and troubles crop up.

He involves himself in acts of violence and his life steadily culminates in despair and tragedy. The novel is vivid presentation of the economic situation of the country in the urban areas relating to the lower middle class after the attainment of Independence. The background of
poverty, rising prices and multiplying children is as vivid as it is realistic.

The novelist project the image of the tradition ridden society of the lower middle classes and of their patience and tolerance Ravi’s father with his rural background, his father-in-law Appu, the tailor and men of tradition accepts their lot in life uncomplainingly. Kamala Markandaya presents the life of the city in its stark realism the unconcerned attitude of the affluent, their obsession for ostentation living and their heartlessness the exploitation of the poor by the rich, and the shady lives of the illicit distillers, black marketeers and hoarders. Poverty and misery brings about a clearance between husband and wife. The novelist depicts the traditional qualities of Indian womenhood power of patience, submissiveness in the face of grinding poverty and exploitation, an inexhaustible capacity for love and simple tenderness. These qualities of tradition have remained unchanged despite the socio economic changes in the post Independence India. The disillusionment and cynicism are born out of the slow development of the country after Independence.

*The Coffer Dams (1969)*, is a story between the coalition of Indians and the British over the construction of a dam across a turbulent river in Malnad. Clinton, the head of a British firm entists tribal labourer and openly exploits them under the guise of developing on third world countries. His wife, Helen establishes a rapport with the tribals
effortlessly and is fascinated by the mystery of the jungle. The tribal chief helps for her see the insensitiveness of the west and the exploitation of the Indians. Helen has an extramarital relationship with Bashiam, the tribal engineer. Racial tension mount as the dam goes up.

Numerous accidents occurred where the tribal were the main victims. Even Helen suspects tribal, when Basiam is asked to operate a faculty crane that smith refuses to operate. Clinton represents the indomitable will of the imperialist west. He wants the dam to be completed at all costs. His mind is set on progress and he has no more concern for machines than for human beings. His steady move towards his goal has no place for ethical values.

Tribals are uprooted from their land to provide housing facilities for the British engineers. A premature blast kills nearly forty tribals.

But Clinton finds no reason to accommodate Indian sentimental and rescue the corpses of the Indians. They could form part of the basement if disposal of bodies was concerned. The Tribals have a better understanding of the vegaries of nature than the British. The Dam built against all odds faces of threat when there is heavy rain. Finally the water level falls, resolving the crisis.

We find here a clash of the native pride and the imperial arrogance that are working in close quarter. In coffer Dams – they seems to be aware of their exploitation and even demand that their rights should be
given. With the constant complaint of hostile weather and fear of cobras, Rawlings wonders why the English insist on carrying the white man’s burden even after delivering freedom on a place to the Indians.

The English women create a hierarchy even among the Europeans living in India. People from Russia and Sweden are considered inferior. With women who have enjoyed the Pre Independence days in India can never understand the ways and attitudes of their own on younger generation. They never belong in Post Independence India. Ex Milie Rawling, Mrs Handerson and Mrs Gilbert with their party and hunting interests. All the colonial British distrust Indians and expect them to be grateful to the British for developing and mechanizing their country.

The Indian characters in the novel admired the strength and determination of the English. But detest their imperial arrogance. The novel suggests the futility when human values are scarified. This novel concludes with the conflicts of races.

The Indian society in transmission from the old to new the traumatic experience of the disintegration of the old values and the instability of the social situations. The novelists of this period lash out among other things at social inequalities, mental inhibition moral and religious taboos, economic disparities, political system and metaphysical subtlety in a spirit of strong healthy humanitarianism. The sympathy of the novelists is
with the poor, the exploited and the lives of peasants laborers worker and coolies in a spirit of love and humanism.

The study attempts to explore the impact of class consciousness on the attitude manner and conditions of living in the context of modern India as it moves from a conservative and traditional social order to a liberal and urbanized socio economic and cultural ethos. The novels explore the concern with the individual in class ridden society. There is an anguish and suffering. The picture of social inequality, exploitation of the poor and unhealthy consequences of urbanization has been painted in Kamala Marakandaya’s novel A Handful of Rice and Nectar in a Sieve.
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