Chapter-VI
CONCLUSION

Introduction:
Mulk Raj Anand, Munshi Premchand and Rohinton Mistry deal with the sufferings of the downtrodden and show all possible sympathy and compassion. Indian society is based on the caste-division and the members of each caste receive treatment and respect as per the hierarchy they belong to. Several attempts have been made in the name of socio-cultural transformation and equality but the age-old practices still exist in one form or the other. The lowest class of the society still suffers inhuman treatment and humiliation at the hands of high-caste people. The novels depict life of the lower caste people suffering from the atrocities and traumatic experiences at different points of time. Dalits suffer because they are born in the lower society and humiliated for no mistake of their own. The high caste society often assigns them the conventional orthodox treatment and subjecting them to both physical and psychological torture and harassment.

Representation of Dalit Consciousness:
The representation of Dalit consciousness in the three novels is realistic putting many controversial issues aside. Ironically, the struggle to reduce and erase the caste system along with poverty from the Indian societies started since beginning of the 20th century with predominance of British Empire, but till now the division into classes exists with its escalated strength and authority in independent India. The Indian English writers utilizing the medium of literature are continuously trying to give voice to the poor and the lower classes people for altering the Dalit’s status. This attempt may be evaluated as insignificant, but the representation of Dalit consciousness has created a resonance to shake the foundation of the societal stereo typed ideology causing the people to rethink the whole problem of the Dalits, so that all classes of humanity might be guaranteed respect, sympathy, and fundamental rights.

Perspectives to Question the Oppression:
The new trend in the writings of the present times is to question the dominating attitude of certain communities of the society towards the Dalits. In an attempt to find an answer to this question, Dalit writers of the later part of 20th century have successfully made early Dalit writings occupy the places and positions who had
earlier denied in Indian languages. Dalit writing has written from the several perspectives to question the oppression in different fields. Away from the Gandhian perspective of the early Dalit writers, the contemporary Dalit writers are writing from Ambedkarite perspective.

**Two Phases:**
The span of the writers and the texts selected for the present study roughly represent two phases in Indian history. They are the outcome of their socio, economic and cultural background. Political backdrop is also significant in the texts. They belong two phases of Indian society, if we take their writing as representation of Dalit consciousness. The major works of Anand and Premchand, which represent social evils and practices, belong to the pre-independence period and that of Mistry to the post-independence period.

**Three Writers:**
The present research has explored Dalit consciousness in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Munshi Premchand and Rohinton Mistry. Being the novelists of the transition period in the Indian socio-political history, they, their writings clearly prove themselves be the products of the age. Among a large number of novelists that emerged on the literary scene, these writers shared the same social perspective of highlighting the social evils that led the Dalits to exploitation, suffering and atrocities. While Mulk Raj Anand and Munshi Premchand belong to first generation, Mistry to the second generation of the Indian novelists in English. All the three writers hail from higher social classes or non-Dalits but they develop a sense of concern and compassion for the Dalits. All the three concentrate on the crisis in that period responsible for shaking and shaping the destiny of India. These three writers have realistically portrayed the lives of the Dalits from a non-Dalit perspective. Whatever it be the Dalit writers or the non-Dalit writers, these writings appear critical of the approach taken by the so-called high castes towards the Dalits.

**Mulk Raj Anand as a ‘Speaker’ for the Untouchables:**
Mulk Raj Anand was not a Dalit writer. Yet his novel has achieved an elevated status rarely given in literature. His work is discussed in terms of its humanist intentions. He acts as the ‘speaker’ for the untouchable. Anand was not only a writer but also a
social reformist. He had social concerns and humanity for the Dalits, which made him a reformist. He has focused on the social reality of the suppressed people. His works make the reader ponder over it. The social reality, which Anand has presented in all his major novels, made him a socialist and humanist. His first novel - Untouchable is an account of a day in the life of its protagonist-Bakha, the Dalit sweeper boy.

Premchand as an Advocate of Social Protest:
Munshi Premchand launched a powerful attack on the orthodox ways of life and religion. For this reason, priests and Brahmans were his major targets. That is why critics have labelled him as anti-Brahman. Throughout his writing career, Premchand continued to assert that orthodox thinking and outdated beliefs only distort the true face of religion and it is the main obstacle in the healthy growth of society. The religion authority also becomes a powerful tool in the hands of highborn society against the lowborn or society of Dalits.

Rohinton Mistry as a Compassionate Realist:
Rohinton Mistry as a fiction writer occupies an important place in Indian writing in English. He chooses the time-tested method of conventional storytelling and communicates his point of view effectively. He successfully delineates the intractable complexities of life in India. Mistry has often known for his compassionate realism. He portrays his protagonist with deep sympathy intending to bring their plight before the world.

The Select Novels:
The three novels, Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable (1935), Munshi Premchand’s Godaan (1936) and Rohinton Mistry’s A Fine Balance (1996) represents the Dalit consciousness with the close analysis of the condition of the Dalits which a few writers can attempt. All these three writers and their novels have not shown any direct path to the resolution of problems of Dalits. It can be understood from this thesis that the struggle of the Dalits cannot end so easily. The writers have expressed their hope for the future relying on their own times’ expectation. Mulk Raj Anand and Munshi Premchand try to pin their hope for betterment of the situation on the dream of Gandhian ideology and vision. On the other hand, Rohinton Mistry shows how Anand’s and Premchand’s hope is destroyed in so called modern Indian and how
everything remains the same except the expectation for change which ultimately becomes for the writers, the characters, the readers and the illusion of hope. In these three novels, the time gap is aroused long years, but irony lies in the fact that—time passes, things changes but the fate and struggle of the Dalits do not change. They remain stagnant at same point where they were before independence. But can we hope for any change in future? These three novels reflect the same background with a lot of harsh conflicting realities. Although there is more than fifty year’s gap among the novels, they portray the situation of Dalits, a similar hostile falling to hold out any hope for them. We see a development of India as country and nation, but the development has no positive effect upon the Dalits.

**Projection of Dalit World in Untouchables:**

*Untouchable* is the finest example of Anand’s all novels in which he displays the critical and painful condition of Dalit people. The novel deals with the issues like prohibition of using facilities like going to temples, using public wells and schools for socially ignored people. The rigid caste system and orthodox division system create an injustice for this community. The situation in the novel is pathetic when Dalits use the public roads; they have to clean the road when they have used for walking by binding a broom with their bodies. Bakha, one of the central characters of the novel reveal a true picture of Dalit people by failing so many humiliations. He is the representative of miseries faced by member of the community to which he belongs.

**Exploitation by Feudal Lords in Godaan:**

The theme of exploitation of farmers by moneylenders and Zamindars has all pervasive in *Godaan*. Hori is so much tradition loving that he cannot tolerate the exploitation by moneylenders but cannot show disregard to traditions. He is God-fearing person who can never think of violating the traditional values and customs. He has brought up in an atmosphere of rigid social set-up where orthodox religious beliefs dominate their life style. He is so much tradition loving that he can never stand against the exploitation by the rich. Throughout his life, Hori has exploited and wronged by the moneylender but he bears all acts of injustice and exploitation silently. His son Gobar is in favor of a radical change in society and he appears as the representative of change and modern values.
Endless Suffering in *A Fine Balance*:

Ishvar and Omprakash, the chamar characters of the novel, struggle for survival in a world that is hostile but occasionally allows them to find refuge in feelings of kinship and togetherness. These Dalits have wronged by the society. However, the cruel and hard experiences do not squeeze out the humanity from the hearts of these downtrodden. Mistry brings out the difference in two communities, the human side of Dalits and the cruel side of upper castes. He stresses that the atrocities and injustice done to Dalits is undeserving and unjustified. He exposes the horrifying facets of the Emergency and the consequences felt by his characters.

Mistry ruthlessly criticizes the existing social pattern in India-as India that claims to have attained new heights. He feels that the nation needs to uproot its caste system ‘to achieve real progress for the citizens. He fervently attempts to expose the misfortunes, discrimination, oppression and the endless suffering of the Dalits in India after Independence. He also demonstrates that political-power be at the village or at the national level-seek to enjoy and succeed in continuing authoritarian forms of the governance under the guise of democracy. With the proclamation of Emergency, even this pretension of democracy has shrugged off to expose the authoritarianism at the heart of Indian politics.

Varna System:

All the three novels written by non-Dalit writers portray the conditions of Dalits and marginalized though to change the heart of ‘Caste Hindus’. These novels depict the cruelties of Varna System in India. However, it was not their intent to awaken the Dalit masses against their systematic institutional oppression. They could not bring out radical changes and revolt against the prevailing Varna system among the Dalits. Moreover, these novels proclaim the dominance of ancient Varna System even in the modern or democratic Indian republic.

Atrocities on Dalits:

All the three non-Dalit writers have highlighted the piteous conditions of Dalits. Their novels become the mouthpiece of the Dalits since they give voice to these unfortunate and inhuman incidents. The Hypocrite Pandits in *Untouchables* and Land Lords in *Godaan* are the agents of atrocities on the Dalits. They punish Dalits and their women brutally for petty reasons or even of no reason. In *A Fine Balance*, Dukhi survives the
poverty of his position and saves his sons from the occupational stigma of being leather workers. But a generation after, all his descendants were brutally killed, except for a son and grandson, who slide into beggary. The next generation of these characters is rebellious and they protest against these incidents. Om of *A Fine Balance* and Gobar of *Godaan* could never tolerate any injustice done to them. They, unlike Bakha in *Untouchable*, the new age Dalits did not believe in the mercy of the upper caste.

**Dalit Women: Victims of Double Exploitation:**
Anand presented the theme of exploitation through Sohini, Bakha’s sister. She not only exemplifies caste exploitation but also sex exploitation. As a caste-exploited, she is shown waiting patiently for a long time when she goes to fetch water from the caste well. “She had in her docile and peaceful bearing.” (UT 27) As soon as Gulabo looks at Sohini, she cries out, “Think of it! Bitch! Prostitute! Wanton! And your mother hardly dead, Think of laughing in my face, laughing at me who am old enough to be your mother.” (UT 28) She not only abuses the sweeper girl but also rushes to hit her. Sohini behaves unlike any other outcaste woman. When other women make servile appeal and show their abject humility to the passer by high caste Hindus to draw the water from the well, Sohini sits patiently away from them. She has to wait near the well for a long time putting up with the lustful men. Here every reader feels inhuman behaviour and injustice towards the Dalits. When they are thirsty, they have restricted to take water. They have no right to share nature’s resources. Even animals too are free to drink when they want. Brutality of the caste system has shown here clearly.

**Untouchability:**
Again all the three novels irrespective of their diverse socio – political backgrounds have one common aspect i.e. untouchability. Anand’s depiction of the practice of untouchability is essentially a matter of pretentious religiosity and exploitation. By a very well worked out technique of dramatic irony and by juxtaposing the plight of Sohini with that of Bakha, the novelist has reinforced the representative character of the figure of the Dalits. Anand in *Untouchable* exposed the Dalit consciousness in contemporary Hindu society.

Anand shares an upper caste Hindu background. Indeed, Anand’s personal life was drastically different from that of Bakha’s in *Untouchable*. He never cleaned
latrines, swept the streets, or felt the struggle of being a Dalit because of high upper-caste background. This does not discredit Anand’s effort to depict the Dalit experience. Anand has a disconnected and impersonal relationship with the Dalit experience because his approach is only to ‘save’ the Dalits from discrimination—He is not concerned with the character that he portrays because his main objective is to reform Hinduism for the betterment of the nation. His intentions are positive, but as readers, we end up not understanding his characters, which inadvertently reflects Anand’s inability to conceptualize the Dalit as an individual.

In Anand’s Untouchable Bakha is unlighted by Mahatma Gandhi in Gol Baag to remove the evil of untouchability. In A Fine Balance, one of the followers of Mahatma Gandhi speaks against it. Mistry gives an indirect reference to Anand’s Untouchable to show that the lot faced by Dukhi, Ishvar, Narayan and Om is on the same scale as it has faced by Bakha. Bakha’s insult and humiliation is the other side of the insult faced by the protagonists of A Fine Balance. It is not the motif of the novelist to bring about reformation in the society but the exposition of the evil facets of Hindu society and culture, which discriminates between man and man.

From Dharma to Constitution:
There is a notable change in the trend among the texts by the non-Dalit writers regarding the belief system of their protagonists. It is found that these writers have shifted from Manu’s laws to the Constitution of India as the line marking difference between justice and injustice. Anand, Premchand and Mistry depict the three different ideologies governing the contemporary social order, respectively – Manu Smurti, Jamindari and the Constitutional rule of law and order. In Untouchable Bakha cannot escape out of the curse of untouchability. In Godaan, despite trying everything in his might, Hori is unable to escape from the clutches from the moneylenders of the village, obviously belonging to the upper castes. In A Fine Balance Mistry projects several constitutional measures to abolish untouchability. Thus, there is a notable line of development in reflecting Dalit consciousness among the non-Dalit writers selected for the study.

Gandhian Ideology:
Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation has been icon of Indian through the freedom struggle movement to the present. Almost every writer in India writing about Indian
society refers to Gandhi directly or indirectly. All the three writers under study have significant references to Gandhian ideology. Many critics say that the main difference between Dalit and non-Dalit writer is that most of the non-Dalit writers suggest the Gandhian path as one means of wiping out the practice of untouchability, while Dalit writers on the whole are against the Gandhian ideology. However, the present study firmly rejects this hypothesis and concludes that in all the three texts protagonists never find themselves at peace with the Gandhian ideology as the ultimate solution to their problems.

**Raconteurs of Social Realism:**
These texts not only reflected the consciousness of their times; they also moved towards an outlook of remoulding this consciousness and giving it a new direction. The interpretation of their work as the reflector of the ethos of their times finds support in their attempt to express and affirm through their writing the anti-colonial consciousness and aspirations of Gandhi era. These writers go beyond the limits of the era insofar as transcends in their writings the constraints on perception of social reality imposed by the Gandhian social philosophy. Having put into the centre of Indian writing the theme of the Indian village in response to the ethos of the Gandhian era, these writers did not allow themselves to become a chronicler of backwardness. Nor did Gandhi’s non-class concepts of village community, of ‘change of heart’, on the part of propertied classes and of ‘reformed’ and ‘good landlords’ as trustees of the peasants could be permanent ingredients of their social outlook. Thus, it is evident that more than being the carriers of a specific ideology, these writers are the raconteurs of the Indian social realism.

**Scope for Raising Wider Dalit Consciousness:**
These novelists could have concentrated more on some of the following crucial issues in maintaining social equality:

1. Assurance of the Constitutional Fundamental Rights
2. Preservation of Human Rights
3. Basic Education for the Dalits:
4. Means of Production and Economic Liberation:
5. Skill Enhancements and Professionalism:
6. Migration to Bigger Places and Cities
7. Changing the age-old Traditional Professions etc.

**Limitations of Non-Dalit Writers:**
It found that non-Dalit writers are selective in their portrayal of the Dalit situation. For instance, upper caste Hindu writers have not taken into account several important issues. Even as late as the early part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the untouchables had no access to public facilities such as well, rivers, roads, schools, markets. The most perverted practice of untouchability was that which, at one time, compelled the untouchables to tie an earthen pot around their neck so that their sputum’s should not fall to the earth and pollute others. Another practice was the compulsion to tie a broom behind them so that their footprints, would be erased before others set their eyes on them.

**Lack of Immediate Solutions to the Problems of Dalits:**
Many novelists have discussed social problems and issues with Dalit consciousness. These novelists are the realistic in their outlook and they are the true representative of their age and social milieu. Their sincere and faithful rendering of life, society and its members, in unbiased manner, bring back memory of the experiences that individual suffered in the country. It is not the motif of these novelists to bring about reformation in the society but the exposition of the evil facets of Hindu society and culture, which discriminate between man and man. However, none of these novels and the non-Dalit writers has shown any direct path to the resolution or the problems of Dalits. Therefore, they never meet the expectations of the Dalit critics.

**Negligence towards Dr. Ambedkar’s Movement:**
Anand is acknowledged pioneer of Dalit consciousness in Indian English Literature. Though his contribution is valuable, his portrayal of Bakha is in keeping with the upper caste view of the caste system. Anand’s novel *Untouchable* fails at many levels. Anand portrays Bakha as nothing but an upper caste mouthpiece. He failed to take note of the Dalit stalwart of the time, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Dalit organizations during the nationalist movement crowned Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as their leader. Anand’s glaring omission of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and crowning Mahatma Gandhi as the saviour of the untouchables, slots the novel into yet another attempt by the upper caste in conveniently hegemonising and taking charge of the Dalit subject.
There were more untouchable leaders like Jyotiba Phule, E.V. Ramaswamy and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who led many agitations and even laid down their lives for the sake of untouchables’ emancipation, but Anand does not even refer to them.

**Conclusion:**

Through their great works these Non-Dalit writers have presented the painful and realistic picture of the so-called Indian society on the best possible scale. They have played quite significant role in sensitising the nation on the issue of Dalit consciousness. Now it is left with the people to think how they can change the prevailing system, and how they can make India more progressive.

Thus, it is concluded that Dalit consciousness is the foremost and chief essence in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Munshi Premchand and Rohinton Mistry. After a close study of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Munshi Premchand and Rohinton Mistry, the researcher has found that they have written for the betterment of society, particularly for the Dalits, suppressed untouchables and all the sufferers exploited by the Savarnas, i.e. the higher castes. They have each done their best to present social reality in their novels through the power of imagination. It is also observed that these writers have not only exerted their sympathy towards Dalits but also have been empathetic, in their perspective, towards the latter.