CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Life becomes worth living and enjoyable when it is free of irritants and abusing elements. It is but natural to expect life to be peaceful. Love and Kindness can secure durable peace in human life but the construction of an ideal society is not possible without allowing equal rights to all. No one should try to dominate the other by exploiting one’s caste or poverty. The awareness that all are equal in the eye of divine law can ensure happy co-existence.

Economic disadvantage of one man’s life should not be the other man’s passport to suppress and torture the disadvantageous. No one section of a society should live in perpetual panic of the other. Women should enjoy equal rights so that they will acquire empowerment which will be an effective deterrent against any kind of gender abuse.

In Chapters II, III and IV is exposed man’s inhuman treatment of man in the name of divisions in birth, class and religion, respectively. Both Anand and Imayam feel that like the animals in the forest, preying upon each other, man is also preying upon man. These authors write with an irresistible nerve, zeal and desire to change this social condition. They know very well that it cannot be done with the help of philosophy or preaching alone. So they choose art as a medium to reach human minds and human hearts more easily.

Social consciousness is what makes a person a writer. It makes him not only perceive but also feel the social evils existing in the world. He, who just feels the social ills and sympathizes with the people who suffer due to them, remains just a
person with a kind heart and fellow feeling. But he, who not only worries about
the ills but records them in his writing with an intention of making the existence of
such evils known to others, that may induce them to think of possible remedies for
such ills, is a constructive artist. Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam belong to the
second category.

Mulk Raj Anand and Imayam reveal in their novels social evils that arise on
account of one’s birth, economic condition, class division, and religious
fanaticism. They both examine such fundamental issues in their novels, and their
novels throw light on many complex aspects of life, which make the readers
ruminate about them and wish for their eradication. Their outlook as well as
understanding of society is almost identical, and their works contain their plea for
human justice and equality. They have a missionary zeal of viewing the society in
a perspective which offers scope for making full use of the inherent talents of
people. Both aim at uplifting the standard of life both socially and economically.

The foremost problem treated by Anand and Imayam in their novels is that of
the socially oppressed. Anand makes the age-old injustice meted out to a class of
people within traditional Hindu society as the central theme of Untouchable. The
choice of the theme itself shows the courage of the author because to take a
sweeper as the hero of his novel is a revolutionary departure. Indian fiction was at
that time a fiction about middle and high classes, and even when low class life
entered into it, no writer could condescend so low as to write about sweepers
cleaning human excrements.

Bakha is portrayed as a representative of the socially underprivileged
exemplifying all such Hindu untouchables everywhere. Right from the morning,
Bakha suffers a series of insults at the hands of the caste Hindus. He sets out for work even before dawn at the rude command of his father. Cigarettes are flung at him as a bone is flung at an insistent sniffing dog; jilebis are thrown at him like a cricket ball; and the papery chapattis fall on him from the third floor. Then comes the fateful incident of ‘touching’ followed by bitter abuse for daring to rest on the platform of a caste Hindu’s house. And in the evening Bakha and his sister become the victims of undeserved wrath at the hands of the caste Hindus.

Wherever Bakha goes, he is greeted with such words as ‘defiled’ and ‘polluted’. The privileged caste Hindus declare dictatorially that the low-born should be wiped out from the surface of the earth and there should be no trace of the existence of such socially untouchable people. Bakha makes an agonized search in himself as to what he has done to deserve all these unwarranted affronts. Bakha’s anguish is heart-rending and there should be no trace of existence of such socially untouchable people. What this story confronts the reader with is a paradox, marking the protestation and practice of untouchability, and this heightens its significance. The issues raised by it involve a complexity of emotions and a multiplicity of motives which cannot be resolved.

Anand feels that such a social division can never be tolerated as it causes untold suffering to the underprivileged. He chooses Bakha as the hero of the novel Untouchable so that the young boy’s zest for life and essential goodness may highlight his undeserving despair and suffering due to society’s cavalier and inhuman treatment of him. Bakha suffers innumerable humiliations on account of caste conservatism. His misery as a low-born forces him to search for a remedy, which, according to him, lies in adoption of Christianity or Gandhism or
Mechanization. The first two are rejected by Anand in favour of the third. He rejects Christianity because it provides only partial solution to the problem and no immediate way out. Gandhi’s emphasis on dignity of labour and cleanliness impresses Bakha very much. He, however, is thrilled with joy at the very idea of the introduction of machines.

It is true that the mechanization solves the problem of untouchability to some extent, but it invariably brings along with it sharper demarcation between the rich and the poor. In Coolie Anand describes the machines in terms of dehumanizing images, such as the deafening bellowing of the rough motor-horns, the tan-tan of tramway bells, and the angry yells of phaeton drivers. The factory in Bombay is no better than hell. In Bombay, where the use of machinery is in full swing, the coolies are considered only useful nonhuman machines. Munoo’s tunic gets torn to pieces and his right arm is bruised due to his ignorantly touching the machine’s belt. Yet, the benefits of machinery cannot be ignored. Anand feels that machine is good and powerful in itself but men should become masters instead of becoming mechanical slaves to machines.

Bhikhu of The Road, who believes in co-operative enterprise as a means of deliverance, collects his people to build a road that will link their village to the near by town. But he is shocked when the high-born people object to the construction for reasons that the road should not be constructed by the chamars [Leather workers] and that it may give economic freedom to them with better wages.

Bhikhu places great faith in the machines, but after the accomplishment of his endeavour in the construction of the road, when he is hit by Sajnu, he is made to
feel that he is after all a chamar, a low-born. He leaves home and walks along the newly-built road towards Delhi, hoping that the capital city with its cosmopolitan atmosphere would take him only as a human being and not as a chamar.

A return to the same theme a generation later in The Road does not, however, indicate a return to the sources of creativity. When a writer returns, years later, to a theme which has been successfully handled earlier in his career, he is not the same writer that he was, nor is his theme exactly the same. Much water has flowed down the Jamuna since Anand wrote Untouchable. Independence has now been achieved and untouchability legally abolished. In big cities, caste-barriers are breaking down or have at least lost their edge.

We are kept in the dark as to what is in store for Bhiku in Delhi. But according to Bhiku, Delhi is an ideal world that entertains no caste distinctions. Bakha in Untouchable returns home in order to announce the possible hope offered by the modern machine. On the contrary, Bhikhu, the mentor of his class fails to think in terms of his community or village. In a fit of despair, he seeks salvation for himself and escapes into modernity. The road to Delhi, therefore, appears to be the road to freedom from caste oppression. Whether Delhi could fulfil his expectations or not is not what matters because the significance resides in its being able to kindle hope in him. The road that he traverses may not lead him anywhere but so long as the road is there, there is hope for him.

Imayam, on the other hand, suggests a different solution. He explains, through Arokkyam, a washerwoman called in Tamil ‘vannathi’ in Beasts of Burden, that a low-born must be a self-conscious individual. Arokkyam, the main character in the novel, never feels that she is a low-born and when others treat her so, she does not
care for it. She never gives up her self-respect and dignity. So, according to Imayam, apart from external agencies, there should be a profound necessity for inner change, which should be imperative on the part of the low-born. They should try to reform themselves by shedding off such demerits for attaining intellectual and spiritual transformation. These low caste people are looked down upon by upper caste people, who do not spare eyeing the women with lustful looks.

Arokkyam, in Imayam’s Beast of Burden, works hard to keep her family fed and united. She longs for a change in the existing order of the society, which according to her is the reason for her family’s poverty. They are the members of the washer man community and at the mercy of the villagers for clothing, shelter and food. All washer man families had a traditional employer who belonged to the opulent higher communities.

The underprivileged people are looked down upon by the upper caste people, who show no mercy or humanity towards the untouchables and try to wield what little power their superiority offers over these people. They look at the women with lustful eyes. For example, Mary is teased by Chadayan, the Kothukkaaran, and she wails that they want to take a nip at her, not even caring that she is a low-born. In the eyes of the high-born the caste of the low-born is not a bar to have a way with the woman of low caste.

Arokkyam’s children are not able to accept the demeaning bahaviour exhibited by the people towards them. Her daughter-in-law Sahayam, a woman from Chinnasalem is of a different outlook, having had a little education and the city breeding. She hates the fact that the people of their place do not even call her by name. They always address her as Vannaati woman. Peter too hates to collect food
from the colony inhabitants and wishes they were coolies. When Mary expresses her wish to move away to a better place, Arokkyam lays bare the futility of going to any place. She is of the view that wherever they go they would always be treated meanly and inhumanly because of their low professional status.

The novel is constructed between two journeys: a pilgrimage of hope at the beginning, and a routine trip to the washing pool in drudgery and despair at the end. A change is important to the novel whose primary theme is Arokkyam’s dilemma within changing systems of belief about the self and society. First, there is the gradual commercialization of traditionally caste-linked functions. The village acquires a regular tailor and a laundryman, both of whom serve not only the village people, but the colony dwellers too, taking away the custom from the traditional washer men.

At the same time there is loss to their main livelihood. There is a steady decline and breakdown in the old caste prerogatives. The amount of grain allocated to Arokkyam and Savuri by right at each household dwindles to no more than a single scant tray; the head and intestines of the goat sacrificed in festivals and rituals which have been traditionally the vannaan’s by right has now come to be auctioned; and even the payment for all ritual services gets reduced gradually.

Arokkyam has one main hope in coping with change—that the church will intervene in support of the old order, and appeal to the elders of the colony to keep up their caste obligations to their washer man, but this hope also fails her.

Class has certainly proved to be more divisive than caste in Indian society because it is able to affect every section of the society at the economic, cultural and political levels. Despite the fact that India happens to be one of the world’s largest
democracies of liberal ideals, it is an unfortunate but irrefutable fact that Indian society is divided sharply into two classes - the rich and the poor.

*Coolie*, in which class division is treated in detail, is the story of Munoo, an orphaned village-boy from the Kangra hills, who sets out in search of a livelihood. His several roles include working as a domestic servant in an urban middle-class family in Sham Nagar, as a worker in a pickle-factory and a coolie in the bazaar in Daulatpur, as a labourer in a cotton mill in Bombay, and as a rickshaw-puller in an Anglo-Indian household in Simla – a job, the rigours of which bring on swift consumption and an untimely death.

The central theme of the novel is the tragic denial of the fundamental right to happiness to a simple, landless peasant. The terrible destiny of being a victim of exploitation is indeed Munoo’s lot. Munoo’s landlord had seized his father’s five acres of land because the interest on the mortgaged land had not been paid due to bad harvest. His father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment leaving his mother a penniless beggar.

Poverty compels Munoo to be apprenticed to life at the age of fourteen. His expectations are extremely modest. His only prayer is to live, to know and to work. His first encounter with the urban world is in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. Before he runs away from Sham Nagar, Munoo has learnt his first lessons in the harsh school of the modern urban world. He is destined to be a slave for his lifetime, doing all of jobs of a servant. But the Sham Nagar episode is only the first act in the tragic drama of exploitation. It is his stint at the Sir George White Cotton Mills in Bombay that exposes Munoo to the full force of the modern capitalistic machine.
The final act of Munoo’s tragedy commences when Mrs. Mainwaring’s car knocks him down. The lady takes him to Simla, as she wants a servant. A deep-rooted inferiority complex makes him accept without murmur his lot as a rickshaw-puller, and as a result of which he dies of consumption at the age of sixteen. This way the theme of the exploitation of the underprivileged is presented in depth in *Coolie*, and the picture is drawn with great vividness.

In the second chronicle of coolie-life – *Two Leaves and a Bud* - the locale shifts to the tea-plantations of Assam, and the adolescent protagonist in *Coolie* is replaced by a landless peasant family from a Punjab village. Anand had studied the problem of the pre-Independent Indian peasant in depth.

Gangu loses his ancestral property owing to debt and is compelled in old age to indenture himself, his wife and his two children as labourers in a British-owned tea-plantation in far-off Assam. Little does he know then that a far worse condition awaits him. After being fleeced by the Indian money-lender, Seth Badri Dass, he is now going to be thoroughly exploited by the whole capitalistic machinery.

*Two Leaves and a Bud* presents the theme of the exploitation of the underprivileged with far greater concentration than *Coolie*. In the earlier novel, the scene shifts from one stratum of society to another, while in the later work, the entire tragedy is unfolded against the background of the tea-plantation which is a microcosm in itself, a world in which British officials and their Indian subordinates on the one hand and the indentured coolies on the other are ranged in two separate camps of the exploiters and the exploited. As a result of this division class problem looms larger in this novel than it did in Munoo’s story.
Gangu is a victim of capitalism. As in *Coolie*, here also the capitalistic forces are headed by the British, thereby bringing in the ancillary theme of race-relationships. The average British thereby attitude to the Indians is well represented by Croft-Coke and Reggie Hunt. For them the Indian labourer is just a piece of thing, a sub-human being with no rights, whose only utility is to be a serviceable tool in the vast machine of the plantation.

Unlike Munoo, Gangu is presented in depth. He is one of the most complete and memorable portraits of Indian peasants in Anand’s fiction. He presents all those bafflingly contrasting strains which marked the pre-independent Indian peasant character. The coolies are supposed to be sub-human. They are forced to toil themselves from dawn to death. Social benefits and health care provisions were denied to them, be it either old age pension, grants for children or health insurance. In short, they are treated worse than animals.

What cruelty class division may create is explained by Imayam in his novels *Arumugam* and *Beasts of Burden* also.

In *Arumugam*, after the death of her husband Raman, Dhanabhagyam has to make both ends meet. She is given a job at Oroville Farm where the supervisor Jerry Albert was always leering at her. Dhanabhagyam, due to her poverty, has nothing to do, but to yield to him. Further, she has to take care of her son’s education that would cost money. To make both ends meet she takes up ‘Mrs. Warren’s profession’. It is to be noted that it is this way of her life that leads to the death of her father and the disappearance of her son Arumugam.

The manager of Oraville farm seduces Vasantha; the wrong doer goes unpunished. But the helpless poor worker is forced to flee the place. Imayam also
observes how a poor woman like Chinnaponnu has to indulge in prostitution for her livelihood. After getting his lustful urge gratified one moneyed rogue goes to the extent of killing Chinnaponnu and her murder just goes untried simply because she belongs to the poor sect. The poor people bemoan their way of life but there is no way out. The helplessness of the poor is very tellingly punctuated by incidents of this kind.

After Arumugam’s running away from his mother, both he and Dhanabhagyam lead a very miserable and pitiable life. Arumugam is forced to live in the midst of prostitutes, pulling rickshaws and doing odd errands for his livelihood. His mother, tormented by her own immoral act starts roaming from place to place in search of Arumugam. She finds her son but her conscience does not allow her to be united to Arumugam and she hangs herself. All these people Dhanabhagyam, Arumugam, Vasantha and Bhagyam, thus, suffer on account of the exploitation of the rich.

In Beasts of Burden also, we see Arokkyam and her family, especially Mary, suffering a lot in the hands of the rich. The tragedy occurs not because they belong to a low caste washerman family, but mostly because they belong to the poor class. For, Mary was seduced by Chadayan who also belongs to the low caste. They were not able to do anything about that because Chadayan, though low by birth, belongs to the rich class. So, what makes Mary’s life questionable and miserable is not the caste system but the class division.

Paradoxically, in India the rich get richer and the poor poorer. To some extent, the caste system plays a major role in causing the rich-poor chasm. The upper castes are the landowning or factory-owning community and the lower caste happen to be the workers in these fields. The growing economic uncertainty in the
nation camouflaged the caste divisions and gives rise to identification of people through their financial situation. The upper castes specifically *Brahmins* and *Ksatriyas* evolve into affluent class of modern India, while the *Sudras* and untouchables, owing to the menial nature of profession and the oppression by the upper castes, become the impoverished lower class. The havoc created by class system is much more than the havoc caused by caste system.

In the path of salvation, people should shed their fatalistic attitude completely. A keen awareness of their predicament should whet their questioning spirit, which in turn should enable them to revolt against the oppressive forces of society. People should get united and strive for their betterment. Solidarity and continued efforts alone would fetch them the desired result.

Anand and Imayam present the problems of the poor and the downtrodden with sympathy in their novels. Their allegiance with the cause of suffering humanity is obvious. They both agree that life on earth is full of suffering and struggle for the poor and the downtrodden. Their study of life reveals that poverty, suffering and misery are the result of caste and class consciousness of the rich. They do not recommend any aggressive mass action for changing the order of life, but suggest a social transformation as a remedy through the mental outlook of both rich and the poor. It is evident that they both belong to the new order of life.

Rejection of religion forms an important phase in the life and literary career of Anand and Imayam. Religion does not seem to have served its purpose. The world teems with people whose promises and predictions are full of hypocrisy, sham and corruption. There is not any one single novel in which Anand has religion as the
central theme but his sarcastic references to its present state, its glittering appearance, and its deceiving mask are found in almost all his novels.

Anand is enraged that the religious men should entrap the superstitious folk by exploiting their gullibility. He is convinced that the institution of religion is positively detrimental to human progress as it creates either passivity or narrow orthodoxy and fanaticism in man.

Anand observes in an article *Why I Write?* that there are not two worlds, heaven above and the earth below. There is no ‘spiritual’ world separate from the ‘material’ world. The soul is body and the body is soul.

Pandit Kali Nath of *Untouchable* is a man with a congenital moral weakness, which gets the better of him as he lacks the real strength of a spiritual person. His life is one of endless recitation of sacred verses. He has no spiritual certitude to enable him to ward off temptation. His cowardly attempt to molest Sohini appears all the more offensive because of his accusing her and her brother of defiling him at the temple when the attempt is foiled. This brings into sharp focus the hypocrisy and the double standards of religious men. The innocent Bakha and Sohini become victims of the conventional moral code.

In *The Road* Pandit Suraj Mani is also guilty of immorality since he makes his fortune by exploiting the ignorance of the people. The people are made to part with their money for the performance of special prayers and ceremonies which are believed to be efficacious in ensuring their well-being, spiritual and otherwise. He tries to keep up his prestige as a priest by saying that if he, the votary of God, is disturbed, the wrath of the gods is sure to descend on the offenders. His
lasciviousness is seen in his eagerness to expose his body, while bathing, to the women at the well.

Mahant Nandgir, who figures in *The Village*, is a more depraved and animated Sikh version of a master sinner, secure in his saffron robes. Nandgir preaches that people should not envy their superiors, lest the order of society be upset. He always sees the mote in others’ eyes but seldom the beam in his own. Under the pretext of safeguarding religious rites, he disgraces Lalu, the non-conformist. Though he pretends to offer spiritual solace to people, he is, in reality, a parasite.

Lalu’s defiant hair-cut causes an uproar and consternation in the village. The Mahant and his followers raise a hysterical wail. This reveals the orthodoxy of the Sikhs. Lalu, the protagonist, is enraged at this and calls the hypocritical priests as charlatans, lechers and fornicators.

As the Hindu priests belong to the Brahmin caste, Anand directs his satirical attack on the Brahmin community as a class and a caste. Anand dramatizes this theme in his short novel *Death of a Hero*. This novel also presents the last phase of the hero’s life. Maqbool, a member of the Kashmir National Movement, is sent to rally the people of Baramula which is in the grip of the Muslim fanatics. In this fatal mission he faces death at the hands of the invaders. Should faith be placed in Kashmir first or religion first is the moot point around which the novel revolves. This controversy leads to bitterness and bloodshed. The Pakistani bigots do not hesitate to resort to meanness or brutality of any kind. They begin to massacre the Kashmiri Muslim brethren without even conducting a parley when they suspect them to be loyal to India. Maqbool, who takes up the cause of the Nationalists, is
dubbed as an infidel and those who profess to uphold the cause of religion are found indulging in sacrilegious deeds.

Maqbool, a Muslim by birth, though not in spirit, serves as Anand’s mouthpiece. He questions the very existence of God, and if at all He exists, His benevolence. He is convinced that this sudden descent of murder on this land was a contrived brutality to cow people down to submit, and resisting it was the only virtue and was not an act of God.

Anand asks in *Apology for Heroism* why God does not help human beings to achieve Goodness and understanding by tilting of the scales in favour of potential good rather than keep all the potential evil for the world to shoulder. The writer questions why He should remain a bloodless, pure, disinterested Consciousness outside Time.

Maqbool’s ideas rejecting the existence of God and accepting only that of man seem to echo Anand’s own conviction. He says that there was no God and there were only men, life and death fulfilling their own purpose through cross purposes, as in the play.

Anand reiterates in his novels that a corrupt and absurd religion formed in devotion to a non-existent God cannot provide any solace to man’s misery. In fact it creates fresh problems for him in various ways. He has great belief in the essential goodness of man. According to him, those who have scant respect for religion, but do more good to their fellowmen are more important than all self-styled religious folk.

Anand in his novels is not so much concerned with the metaphysical question of good and evil as with the dilemmas, the ambiguities and the doubts religion
creates. He is not concerned with the so-called means to salvation or any such idealistic aspiration either. He feels that if religion has to exist, it has to provide a kind of liberating experience to its ardent practitioners.

However, man’s relationship with God is purely a personal experience, something that needs no external demonstration. No church, no temple is necessary. One can find it in his heart in the secrecy of his most intimate feeling. Religion should be a unifying force and not a divisive factor. Religious tolerance is an essential requisite for the prevalence of peace and prosperity. To promote this, man must have a generosity of heart. The best solution that Anand seems to suggest is to do right and to build a new life on this earth. This healthy attitude sets aside man’s idle thoughts about heaven and places the hope of salvation in man’s capacity for goodness, for there can be no better world without better men.

Anand’s attack on man is double-pronged. While accusing the privileged people of their callousness, he also condemns the abject acceptance of the inhuman treatment by the oppressed. Anand is infuriated with the folk because, once they are passively resigned, there is very little scope of salvation for them.

In Death of a Hero there is a graphic description of the various atrocities that result from religious chauvinism. Anand is so much obsessed with this problem that there is hardly any novel which lacks a contemptuous reference to God or religion. Anand’s main objection is to the priests who perform both rituals and atrocities. It appears as if he has vowed revenge against faith in God because he never lets slip an opportunity to wage a war against these.

Imayam’s Beasts of Burden begins with a pilgrimage to the church of St. Anthony undertaken by its main character Arokkyam along with her husband
Savuri, elder son Josep and younger son Peter in order to get a solution from the priest for Arokkyam’s dilemma regarding the social changes that have taken place in the village, which add to their poverty and despair. The priest is away; therefore the family members take shelter in the shade of a neem tree. When the priest arrives, Arokkyam goes inside the church where the Saamiyar, so called by Arokkyam, is seen swinging from one side to another in his swivel chair. She narrates everything in a complaining tone about her dwindled payment for specific pieces of work done by her and her family members to the villagers and the decreased annual allowances. The priest pays little attention to her words; instead he enjoys smoking cigarette and blowing out the smoke that forms sets of rings. Arokkyam pleads to him to come to their village and advise the villagers to give Arokkyam’s family higher wages. She firmly believes that if he does so, their difficulties and distress would come to an end. However, the priest says with great indifference that she should often visit the church in order to get the mercy of God and he adds she has come only for the first time since the festival. This incident shows the sham of religious people and also their callous indifference to the miseries of the poor.

When the priest offers to educate Peter, the family is against it and Peter runs away from home. As washermen, they are outcastes and their belonging to Christianity in no way has changed that fact. Thus the efforts of the religious heads to convert the outcastes their religious faith through financial assistance prove to be futile. While declining the priest’s offer, Arokkyam proves herself to be a woman of strong personality. But she reconciles herself, though not uncomplainingly, to her lot without losing her hopes for better days.
Arokkyam’s problems are thus manifold. While she fights for her rights she fails to understand her real rights as a human being in a society full of oppression and segregation in the name of caste.

Religion is a factor which compounds Arokkyam’s disillusion. She wonders how and why they became Christians, and what benefits had the conversion brought to them. Had they remained Hindus they would have had at least less miseries and more relations.

Imayam’s Sedal deals mainly with the misfortune caused to the heroine due to one of the religious customs that exist in many parts of India. The story is based on a ritual called pottukattu. The main character Sedal was forced into the practice even when she was very young, in order to appease Goddess Selliamman for getting rains. Since they belong to a lower caste her parents are not able to do anything about that. She is separated from her family and forced to live in a hut with a harassing old woman. Even this does not last long because the old woman dies and Sedal is left alone.

What is more shocking to Sedal is that she is not permitted into any village elder’s house when she attains puberty. This forces her to think of even suicide. Fortunately, a distant relative Ponnan takes her with him. She plays an active part in Ponnan’s troupe of dancers and starts performing in village temples.

Again Sedal is struck with misfortune when Ponnan also dies. Without knowing what to do she goes back to her village thinking that the village people would help her. But the village elders only find fault with her for abandoning their own village and performing for other villages. She is again left lonely to lead a miserable life. Another pottukattu girl called Panchali meets Sedal and it is she who makes the
latter realize their true status in the society. Panchali is in deathbed and she wants Sedal to give life to her troupe of dancers, who solely depend on Panchali for their livelihood and for whom she has been so far giving training. From then on, Sedal spends her life going on with this troupe of young boys to perform in many places.

Had Sedal stayed with her parents, however poor they might be, she would have found a life partner and thus lived a normal life of a housewife with her husband and children, like other women. But now it becomes a clear blind religious ritual that has spoilt the life of Sedal who would have had a peaceful or at least a less miserable life, had she been left to live with her parents instead of being made a prey to the practice of pottukattu.

The rejection of religion forms an important phase in the life and literary career of Anand and Imayam. In Beasts of Burden and Sedal of Imayam and in almost all the novels of Anand there is a marked non-religious attitude. But they have an abundant faith in man.

In the early years of old traditions, it is the belief in God that inspired the formation of all values of life, and such a tendency of judging everything in the name of religion is discarded by both Anand and Imayam. They want to create a new way of reviewing life through non-religious consciousness. For both, the human relationship is of utmost importance and everything else, including religion, should be considered less important. Religion is for the sake of man, and if it does not ensure the well-being of humanity, its necessity should be re-examined. Man is born to love other human beings, and to offend or wound any one, either physically, mentally or spiritually, is an instance of human betrayal of trust.
Things, to a great extent, will solve themselves if the priests serve humanity instead of exploiting the innocence of the common people, for service to humanity is what is stressed most in almost all religions. Common people should not let themselves be gulled by religious people in the name of some false and blind rituals, because if they are passively resigned, there is very little scope of salvation for them.

Anand and Imayam deal with many social factors that damage society such as caste system in its worst form, unequal distribution of wealth that leads to the rich-poor divide, misuse of religion and many other man-made miseries. It cannot be denied that there is much advancement in many fields, especially after independence. India, once deemed as a third-world nation, is now emerging as one of the superpowers of the world. There is much progress in the fields like education and technology, but there are also many adverse issues as mentioned above, which still continue to exist in India. Education aims at creating a society free from denigrating people based on caste, class and creed. Yet centuries of deeply entrenched system in the fabric of society makes it difficult to accept changes.

Education and technology do lift the low people, but they also encourage the upper-class authority, because education and technology are developed and enjoyed by only such people. The choices of the lowly, the poor and the ignorant are limited, because even if they choose some profession outside the birth and status by educating themselves, it is rarely accepted by the society. The main reason for this is that they still suffer from discrimination.
The social and economic systems invariably make the high-born and high ranking people superior while the low-born people and the poor coolies are at the mercy of socially and economically upper class people. Such a thing will exist so long as the poor and the lowly, like machines, do the works dictated by the upper class and high-born, without trying to lift themselves above their present condition and status. The urge to attain a better and happier life should come mostly from them, and not from outside.

In India the social pattern is structured in such a way that it suppresses the individual in the interest of society at large and there is little scope for the cultivation of an integrated human personality. The reformers and the people with a keen sense of social consciousness must help an individual to free himself from its own conditioning influence and educate him to be a self reliant being.

The works selected for analysis in this thesis are set in a wide background of pre and post-independent India extending even to the present day. Yet the issues plaguing the protagonists and various characters are almost the same even now. The caste and class woes, as well as those caused in the name of religion seem to be the issues harassing them and it makes them do something as writers to restructure society.

Societal restructuring is not possible by mere movements and upheavals; it has to be brought about first in the minds of individual and there lies the greatest task for humanity ahead. Anand exhorts the poor and the low born to stand up for their rights and for justice and he wants them to be the people they are meant to be.

Anand and Imayam have dealt in great detail human problems, which are social, economic and religious. They do not try to mystify the reader but go
straight to the core of the subject and suggest solutions in simple terms. They have presented social evils in myriad manifestations and have covered many different layers of human experience in their novels. Their close associations with the suffering folk have given their novels an intimate quality of felt life. Their passionate recording of the events confirms the authenticity of their fiction. Their commitment to the betterment of humanity is deep and abiding. Their main intention is to interpret the reality of life, and not merely to reproduce it in their works, and this they do in order to cause social action for the transformation of reality in the proper direction by transforming the very attitudes – mental and spiritual – of the people and also the ways of human life.

Of these two writers, Imayam is more moderate while Anand has gone to the level of being called a propagandist in his enthusiasm to be grasped soon by the people in their hearts. But Anand cares least about others who call him so, because he believes that all art is propaganda. What is to be applauded is his strong plea for a dire necessity to change the social condition urgently, in which he is not for any compromise.

Though Imayam’s plea is not so strong and aggressive as that of Anand, the graphic descriptions and vehement expressions of instances of man’s inhumanity to man on account of caste, class and creed are common to both, and they are intended as a message to reach the hearts of men immediately. That is why their words come not only from their intellect but also from the heart.

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that even today the problems discussed by Anand and Imayam in their novels are prevalent in our complex modern life. Both Anand and Imayam are of the opinion that the social evils in
India are so deeply rooted in the soil that a complete revolution, physical, psychological and religious is necessary for reformation. People, both men and women, should collectively come forward with physical and mental readiness and preparedness to change the existing social order and establish a new, better order.

Anand and Imayam have probed deep into crucial human problems and have artistically interpreted them in their novels for the people to come to know of them and think of the ways and means of eradicating them.

The issues dealt in the works of both Anand and Imayam are by and large of the same nature. The protagonists Munoo and Gangu as well as Arumugam, Dhanabhagym and Vasantha are all the victims of social order and economy. They are mercilessly exploited by the rich people. They struggle financially owing to the woes of class system that never leaves them in one way or the other, and they are exposed to suffering and left hurt and disillusioned. Both Anand and Imayam project in their novels how money plays a vital role in deciding human characters and human relationships too. It can make masters or monsters of men.

Human society is a community of persons. A community of persons becomes fraternal when the members of the community are bound by identity of sentiments and love. It is love that builds a communion of persons. A charitable and compassionate behaviour is a consecration of human dignity. Any violation of this principle is a social imbalance. Love for others should be the life blood of human community. Imayam, and Mulk Raj Anand have a compassionate view of society and their writings show the enormous compassion they have for the downtrodden and the socially disabled. Their aim is unmistakably to promote the well being of the socially disadvantageous. Their indubitable and laudable humanism leads to
their passionate social consciousness. Their ardent humanism and the resultant keen social awareness inspired them into writing the travails of the underprivileged and also to sensitise the society to the urgent need of these people to lead an exploitation-free life with dignity.