CHAPTER THREE
VOICES OF THE MARGINALIZED IN MULK RAJ
'UNTOUCHABLE'

MULK RAJ ANAND

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VOICES OF THE MARGINALIZED IN MULK RAJ ANAND’S UNTOUCHABLE

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3.1 Introduction:

Mulk Raj Anand is the prominent novelist. He was born in a Hindu family of Kshatriya on 12th December 1905 in Peshawar. His father Lal Chand Anand, who was a coppersmith working in Amritsar joined the British Army and served it as a clerk. His mother Ishwar Kaur came from a peasant family of Central Punjab. Anand studied at the Khalsa College, Amritsar. On the life of Mulk Raj Anand one finds the influence of many people. In college days he met Iqbal, the poet-philosopher who influenced him much in his formative years in 1925.

Anand went to London on a scholarship to obtain a Doctor’s degree. During his studies in London he fell in love with Irene, the daughter of a Welsh professor who was a scientific philosopher. The marriage, however, could not take place. In the college days Anand read Urdu and English literature as well as a lot of continental literature including Marx, Mazzini. During his stay in London for seven years, Anand also studied Indian art and philosophy. He also read Darwin, Freud, and Jung and was much influenced by them. He started there writing for Eliot’s ‘Criterion’ a literary periodical. In 1932 Anand returned to India and stayed with Gandhi for sometime in Sabarmati. In this year, he wrote his opening novel ‘Untouchable’

In 1935 Anand was on his tour to Europe tour. During this period he founded ‘Indian Progressive Writers Association’ with the help of Sajjad Zaheer. He went to Spain where he met Ernest Hemingway, the well known American novelist. In 1938 he organized Progressive Writers Movement and edited for some days ‘Indian Literature’ that was an organ of this movement. In 1939 Anand went to London and worked for India’s independence. After the end of Second World War in 1945 Anand came back to India. During the period of 1932-1945 many of Anand’s novels and collections of short stories had came out. He obtained Ph.D. degree on the Philosophy of Berkeley, Hume and Russell.
He lived in Khandala (Mumbai) and was editing an art magazine ‘Marg’. Mulk Raj Anand also wrote some books on art, painting a sculpture such as Homage to Khajuraho. He was for sometime the Chairman of Lalit Kala Academy. Mulk Raj Anand is mainly a humanist and a socialist. He hates superstition, racism, caste and class, capitalism, exploitation, fascism and war genocide. Through his writings and preaching he attempts to awaken for a vision of life, for a task of reconstructing humanity in India and the world.

He had first-hand knowledge of the rural life of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier provinces of those days. He had seen villagers living in squalid conditions and utter poverty. He had seen village life exploited by religious hypocrisies. All these cast a spell on the mind of Mulk Raj Anand. He decided to write about those people who were being insulted and humiliated by the orthodox Hindus and the white sahibs. His compassion for the downtrodden of India finds expression in his novels like Untouchable, Coolie, and The Road. Mulk Raj Anand belongs to this class of writers whose novels deal with the exploitation of the poor and the miserable plight of the untouchables. Anand is called as the powerful champion of the downtrodden.

During a long span to his writing period Anand created more than a dozen novels, half a dozen collection of short stories and many other works on subjects ranging from art to cosmetics and literary criticism to cookery, essays on several subjects, arts criticism and poetry too. He also contributed a number of articles and reviews to scores of Journals. He himself has edited several periodicals including a magazine meant for children. Most of his fictional works have been translated into several world languages.

Anand was awarded the International Peace Prize of the World Council for promoting understanding among the nations of the world through his creative work. Anand was honoured by the award ‘Padma Bhushan’ in 1967 and the Sahitya Academi Award in 1972 for his novel ‘Morning Face’. Anand received many national and international awards and recognition. M. K. Naik observes:
“His upbringing and his intellectual development have led him, on the whole, to place greater emphasis on the need to revolt against the decayed aspects of the Indian tradition than on the acceptance and upholding of the finer elements in it. At an impressionable age he had become aware of the religious hypocrisy and bigotry in Indian society and of its injustice thriving on anachronistic practices such as untouchability, on feudalism and economic exploitation of the haves-nots by the haves. This awareness was sure to make him a militant critic of the baser elements in the Indian tradition.”

3.2 Mulk Raj Anand: A novelist:

Mulk Raj Anand is the most admired and well known Indian writers in English. In his long writing career of fifty years he created more than a dozen novels. ‘Untouchable’ is Anand’s first novel that was published in 1933. It was followed by ‘Coolie’ (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud(1937), The Village(1939), Across the Black Water(1940), The Sword and the Sickle(1942), and The Big Heart(1945), Seven Summers(1951) The private life of an Indian Prince(1953) and Morning Face(1972). His last novel Morning Face brought him the Sahitya Academy Award.

His greatest contribution to Indian novel in English is the assimilation of the best of Indian and Western techniques in his novels. He is the first successful Indian novelist to use stream of consciousness technique. His other virtues as a novelist are the Indian setting and the sense of humanism that came across in almost all his novels. Major themes of Anand’s novels are the caste-system, freedom movement, the conflict between tradition and modernity, the exploitation of the poor, the position of women in Hindu
Society, and the pathetic attempt to attain the glory by women. His themes are mainly about the socio-economic problems in contemporary India.

He is the novelist of characters and social reality. His plots have a clear beginning, suspense ridden middle and a powerful end. Anand’s characters are real and authentic. His major characters fall into two categories, the sufferers of social injustice and exploitation and the upholders of the unjust social order- the hypocrites, priests, landlords and money lenders. Women characters are presented weak and defenseless. Another great contribution of Anand is that he made common people or the people of lower class his heroes and began to write about them. Anand uses satire and humour in his novels. Mulk Raj Anand’s language has a fine flavour of the Indian English. He freely makes use of the English translations of Indian abusive expression. The use of overstatement, unjustified use of chance and co-incident are some of his limitations. In this regard M.K. Naik comments:

“His missionary zeal makes him indulge in direct statements and over statement as is done in the case of Untouchable through the lips of the poet Iqbal Nath”2.

With all the limitations and weaknesses, Anand attained great success as a novelist. We find the element of maturity in his novels.

3.3. Mulk Raj Anand: A Short Story Writer:

Mulk Raj Anand is mainly known a novelist but he is also the most productive Indian writers writing short stories in English. He has about seventy short stories to his credit. These short stories are published in collections all through his career. These collections are: The Lost Child and Other Stories(1934); The Barber’s Trade Union and Other Stories(1944); Indian Fairy Tales(1946); The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories(1947) Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories(1953); The Power
of Darkness and Other Stories (1959); More Indian Fairy Tales (1961); Lajwanti and Other Stories (1966); and Between Tears and Laughter (1973).

Anand’s art of short story writing is influenced by various factors. The technique of the Indian folk-tales and fairy stories inspired him. Anand is greatly inspired by western writers. In his writing one finds the mixture of Indian tradition and western approach. His art of the short stories is entirely his own, for it combines the traditional frame-work of the folk-tales with attentiveness on characters and situations of contemporary life. Anand’s short stories are infinite in variety. There is variety of character in his short stories. He presents an outstanding variety of characters, covering a wide area of the Indian social, economic and political scene over a period of more than forty years. He explores multiplicity of themes through his short stories. Religious hypocrisy, Feudal attitudes, Women and their traditional status, East-West themes, The Rural and the Ruled: Relationship, Freedom struggle, Satire on Post Independence Rulers, Blending of the Old and the New, Exploitation of the Haves-not, Hunger and Starvation are some the important issue of the contemporary times successfully handled by Anand through his short stories. Anand is a born story teller and he can narrate his stories in a spellbinding manner, usually with an effective beginning and clinching conclusion.

3.4. Mulk Raj Anand: As a Humanist:

Mulk Raj Anand is known for his humanism. His humanistic doctrine has been set forth in detail in both “Apology for Heroism” and the essay, “Prolegomena to a New Humanism” in lines written to an Indian Air. His humanism makes him a novelist with a mission, his mission being to write for the betterment and uplift of the under-dog of society. He believes in the supremacy of man. He insists on the self-respect of man irrespective of caste, creed, class, or wealth. His crusade is against superstition, feudalism, and imperialism. That is why he rejects God, Fate, Religion, Past, and Future. His immense faith is in the dictum man is the master of all things.
However, it does not mean that Anand admires everything of man. He does not admire man’s greed, selfishness, cruelty, and insensitivity. But he thinks of man as a whole.

He thinks that man can overcome his difficulties and problems with the help of imagination, reason and science and technology. He says that all people must have freedom – social, economic, political, intellectual and emotional. His humanism includes the equal status of woman with man. His novel ‘Untouchable’ expresses some basic trends of humanism. The novel expresses that the sweeper class has also dignity and the poor untouchables also must have the right for schooling, education, entrance in temples, mixing with the high caste Hindu. They must get equivalent and good treatment, food and housing and clothing. If all these facilities are made available they will soon come to the status of other classes in the society.

3.5. Mulk Raj Anand’s: Untouchable:

‘Untouchable’ is the first novel of Mulk Raj Anand. The novel written about eighty years ago in 1933 presents distressful life of the untouchables in those days. It was Mahatma Gandhi who had asked him in 1930 to write a pamphlet on untouchability and the present novel was the result.

It is a social novel. It deals with a serious issue of untouchability. It is one of the daring efforts to choose an untouchable boy as the hero of the novel. Critics praised Anand for his handling of the theme. The central idea of the novel is untouchability. It is a social issue in Hindu society. The people called ‘Sudras’ was treated as out-caste. The problem is not fully solved even today. But when Mulk Raj Anand wrote the novel, it was a severe and serious issue. Anand made people aware of it through the tale of Bakha. The purpose of the novel was making the people see the evil in it. Mulk Raj Anand successfully presents it as a blot on society, a sin against humanity. He does it through Bakha’s experiences in a day. He makes us think of this issue as a social evil, an injustice by man to man. Simply by narrating only one day in the life of the Bakha, a
sweeper boy, Anand successfully portrayed their world of horrors and sufferings. Mulk Raj Anand’s attempts to handle novel as a weapon of social reform and tries to expose the weaknesses of Indian society at its different strata. Through this novel Anand has tried to give voice the voiceless section of the society. E. M. Forster said in the Preface to Untouchable, the book is “indescribably clean … it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it”³.
3.6. Voices of the Marginalized in Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable':

UNTONGHCABLE
3.6.1 Background:

The social condition of the untouchables in India was worst by 1930 when ‘Untouchable’ was published in 1933. The upper Caste-Hindus treated them extremely badly. The untouchables were not allowed to any school and thus they were disadvantaged of their right to education. They were also not permitted to enter any temple for fear that the atmosphere of the temple would be defiled and polluted by their touch. The untouchable were always kept away at a distance by the upper caste Hindus so that they would not touch them and defile. They must shout from distance of their approach so that the upper caste Hindus could keep themselves away from them. The untouchables must live outside the town and could live only on the left over food from the plates of the caste Hindus. They must not climb up the caste the steps but could beg from a distance. The caste Hindus sprinkled water on the things touched by the untouchables and made them pure. The untouchables were not allowed to take water from wells or the lakes meant for the caste Hindus. They could receive water from the caste Hindus only as favour. Thus the social condition of the untouchables was worse than that of the animals.

A writer’s views and mind-set condition his work. They are the result of a number of influences that operate upon him. Mulk Raj Anand is no exception in this respect. His domestic background, his social milieu, his education, his reading and his connections with people, have all conditioned his literary output and gone into the making of Anand the novelist. Mulk Raj Anand had first hand knowledge of the rural life of the Punjab and the North-East Frontier Provinces of those days. As a child he lived in the army cantonment. The colony of the untouchables was quite close. As a child Mulk Raj Anand played with children of this colony. He has closely seen their lives. He develops sympathy for them. He had seen villages living in squalid conditions and utter poverty. He had also seen village life exploited by parasites and religious hypocrites. He had seen how the upper class sections of the society give inhuman and insulting treatment to the lower and backward class section of the society. All these cast a spell on the mind of Mulk Raj Anand. He decided to write about those people who were being insulted by
orthodox Hindus. Through his novels, short stories and creative writing he determined to
give voice the voiceless, marginalized section of the society.

The novel ‘Untouchable’ is one such effort to give voice to the unending
suffering of the untouchable. The novel pictures the period around 1930-40. The problem
of untouchability was severe in those days. The caste system in Hindu religion is very
old. But it was based on work and not on birth. A son of a Brahmin could be a Vaishya, if
he started business. But slowly it lost this flexibility and became rigid. The so called
upper class people were responsible for that rigidity. They treated the low class people
like trash. This continued for a very long period. The result was that it became a tradition.
The low class was separated from the society. They lived in a separate colony out side the
village, town or city. It was taken for granted that doing dirty work like sweeping and
scavenging was their work by birth. They could not receive education. They were not
admitted in the schools. Their touch was called pollution. If they touched an upper class
Hindu, his religion was defiled. The touched person must bathe and purify himself. Even
the things like coin touched by an untouchable were accepted after sprinkling water on it.

Such was the caste-discrimination in which the novel Untouchable was placed. In
other words, the low class people, their lives in the colony, their poverty, their
humiliation, their illiteracy and the inhuman treatment had given to them forms the
setting of the novel. Mulk Raj Anand, who felt deep sympathy and compassion for them,
presents their condition in this novel realistically but without sentimentalism. The low
class and caste people are suffering. They could not protest against the injustice. Anand a
sensitive person and creative writer feel it wrong. He tries to give voice the voiceless
untouchables and appeal to the society to treat them as human.

In the year 1924 Anand went to England for higher studies in Philosophy. He
thought that the international socialism was the only solution to the world’s problems. He
received the Doctors degree for his thesis on the philosophy of Berkeley, Hume, and
Russell in 1929.
“Untouchable” was written over a long weekend in 1930. Mulk Raj Anand tells that it poured out like hot lava from the volcano of his imagination. In his article “On the Genesis of Untouchable: A Note” Mulk Raj Anand tells in detail about the writing of the novel. He started writing the first draft of the novel; he writes

“One day I read an article in Young India, by Mahatma Gandhi, describing how he met Uka, sweeper boy, and finding him with torn clothes and hungry, took him into the ashram. I decided to go and see the old man”

In 1930 Mahatma Gandhi asked him to write a pamphlet on untouchability. Instead of pamphlet Anand wrote this novel. He went to Sabarmati and met Gandhiji. He read his novel “Untouchable” to him. Gandhiji asked him to make it short to a mere hundred pages. He stayed at the ashram and revised the novel and Gandhiji accepted it. He went to London in search of a publisher. One after another nineteen publishers rejected his novel. Finally a small publisher Wishart Books Ltd. published it in 1935 with a defensive preface written by E. M. Forster.

3.6.2 Realistic Opening of the Novel:

Untouchable is a social novel, and it is related with the discrimination and mistreatment to which one big part of Hindu society is subjected by the other part enjoying a much superior place in the social hierarchy. It is related with the depiction of the life of the untouchables. The novel is concerned not with the life and suffering of some particular individual, but with the life and suffering of untouchables as a class in Indian society. Through the particular untouchable Bakha, the novelist has focused concentration on the miserable plight of untouchables generally. He begins with particular – here Bakha, the untouchable lad- but soon generalizes upon his life and suffering. Bakha seems to a representative untouchable exemplifying the predicament of not only the so called Hindu untouchables but also of all the miserable classes in the
world. It is to stress this global significance of Bakha that Anand has named the novel “Untouchable” and not “The Untouchable”. The definite article “The” has been deliberately omitted. The title indicates that the novel is not concerned with any particular individual but with the whole class of untouchables living in miserable conditions. The theme of the novel “Untouchable” is the age old injustice by the traditional Hindu society to the untouchables.

Anand has artistically portrayed the harsh reality of the Hindu society which was divided into various pigeonholes. And the novel is the realistic picture of it.

The opening paragraph of the novel epitomizes the ‘big divide’ between the untouchables and other resident communities in the town. The novel begins with a sensible description of the colony where the untouchables live. The colony is a cluster of mud walled houses distant from both the town and the cantonment. The outcasts living in the colony are mainly leather workers, washerwomen, grass cutter, water carriers, barbers and scavengers. The colony of the untouchable is located at a particular distance. The upper-caste Hindus and the Tommie’s in the Barracks live in good condition but the untouchable live in squalid houses.

This is the description of the outcaste colony. It is clear indication that the untouchable have to live in a segregated, isolated, filthy and unhygienic locality where cleanliness, sanitation and water-supply are dreams. Anand gives us a realistic picture of the outcasts’ colony. The settlement is gloomy, wet, unpleasant place. The thatched mud-houses clustered together in two rows integral for human surroundings. It appears as though the scavengers, leather workers, washer men, barbers, water-carriers and grass cutters—all these inhabitants of the colony are sub-human non-entities huddled up together. They should be satisfied to live in the gutter like worm only to be compressed by the superior caste people. It practically demonstrates what the idea of untouchability is. The untouchables are living just to make the life of the upper caste Hindu comfortable. It seems that helping for the upper caste is the only purpose of their life. The sweeper are there to clean their latrines, the washermen are there to wash their clothes, and so on.
These untouchable don’t have any other objective in their life other than serving to the upper caste Hindu. They are not permitted to enjoy their life. On other hand the untouchables are depending on them for many things. They have to face humiliation and insults in the hands of upper caste Hindus. The writer’s purpose of this realistic description of the untouchables and their colony is to show their dejected condition. Anand is trying to show the society how these untouchables are living in a filthy condition. For instance the untouchables are not permitted to take water from the well.

As Premila Paul points out:

“Anand gives us a vivid picture of the outcastes’ colony

since it is in the positive sense, a place for argument – an

empirical affirmation of what the concept of

untouchability connotes”.

The intention of Anand is to make the people, especially upper caste aware how the untouchables are living in a very unhealthy condition. The untouchables don’t have any complaint. In the novels not only the characters speak but also the situations and silence also speaks. The opening part of novel fulfills the purpose.

3.6. 3 Lakha: Representative of Untouchable:

Lakha is the Jamadar of the sweeper’s of Bulashah. He is an untouchable of the common sort who submissively accepts his lot and feels no resentment. He represents that type of sweepers who were once of a time uncultured, unhealthy and servile. Though he has given up work, he enjoys a superior position among the sweepers. His son Bakha has also come up to take his place to help him.

As Lakha belongs to a downtrodden class, he has borne poverty, injustice and maltreatment like his forefathers. In his life he never dreamt of rebelling the established social order. On the contrary he always behaves in a servile humility. When Hakim
Bhagwandas, abuses him severely for entering his clinic he begs pardon and apologies. Even if his son Bakha is slapped by the upper caste Hindu he has no courage to denounce the man or to stand against him. Even if his daughter Sohini is molested by the priest he shamelessly remains quiet as he lacks in urge and courage to protect. On the contrary, he persuades Bakha saying they are superiors and have power.

Lakha cannot be blamed for his weakness and loss of courage. His life’s experience has taught him that his safety lies only in quite obedience to his masters. He knows he has quietly to suffer oppression because he has neither power nor the means to resist it individually. His advice to his sons is therefore, the outcome of his age old experience.

Lakha can do nothing against his superiors in the society. But he behaves short temperedly at home. He often gets irritated with his children unnecessarily. At the same, Lakha is hard and rough only from outside like the exterior of an almond. He is soft at heart. He has a real love and affection for his children. When Bakha is ill, he rocks the child in his arms hoping that that he would survive till morning. When it is dawn he rushes to Hakim Bhagwandas, falls at his feet and begs him to do something for his son. Bhagwandas insults and abuses him for the pollution by his entry and touch. But he bears all for the sake of his son.

The Character of Lakha shows how the untouchables are made miserable. Though Lakha doesn’t speak through his mouth every action of Lakha speaks. The only feeling we find in him is the fear of the upper caste. In some situation it is said silence speaks. It is absolutely true to the character of Lakha. Lakha symbolizes the common run of untouchables.

3.6.4 Bakha: An Untouchable Boy as the Hero of the Novel:

Bakha, the son of Lakha the leader of all sweepers in the town and the cantonment is the central character of the novel. He is young boy of eighteen. The novel an account
of the variety of experiences of a day in the life of Bakha in the ‘Stream of Consciousness’ technique. The reader can glance at the suffering of Bakha and feel about the suffering of the class.

Bakha is stout and healthy in appearance. Being strong and able bodied, his well built physic imparts him dignity. He looks nobler than his companions and superior to his filthy profession of cleaning latrines. His chief duty is to keep the public latrine clean. He shows surprising efficiency and quickness in doing his job. He has tremendous capacity to work. Though his job is unclean, Bakha remains relatively dirt free. He looks clever, even responsive, with a sort of self-respect that does not belong to the common scavenger, who as a true is uncivilized and dirty. In the words of E.M. Forster

“Bakha’s Physique is distinctive. We can recognize his broad intelligent face, graceful torso and heavy buttocks as he does his nasty jobs, to stamps out in artillery boots in hopes of a pleasant walk through the city with a paper of cheap sweet in his hand.”

Mulk Raj Anand describes Bakha:

“Each muscle of his body, hard as rock when it came into play, seemed to shine like a glass.”

The above description shows that Bakha is a young man as other young men, who belong to upper class. But his belonging to the untouchable class makes a great difference in his life style. As he belongs to untouchable class he is insulted and humiliated by the upper class.
The Havildar is thoroughly impressed by Bakha’s quickness and efficiency in doing his job.
He says,

“You are becoming a ‘gentleman’, ohe Bakhya”⁸.

But his efficiency is not taken into consideration. The society is bias towards him.

The novel “Untouchable” covers the dealings of a one day in the life of Bakha. Bakha is much fascinated by the white man’s life. The Tommie’s treat him as a human being. He is conscious of the dirt and filth in which they reside. The surroundings in which they reside have degraded their souls. He thinks himself advanced to other untouchables. In fact he has a feel of exceptional regarding him.

As E.M. Forster writes in his Preface to the Untouchable:

“Bakha is an individual, lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak, and thoroughly Indian.”⁹.

The novelist offers a realistic presentation to Bakha at work. Bakha is a dexterous workman. He cleans latrines sincerely and quickly. Each muscle of his body, solid as rock, seemed to shine like glass. He rushed along with a great ability from one doorless latrine to another for cleaning, brushing, pouring phenol. For Bakha work is worship. Anand wrote:

“What a dexterous workman!” the onlooker would have said”¹⁰

Though Bakha belongs to a down-trodden class Mulk Raj Anand calls him
He has strong fascination for English clothes and the English way of life. Saros Cowasjee writes in this regard:

“The Bakha’s slavish emulation of the Tommies, though comic, is his first affirmation that the life he has been compelled to live is monstrously unjust. Though he may cut a ridiculous figure as he stumps out in artillery boots, wearing discarded trousers, puttees, breeches and regulation overcoat, with Red-Lamp cigarette smoldering between his lips, it is all the same a manifestation of his tremendous strength and courage.”

It seems that Bakha is not contented with his own life style. He wanted to live the life of gentlemen which is deprived from him by the caste Hindus. So by wearing the clothes of English men he fulfils his ambition. The wearing of English clothes suggests his hidden ambition that is to live the life of dignity.

His love for English clothes and English fashion gives comic touch to his character. His friends and other boys call him mockingly ‘Pilpali Sahib’. He thinks that wearing English clothes help him to look like a gentleman. At the same time he is well aware the only wearing English clothes is not sufficient to be gentlemen. He must learn English and educate himself. He wants to educate himself and wishes to speak the tis-mish of the Sahib. But poverty comes in his way. He is too poor to go to school. Not this alone but the caste barrier also would not have permitted him to sit by side, with children of the caste Hindus. He is quite intelligent and ambitious to read and so soon devises a
way to overcome the difficulty. He persuades Bara Babu’s two sons to teach him. He would pay them one anna per lesson. While the children of many high-caste Hindus are reluctant to go to school, here is a sweeper boy so much handicapped and yet so much eager to receive education. It is a pity that the dream of the poor sweeper-boy never sees the light of day. Through the presentation of a day in his life, Anand has successfully tried to enlist our sympathy for the under-dogs of society.

Bakha has a high sense of duty. He values cleanliness as a social responsibility and that is why he works hard to clean latrines. As Bakha belongs to a sweeper class he becomes the victim of social injustice though he possesses so many good qualities possessed by anyone of the high caste Hindus. But these qualities cannot resist the rigid conventions and inequality of the society. For instance, he wants to take revenge upon Pandit Kali Nath who molested Sohini but cannot do it because the priest is protected by the powerful caste Hindus. Between the struggle of the individual and the society Bakha is always defeated. He wants to rise against the tyranny of the upper caste Hindus but he has to relapse into inhuman servility which he has inherited from his ancestors. He cannot breathe the atmosphere of freedom in his life. The novelist wants to stress that individual protest would not change the social order. Even Bakha, who desires for an end of untouchability, cannot find any solution to it.

3.6.5 Rakha: A True Child of the Outcaste Colony:

The picture of the people live in the outcaste colony is equally realistic and graphic. Bakha and Sohini are exceptional examples of cleanliness. But his brother Rakha is the proper representative of the people in this colony. Rakha is the brother of Bakha. Anand draws a character sketch of Rakha in all his filthiness. He describes him as:

“Rakha is a short, long faced, black, stumpy little man …

His tattered flannel shirt grimy with blowing of his ever running nose obstructed his walk slightly….This gave him
a rather drawn, long jawed look defined by his small eyes”\textsuperscript{13}

Rakha stands in sharp contrast to his brother Bakha. He has no sense of cleanliness. He does not wash his hands before food or after food. He loves playing around dung and filth. This description would fit to many boys in the colony. The point is that Rakha, the brother of Bakha seems to true child of the outcaste colony. He is so dirty that Bakha cannot allow eating from the same bowl with him. Rakha is a friend of the flies and the mosquitoes. Malaria lingers in his bones. His listless, lazy manners are a result of his surroundings. The depiction of the colony of the untouchable would reveal that Anand has not idealized the untouchables. As Prof. M. K. Naik points out critically in his book “Mulk Raj Anand”. He comments:

“Rakha does not arouse any comparison or sense of admiration in us. He remains in our mind as a boy who is wholly obnoxious and filthier than any other usual Indian sweeper boy”\textsuperscript{14}

Rakha is careless not only in his dress and behaviour but also in his task. He is quite negligent in his routine work. Rakha has no company of good and educated friends so he remains absolutely uncultured. He exchanges abuses freely among his playmates. Rakha is a symbol of considerable importance from the psychological and social point of view. Like most of the untouchable boys he has become the victim of an insufficient and defective upbringing in a family.

3.6.6 Sohini: A Victim of Double Marginalization:

Sohini the female character in the novel is the victim of double marginalization. She is victim firstly as an untouchable and secondly as a woman. As an untouchable she
is not allowed to take water from the well and as a woman Pandit Kali Nath tries to molest her. Sohini is young and beautiful.

Bakha is proud of the beauty of his sister. Her matchless beauty tempts Pandit Kali Nath, the priest in the temple. He makes an attempt to molest her. But Sohini makes a hue and cry when Kali Nath leaves her and goes on shouting ‘polluted polluted’ Any how, Sohini keeps herself uncorrupted and virtuous.

Sohini is not only physically beautiful but she is also a virtuous girl. She never harbours any base emotion or ill-will. She grows in a wretched family and lives in dirty surroundings. But she leads her life far above the unhealthy surrounding. Innocence, truthfulness and chastity are the striking virtues that Sohini so richly possesses. Gulabo bullies her and hates her out of jealousy of her budding youth. Sohini is in the prime of her youth and beauty. She is a simple, innocent and very modest girl. That is why; she does not even understand the real motive of Pandit Kali Nath in favoring her at the well or inviting her to the temple to clean his house.

In her routine life at home Sohini has taken the place of her mother. She is meek, submissive and polite. She has to look after the house and care for her brothers and her father. Besides the household duties she does the duties of cleaning the latrines of the upper caste Hindus. She is dutiful painstaking. She goes to the caste-well to fetch water and balancing her pitcher well on her head she comes back to her one roomed home.

Sohini evokes our sympathy and appreciation in the same measure as Bakha. She is very sentimental and has a great deal of love for Bakha. She is intelligent even sensitive with a sort of dignity that does not belong to the common scavengers. Her role in the novel is as prominent as that of a heroine. She exposes the hypocrisy of the upper caste Hindus. On the one hand these caste Hindus say that they are polluted by a mere touch of a sweeper, and on the other hand they do not hesitate to embrace a beautiful sweeper girl to satisfy their lust. Secondly she also brings out of the jealousy and hatred with one another among the sub-caste and the classes of the untouchable. Thirdly she
serves as a symbol as she shows the wretched conditions of the scavengers and illustrates the social exploitation and persecution, tyranny and injustice. Her long waiting at the caste well for a few drops of water narrates the woeful tales of the sweeper community throughout India.

The character of Sohini is individual as well as representative all those untouchable who suffers. Through the character of Sohini Anand tries to give voice to thousand of untouchable woman. Sohini is speechless but every action of Sohini speaks.

3.6.7 Untouchability within untouchability: The Realities in Hindu society:

The novel also focuses on the important issue in Hindu society. The novelist has shown that the Hindu society is like a circle containing several circles of castes and subcastes. There is segregation within the untouchables also. In the colony scavengers, leather workers, washer men, barbers, water-carriers and grass cutters are living together. All these are untouchable for the upper class people. But still there is segregation within the untouchables. The washer men reject to mix up with the leather workers and the leather workers with the scavengers. This becomes clear from the way Gulabo, a washerwoman ill treats Sohini, Bakha’s sister. The following quotation from the novel reveals this fact.

“Go back home”, said Gulabo mockingly. “There is no one to give you water here.” Sohini laughed more hilariously at the ridiculous abruptness of Gulabo’s abuse.

Gulabo, the washer woman though untouchable thinks that she is advanced to Sohini the daughter of a sweeper. The untouchability within untouchability is again another problem in Hindu society. Through this incident from the novel the writer is tries
to show the segregation. However the main concern of Mulk Raj Anand is to attack on the caste system in Hindu society. The passage is characterized by a violent flow of abuses. Gulabo vents her anger in so many filthy expressions: bitch, prostitute, wanton, slut, eater of dung, drinker of urine. Anand’s use of swear words reflect the realistic life. Swear words are essential to present life as it is. The conversation between Sohini and Gulabo flash light on the fact in Indian society

3.6.8 Insult and humiliation of Bakha:

A strong believer in the dignity of man and equality of all men, Anand naturally shocked by the inhuman way the untouchables are treated by those that belong to superior castes- especially the Brahmin or the so called “twice born” The degradation and humiliation inflicted on the unfortunate sections of society is highlighted through Bakha. Anand selects a particular boy Bakha as the central figure of untouchable and selectively narrates certain incidents that happen with him during the day. Bakha is the representative of all the untouchables in India. The events that happen to Bakha produce in him an acute awareness of his low social status. Bakha, in fact suffers. He is a fine boy, good, intelligent. But what society gives him are insult, humiliation and injury. Bakha starts his day with cleaning the latrines with a spirit. He completes his work. He is completely tired of his morning round of work of clearing latrines. His father asks him to sweep the main road and the temple courtyard. It is of course, a well come change from his foul-smelling world to a world of peasant sun-shine. In the beginning of the novel Anand only narrates the outcaste colony. The vivid description not only acquaints with the unhealthy and filthy condition but also have a dialogue with every sensitive person that it is an injustice with the untouchables. The characters remain speechless but the situations speak.

Bakha proceeds towards the city to sweep the main road and the temple courtyard. It is the beginning of the series of insult. He halts before a pan-cigarette shop, looks at himself in the big mirror on the wall of the shop and feels tempted to purchase a pocket Red Lamp cigarettes. This shows that Bakha wants to look good. Before picking up the
coin that Bakha puts at the counter, the shopkeeper sprinkles water over it to purify it. Then he throws a packet of Red Lamp cigarette at Bakha, as a butcher may throw a bone to an insistent dog. This insult annoys the sensitive boy but he picks up the pocket and moves away. The treatment given by the pan shop keeper is worse than an animal. He goes to a Mohammedan, putting at a big hubble-bubble to light his cigarette from the chillum. The Muslim allows him to do so. He lights his cigarette and starts on happily. The behavior of caste Hindu is here contrasted with that of the Muslim who treats him as a human being and not as a dog. The writer here focuses on the issue that comparatively Muslims and Christians are humanistic towards the untouchables. And the upper caste Hindus are rigid towards untouchables.

A similar humiliating incident happens on the main street. At a confectioners shop Bakha is tempted to buy some jalebis. The confectioner cheats him, while weighing. This shows that the poor and untouchables are deceived by the so called rich. Bakha enjoys a few juicy pieces and feels overjoyed. The taste of the warm and sweet syrup was satisfying and delightful. From the above two incidents that take place early in the morning the writer tries to suggest that how the untouchables are insulted and deceived by the upper class. Comparatively the approach of Muslim is quite humanistic towards the untouchable. The Muslim allows Bakha to light his cigarette.

Bakha had purchased the mouth watering jalebis and is lost in enjoying the taste of eating a portion of them. As he walks along the street, munching and looking at all sights, he wonders at a big sign-board. At present his gaze is drawn to a figure sitting in a window. He stares at her, absorbed self conscious. Accidentally he touches a Brahmin and is reviled as a disgusting creature that has made the Brahmin unclean. Bakha did not intend to pollute Lalla, the upper caste Hindu. They all begin to insult and curse Bakha. He feels sorry and begs Lalla’s pardon. He is requesting to excuse him for the guilt. Lalla immediately starts shouting:
“Swine, dog, Why didn’t you shout and warn me of your approach! Don’t’ you know, you brute, that you must not touch me!”

Soon other Hindus gather there and begin to shower abuses. Bakha feels frustrated. He thinks that why he is always abused by the crowd. He thinks that he is abused because he is a sweeper, because he clean latrine. He is tired but no one thinks about and abuses him.

These lines show Bakha’s pitiable feelings and anguished cry against the injustice. Through these words of Bakha, Anand exposes clearly the feeling of his heart and compels the reader to think about the duplicity of the high society.

The passage clearly shows the realistic presentation of the mental agony of Bakha at the hands of upper caste Hindus. The caste Hindu abuses Bakha with foul words. A number of people gather there in no time, each taunting, abusing and cursing. Bakha felt further confused by this fresh development and the novelist describes his misery, hopelessness and helpless. Anand narrates this incident realistically and sensibly. Here Anand gives voice to inner agony of Bakha which is neglected by upper class Hindus.

Luckily a sharp tongued Muslim tonga-wallah comes to his rescue. The sympathy that miserable Bakha draws from the Muslim tonga-wallah infuriates the touched man. He gives a harsh and sharp slap on the face of Bakha. Bakha receives a slap on his face from the man he has polluted. Bakha feels much dishonored and tears well up in his eyes. Bakha’s turban falls off and the jalebis get scattered in the dust. It is the most pathetic incident in the novel showing the heartlessness of the caste system. The incident is not only pitiable and heart rending it also reveals Anand’s full grasp over the psychology of both the untouchables and the caste Hindus.
When he leaves the place, he is moved by the kindness of the tonga-wallah. Bakha is thinking about the kindheartedness of the Mohammedan tonga-wallah who helps him and rescues from the upper caste Hindu. Bakha think about the kind help of Mohammedan tonga-wallah. He thinks about the kindness and he doesn’t mind touching untouchables. The writer tries to show that other than Hindu religion are kind to the untouchables. Anand narrates this incident sympathetically.

The scene fully brings out the degradation and anguish of the untouchables in Hindu Society. Another portion of untouchability is unfolded by Anand through the type of conduct meted out to Bakha and other untouchables by the Mohammedans, Christians, and the men in the army. Bakha is sympathetically consoled by the Mohammedan tonga-wallah after he is beaten by the upper caste Hindu Lallah. Havildar Charat Singh too gives him tea and gives him a hockey stick. The unanticipated appointment of Hakim Bhagwan Das to Lakha’s house when Bakha’s situation had deteriorated to the degree of impeding death establishes the nobleness of the medical occupation. These incident shows that humanity exists in this society.

As Saros Cowasjee aptly observes,

“The most violent incident in the novel.”

As he moved, along, the scene of the crowd and the man who hit him flashes before his mind. All of a sudden he realizes his position in the world. Then aware of his position, he begins to shout aloud the warning word, to announce his approach:

“Posh, Posh, the sweeper coming, posh posh the sweeper coming, posh, posh the sweeper coming.”

The undertone, ‘untouchable, untouchable’ was in his heart, the warning shout, posh, posh sweeper coming! Was on his lips. He was repeating the word untouchable for
several times. This is the cry of the suffering heart of an untouchable. His strength, his modernity, his nobility, his gentleness were of no use to him. He is an untouchable to the Hindu society. He was nothing but an untouchable, a helpless victim. These thoughts crowded in his mind. This unfortunate incident makes him indulge in pitiable self analysis of his plight in this interior monologue.

“Why was all this fuss? Why was I so humble? I could have struck him! But why couldn’t I say something? Couldn’t I have joined my hands to him and then gone away. The slap on my face! The coward!”

This is the heart rendering scene in the novel which arise sympathy in the mind of a righteous and sensitive human being.

3.6.9 Molestation of Sohini by Pundit Kali Nath:

The pollution or molestation scene in the temple is most rationally presented by the writer. On Pundit Kali Nath’s implication Sohini goes to sweep the courtyard of his house. Bakha also goes there to clean the outer courtyard of the temple. Pundit Kali Nath is attracted by the beautiful figure of Sohini. He attempts to molest her. As she does not yield to his sensual pleasures he raises hue and cry against her in order to extricate from the alarm Sohini has raised to ward off his indecent advances towards her. If Sohini had yielded to his requirements he would not have complained of the charge of pollution against her. Anand presents this scene in order to show that some priests like Pundit Kali Nath are attempting to exploit some low-caste women sexually also. The scene comments on the hypocrisies of the high class Hindus. Bakha reached the temple. He is deeply moved by the triumphant worship of the devotees. As he joins his hands in order to worship the unknown god, he hears a cry, ‘polluted, polluted, and polluted.’ The cry disturbs him. He is completely frightened. His eyes are covered with darkness. The priest accuses Sohini of having polluted him.
Bakha manages to take Sohini away from the courtyard. She tells Bakha how the priest made improper suggestion to her and held her by her breasts. Bakha is filled with anger.

"Tell me, Sohini’ he said, turning fiercely at his sister, ‘how far did he go?’ ‘Brahmin dog!’ Bakha exclaimed, ‘I will go and kill him!’ And he rushed blindly towards the courtyard.”

He calls the priest a hypocrite, a liar. He feels like going and killing the priest, but Sohini restrains him and persuades him to go away quietly from there. The incident shows that there is some limit to the injustice and humiliation. The untouchables have some honour, prestige.

Bakha is not directly involved in the episode. But he is present as a witness. The events underlines two important specifics. 1) The touch of an untouchable pollutes an upper caste Hindu. But the untouchable women are not safe. Gulabo is an earlier example of it. But she yields willingly. Sohini protested to save herself from seduction. 2) The priest is hypocrite. Had Sohini yielded to his wish, she would not have polluted either him or the temple. But she refused to yield and he charges her of polluting him and the temple. Mulk Raj Anand wants to emphasize this very double standard of the upper class Hindu.

The aim of this episode is to present the ghastly life of the untouchable. The writer’s sympathy for the destitute and irritation for the upper caste is also clearly seen. M. K. Naik comments on the episodes. Bakha is an exceptional, uncommon individual, entirely different from the other untouchables, and the uncommonness of the central figure has been stressed from the very beginning. He has deeper awareness of his position in the society. He is static and dynamic at the same time. He is static because the centuries of servility have made him weak, powerless and morally degenerate. As M. K. Naik puts it.
“Weakness corrupts and absolute weakness corrupts absolutely. It also shows that eternal servility is the price of untouchability. Bakha may be a tiger, but he is a tiger in a cage, helpless and at bay.”

The scene of molestation of Sohini is significant. It throws light on the hypocrisy of the upper caste Hindus and also the defenselessness of the untouchables. The Brahmin try to molest Sohini and still the untouchables have to keep quite. Bakha has an incredible capacity to oppose and hit the priest but it is his caste and position in the society stops him

3.6.10 Insult after Insult:

The temple seen is followed by another degrading, traumatic and sorrowful episode called the “Chapatti throwing” episode. After sending Sohini home Bakha enters in the silver smith’s lane to beg food. As he had not eaten anything from the morning he is very hungry. Bakha has to cry at the door like a beggar for food.

“The sweeper has come for bread, mother! The sweeper has come for the bread. Although he wants food for the work done, the women there throw” he shouted a little louder. But it was of no avail.

The orthodox house wife gets mad with anger because Bakha has defiled her house by contact. She scolds him and throws a chapatti from the third storey of the building. It falls on the damp and dirty place below, where a child is relieving himself. Bakha picks it up and without any more attempts to collect food from other houses,
returns home. The Hindus think that mere contact of the untouchable will corrupt the house. The episode throws light on the mentality of orthodox caste Hindus. Bakha is expecting food for work. But still the upper class people want the scavenger and other untouchable should work for them. But their touch will defile their house. The writer attacks on the double standard of the upper caste. The untouchables insulted every now and them by the upper caste.

Bakha reaches home with so many insults. He has very nervously drowned in himself. His mind is a diverse ground for battle ground of diverse conflicting emotions. Lakha asks him what the matter is. The sympathetic tone opens his heart to him. He says:

“They will ill treat us, even if we shouted. They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt.”

These are the heart rendering words of Bakha. The incidents happen in the day time hurt him.

In the afternoon Bakha goes to attend the marriage ceremony of his friend Ram Charan’s sisters and to receive his share of the sweets. Ram Charan, the washer man’s son, Chota, the leather worker’s son and Bakha forget for the time being the sub-low caste differences and share sugar plums. Another dramatic scene is the scene of the Hockey match where Bakha and his friend Ram Charan, Chota and other form team to play Hockey. There is a match between 31st Punjabis and the 38th Dogras. The boys of the two sides attack each other. By accident a babu’s little son is hurt. Bakha takes the child to its home. Bakha hopes that his mother shall feel obliged. But to his surprise, she bursts at him in fury:

“You eater of your master, you dirty sweeper. What have you done to my son?”
Here Bakha deserves award from the family members of the child. But he receives abuses from his mother for touching the child. This scene presents the depressed life of the untouchable and the inhumanity of the caste Hindu.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly comments:

“Bakha’s cup of frustration and misery is full”25.

Here again the theme of untouchability within untouchability, the hierarchy in Hindu religion is discussed. The washer man, leather workers, scavenger all are untouchables. But the washer man and the leather workers think themselves advanced to scavenger. Not only the upper caste Hindus but also the other outcastes insult the scavengers.

3.6.11 Solution to the problem of Untouchability:

Mulk Raj Anand presents a serious social issue. But he does not stop there. Anand had given conscious voice and try to give solution. Like a conscious social reformer Anand wants to solve this problem. In Untouchable Anand has recommended three possible solutions to the problem of untouchability towards the end of the novel. With it the novel ends. But others like E. M. Forster claims that it is an integral part of Anand’s plan. The intention of this novel is not just the propaganda of the issue but he genuinely wants to solve the social of this problem of untouchability. Anand had discussed few solutions for the abolition of the age old problem of untouchability in Hindu society.

The first solution to the problem of untouchability in Hindu society is recommended by the colonel Hutchison. Colonel Hutchison is a Christian missionary, the chief of Salvation Army. Like Bakha Colonel Hutchison too in a way, is an outcaste: One alienated from the British residents of the city and driven from home by his card playing and hard drinking wife. He is often seen hiding behind rubbish heaps in wait for some troubled outcaste who would listen in his despair to the gospel of Christ. The Colonel is
lovable but pathetic figure. Because of his broken Hindustani and introspective nature he had little success with conversion of people into Christianity. The encounter between Bakha and the missionary is amusing: one drowned in his ecstatic, hymn-singing, the other quite obvious to the message but happy to be in contact with a “sahib” from whom he might extract a pair of cast-off trousers.

“Who is Yessuh Messih Sahib,” Bakha asked, eager to allay his curiosity. “Come I shall tell you” said colonel Hutchison. “Come to the church.”

The missionary Colonel Hutchison tries to persuade Bakha by reciting songs. To this straightforward question the missionary answers with three stanzas from the devotional songs.

“Life is found in Jesus,
Only there’ tis offered thee;
Offered without price or money
’Tis the gift of God set free.”

And.

“He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.”

All this adds to Bakha’s confusion but a chance sentence from the missionary goes home “Christ sacrificed himself for both the rich and poor, for the Brahmin and the
Bhangi” The last sentence spoken by the missionary creates an impression that Christianity is superior to Hinduism. Bakha says,

“Han, Han Sahib, I understand, Yessuh messih make no differences between the Brahmin and myself.”

All this discussion adds to the puzzlement of Bakha. He does not like the idea of being called as a sinner. He has committed no sin that why he doesn’t like the idea of being called as a sinner. Therefore the question of confessing sin does not arise. The question of the original sin and all human being sinners baffles him. He cannot bring himself accepting conversion to Christianity for the sake of equality.

The second solution to the problem of untouchability in Hindu religion is offered in the form of Gandhism. In this confused state of mind he confronts a crowd of people at the Golbagh to listen Mahatma Gandhi’s speech. Here in this sea of humanity, he finds people from all classes and castes together as if Gandhi was a magnetic force to bring the much desirable equality for all and the abolition of the evil of untouchability. Bakha reaches Galbagh. When Bakha reaches the place Galbagh. He sees people of all caste and religion gathered together.

Bakha feels happy when he sees all the people gathered together. He is highly impressed by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. But he also felt that, there was a challenging barricade between him and the mass, the barricade of caste. He was part of a awareness which he could contribute to and yet not recognize. Gandhi alone integrated him with them because Gandhi was in everybody’s mind.

Though the people of all caste, religion gathered their but Bakha is conscious about his social position. He did not disregard the experiences during the day.
Mahatma Gandhi starts speaking. He does not understand the opening words. But he is thrilled to hear the Mahatma, who regards untouchability, “as the greatest blot on Hinduism”.

When Mahatma advises the untouchable to develop their own lot by getting rid of the habits of drinking liquor, eating carrion and gambling, Bakha gets confused and fears that the Mahatma is digressing. The Mahatma’s concluding words give him relief. These words are:

“All public wells, temples, roads, schools, sanatoriums, must be declared open to the untouchables. And, if all of you profess to love me, give me a direct proof of your love by carrying on propaganda against the observance of untouchability. Do this, but let there be no compulsion or brute force in securing this end. Peaceful persuasion is the only means. Two of the strongest needs that keep me in the flesh are the liberation of the Untouchables and the safeguard of the cow. When these two wishes are satisfied there is swaraj, and therein lies my soul’s liberation. May God give you power to effort out you soul’s recovery to the end.”

Gandhi’s appeal is more rational as well as touching. To Bakha the appeal of Gandhi is more satisfying than the vague advice of the missionary colonel Hutchison.

The third possible solution emerges during the exchange of words between Mohammedan R. N. Bashir and the very intelligent poet Iqbal Nath Sarashar. Iqbal does
not feel that Gandhian solution will be of any use. Bashir criticizes Gandhi and calls him humbug. Iqbal Nath Sarashar is a poet and the editor of a journal called ‘Nawan Yug’. He is man of progressive views. He says that only machine which clears dung can end untouchability. He further says that the sweeper can free him from the shame of untouchability and obtain the self-respect of position which is their right as a helpful portion of casteless and classless society. The basis of untouchability lies in the filthy work of cleaning the streets and latrines. Iqbal Nath Sarashar assert on the issue of refuting the age old issue of untouchability.

R.N. Bashir and Iqbal Nath Sarashar provide a different solution to the problem of untouchability. Both do not agree with solution of Mahatma Gandhi. The machine, he suggests, is the flush system or the drainage system. The system is in use in big cities. If everybody implements this system untouchability would end. Hence both Gandhi and the flush system together can go a long way toward the abolition of untouchability.

Bakha returns home as an enlightened man, full of hopes, dreaming that the gloom of untouchability will soon disappear, and machine is the answer to the problem. Bakha sees a ray of hope in the words of Iqhal Nath. As he walks back home, he feels that better days are ahead for the untouchables. However the machine alone cannot bring about a change in the lives of untouchable. Gandhian teaching and the flush system together can go a long way towards the eradication to untouchability in the Indian society.

Some critics are not happy with this ending and this last part has come in for a good deal of criticism. There are objections with regards to the ending of the novel. For instance Bakha is only the submissive listener and he does not understand most of the points of the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi and Iqbal Nath Sarshar, the poet. At the end of the novel Bakha is still left in doubt. He didn’t get any concrete solution the eradication of this problem.
However, there no definite and final solution to this deep-rooted social evil. The novel seems to have done a good service in highlighting the theme of untouchability in all its multi faceted perspectives through its open-endedness.

3.6.12 Untouchable: Depiction of society in State of Transition:

Untouchable was written in 1930. In 1930 Indian society was in a state of change. There was clash between tradition and modernity. Gandhian movement unrestricted the energies of men and women slumbering for centuries and roused their consciousness against our degrading social practices. Gandhi was against casteism, immorality and irreligion. One of the consequences of the disturbance caused by the Gandhian movement was that many of the traditional customs and beliefs began to deteriorate and the established order of society was shaken. In short, in the thirties Indian society was in a state of transition. There was clash between tradition and modernity. This transition and this clash is one of the themes of the novel written by Mulk Raj Anand. Anand tries to give realistic picture of this state of society.

Mulk Raj Anand takes this transition period as an opportunity and gives voice to the untouchables and marginalized in the society. Untouchable was his first novel written in this tradition. It depicts the situation of the society of the thirties. The confusions of the majority and consciousness of the minority and marginalized all get place in the novel. In short the novel ‘Untouchable’ depicts the society in state of transition.
3.7 Conclusion:

Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Untouchable’ mirrors the traumatic horror of untouchable life in India. The pathetic sufferings undergone by the untouchables have found voices of resentment, anger and protest in the novel. Religious history tells that the untouchables are part and parcel of Hindu society in their social and religious practices and values. The untouchables are subjected to traditional disapproval to low work and social ostracism. It appears as if the untouchables were a separate nation. Their education, their residential localities, their jobs were all determined by the caste-Hindus. The upper caste-Hindus built up the philosophy of caste superiority in order to enable them to justify any act of brutality taken against the untouchables.

The chapter is an effort to focus on the situation of the untouchables in India. The age old tradition of untouchability and their consequences on the life of untouchables are discussed in the novel. The first section of this chapter records the childhood experiences of Anand and his views about untouchability. The second section of this chapter deals with pitiable experiences of the protagonist of the novel, Bakha. The realistic description of the outcastes’ colony, the brutal treatment given to Bakha by the upper caste Hindus and its analysis is covered in this chapter. This section also includes the episodes like the touching episode, the molest episode and the chapatti throwing episode. Finally the discussions about various solutions to eradication of the untouchability in Hindu society and its validity are discussed.

The main focus of this chapter is to show how Mulk Raj Anand through the novel tries to give voice to the untouchable voiceless section of the society. The opening of the novel, the description of the outcaste colony, the bitter experiences of the untouchables, the daily routine of the untouchables, the inner voice of the untouchables, their insults, and happy moments in their life makes every sensitive person feel sorry for them. The chapter analyses the bitter experiences of the protagonist which are rationally presented by the writer. Anand very powerfully draws our attention to the sub-human treatment given to Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, Sohini and other outcastes. The novel
portrays a variety of tormenting experiences of the hero and what makes them extraordinarily intense is the fact that they happen in a quick succession in a single day: Sohini, Bakha’s sister is not permitted to fill her pitcher from the caste-well, cigarettes are flung at Bakha, Lallaji manhandles him for polluting touch; Jalebis and chapattis are thrown at him; the temple-priest shouts that Bakha has polluted the temple; Pandit Kali Nath tries to molest Bakha’s sister; Bakha is abused for defiling the house of an upper-caste Hindu Lady. The sequence of these incidents may or may not be important. What is important is that they take place at breath-taking pace. Sometimes the characters speak and sometime the situation.

To conclude the discussion about the voices of the marginalized in Mulk Raj Anand’s novel ‘Untouchable’ one can express once agreement with the words of E. M. Forster that untouchable could have been written by an Indian writer only who observed untouchability from outside.