This study aims at investigating the fictional writings of Mulk Raj Anand and Chinua Achebe from the perspective of social justice and liberation. While Anand’s oeuvre is marked by a deep-seated desire to portray and probe the hitherto unsung plight and predicament of India’s poor and marginalised people, Achebe’s relentless logic and artistic fervour succeed in reconstructing the glorious past of the Igbo tribe and in indicting the havoc, psychological, social and cultural, wrought by the colonial confrontation. The characters that people the novels of Anand are the underdogs, the untouchables, the unlettered and the unwanted categories, who would never have found an entry into the world of literature, but for Anand’s pioneering and bold initiative. Achebe has filled his fictive canvas with men and women, drawn from the Igbo heartland enacting the unheroic but warm, homely, intense and moving drama of life, in its pristine purity and raw innocence.

Both these writers are wedded to their respective national history, culture and people as it emerges from their novels. They not only love and respect their people and their traditions, but are irrevocably committed to the task of educating and conscientizing them and the Europeans, about the rich and colourful cultural heritage and achievements that their respective country can boast of.
In other words, Anand and Achebe are both committed writers. Their novels are classified either as the political novel or as the novel of dissent or protest. Achebe has, time and again, confessed that he is a political writer and that he believes in the politics of universal human communication and mutual respect. Anand is a humanist and his humanism manifests itself in a realistic representation of the inhumanity of the situation of the oppressed masses, suffering various types of disability, discrimination and alienation.

Anand’s humanism was the natural outcome of the impact of his childhood experiences and observations, chastened and purified in the crucible of his systematic and intense study of the different systems of Western thought and philosophy. It is a synthesis of a sort, which, in due course, becomes a unified perception of the Protagorean dictum, "Man is the measure of all things". The simmering anger and impatience that one often senses in his works, are the product or offshoot of his passion for social justice and human dignity.

It should nonetheless be added that Anand’s commitment as a writer has been a target of scathing attack from several literary quarters. Critics have been haggling over the question of Anand’s writings being pure agitprop or propaganda. Anand has been charged with being propagandist in his writings. Moreover he has been branded as a Marxist, leftist and a socialist because
of the predominance of social themes, stories and plots of his novels.

While Anand admits that he has studied Marxism systematically, he never professes himself to be a Marxist. He may have been influenced by Marxian thinking and approaches to social reality. His rejection of, and disaffection with religion, creed and cult and his scant respect for superstitions and irrational beliefs and fears are certainly expressive of his Marxian sympathies. Nevertheless it may be unfair to label him as a Marxist. His philosophy of life and approach to art are still 'sui generis'. The societal analysis that undergirds his fictional portrayals may have been inspired or dictated by Marxism. His anti-capitalistic sensibility as expressed in novel after novel is a sure sign of his socialistic persuasion.

It is interesting to note that influences of Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru are discernible in Anand’s writings. Thus his concern for the poor and the untouchables is not imported from the West, but the byproduct of his association with Gandhi and learning in the school of Gandhism. His socialist and modernist conception of a new India is without doubt an echo of Nehru’s political philosophy. However, Anand reminds one of Rabindranath Tagore when he touches the depths of the human spirit and pathos in some of his novels and engages in probing motives and deeper sensibilities of characters.
Achebe resembles Anand in some of his characteristics as a writer. He too is a committed artist with a missionary zeal for the restoration of dignity to his people. Achebe is a consummate artist. His craftsmanship is nowhere in jeopardy. Without sacrificing his overall aim of evoking the splendid past and the harmonious but simple life-style of his ancestors, he has succeeded in creating credible characters, substantive stories and enthralling and absorbing plots.

While Anand doesn't conceal his sensibilities and political posturing on occasions, Achebe merely shows up the contradiction and chaos thrown up by the colonial regime and leaves it to the reader to make his own judgement or inference. Where Achebe wants to indict the arrogance and imperialism of the British, he takes recourse to the ironic or satiric mode.

Thus we notice that there are similarities and variances between Anand and Achebe as writers and artists. Nevertheless what interests one here is the possibility of an in-depth analysis of the novels of Anand and Achebe with a view of establishing their liberationist angle and scope for liberationist interpretation and illustration.

A host of critics and scholars both Indian and foreign have studied the works of Anand and written elaborate critical commentaries on individual novels and on Anand's merits as a novelist. Similarly Achebe has attracted a number of African and
foreign scholars and students of English literature. There is a fairly sizable corpus of critical scholarship on Achebe and his works. Considering the short span in which he engaged in active literary output, the quantum of writing on him is quite amazing.

While a plethora of criticism of Indian Scholars is available, only critics such as K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, S.C. Harrex, C.D. Narasimhaiah, Saros Cowasjee, G.S. Balarama Gupta and some others who have shown extraordinary interest in Anand’s literary career and produced significant critical scholarship are taken up for review. Among the Western critics it is, Margaret Berry, Marlene Fisher, Alastair Niven, D. Riemenschneider and Jack Lindsay who have written extensively on Anand and of course a score of others who have published well-documented, research articles in leading journals.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, in his Indo-Anglian Literature (1943) renamed as Indian Writing in English (1962), has devoted a chapter to Mulk Raj Anand. Iyengar starts with a brief life-sketch of Anand where he traces the carftsman’s industry and meticulous attention of Anand to his father, who was a copper-smith turned soldier, and his common sense and compassionate understanding to Anand’s mother. He takes up all the published novels till date and assesses objectively the merits in terms of Anand’s craftsmanship, art, characterization and style. The writer pays a rich tribute to Anand for having chosen to paint, in his works, the predicament and plight of the
bottom dogs in Indian society and for having done it spontaneously without any self-conscious display of proletarianism. In other words, the uniqueness of Anand consists in his portrayals being the outcome of his personal knowledge and experience of such outcastes and underdogs in his life, and identification with their lot.

He declares that *Untouchable* is perhaps the most compact and artistically satisfying, *Coolie* is the most extensive in space and time and *Two Leaves and a Bud* is the most effective as a piece of sarcasm and satire. For him Bakha is both a prototype and an individual. The Lalu trilogy is an impressive work that comprises local and national politics. Iyengar commends the terrific intensity and concentration of *The Big Heart* and Anand’s familiarity with the theme that he is treating. He is rather negative about *Private Life of an Indian Prince* from the point of view of style and treatment. Later in a postscript he has revised his opinion and expressed appreciation of the novel’s autobiographical strand, sense of history and narrative power. He further adds that Anand’s remarkable qualities are vitality and sense of actuality. His characters are real and full of flesh and blood. They are allowed to act, react and interact on their own. He, moreover, emphasises the universal against the particular.
Iyengar's criticism is quite perceptive and unbiased. While assessing the individual merits of a novel, he is able to point out the finer artistic aspects of the work. He has probably belaboured the point that Anand's commitment is not artificial or obtrusive but natural and spontaneous.

Jack Lindsay has contributed a very stimulating and insightful study of Anand's works in his book, *The Elephant and the Lotus: A Study of the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (1965). Lindsay's minute sketches on the individual novels are immensely elucidating and scholarly. He brings his erudition to bear upon his critical judgement. One of his objectives seems to be to bring out Anand's capacity to define the general in the particular. Starting from an analysis of *Untouchable*, Lindsay runs through the whole canon of Anand's major novels published till then and shows how his protagonists are both individuals and types. Moreover, Lindsay points out the technical superiority of Anand as compared with Premchand whose fictional canvas bears close resemblance to Anand's. While asserting Anand's variety and fecundity in terms of his style and theme, he is able to recognise the influences in Anand of both Tagore and Prem Chand. However, Lindsay is of the opinion that Anand displays a beautiful blend of Tagore's full humanistic focus symbolising universalism, and the compassion or solidarity with the suffering mankind that Prem Chand so spontaneously exuded. Lindsay compliments Anand on his ability to command a philosophic
detachment from his subject and characters. In his attempt to harmonize the Eastern and Western traditions, he is an heir to Tagore and scores a creditable victory in novels such as The Big Heart, Untouchable and The Road. Lindsay makes Anand out to be a citizen of the world, who strives through his writings, to create a new India, a new society and new harmony.

D. Riemenschneider has a monograph that must have, when it appeared in 1967, been a breath of fresh air in Anand criticism, as the author maintains that Anand’s conceptual framework is quite limited and therefore it is his artistic and creative acumen that must have enabled him to create a whole gamut of people in his novels. The article entitled "An ideal of Man in Mulk Raj Anand’s Novels" (1967) sets out to show how from Munoo of Coolie to Maqbool in Death of a Hero there is one line of stereotyped heroes but how there is a constant development, an ever deeper insight into man’s nature and the different stages in the process of self-realization. From one protagonist to the other, there is a higher level of maturity, a spiral process of growth in self-awareness. According to the author, Gauri and Ananta are two characters in whom Anand has expressed his idea of man clearly and convincingly. Anand seems to advocate the ideal that the most a man can do, is to sacrifice his own self for the sake of his ideas or his fellow human beings.
C.D. Narasimhaiah in his book, *The Swan and The Eagle* (1969), has devoted a whole chapter to Mulk Raj Anand with a subtitle "The Novel of Human centrality" and makes an impassioned appeal for a revival of interest in Anand's writings both in India and abroad. While asserting that Anand is guilty of a propagandist streak in his short stories like "The Barbers' Trade Union" and "The Tractor and the Corn Goddess", the author goes on to make a detailed critical analysis of three of Anand's novels, namely, *Untouchable, Coolie and The Big Heart*. C.D. Narasimhaiah's attempt is praiseworthy as he exculpates Anand of the allegation of being propagandist, leftist or Marxist in conviction, by pointing out the artistic merits of each of the novels, in terms of the story, theme, characterization, plot and structure. For the author, Anand is a humanist and therefore his novels are concrete artistic expressions in human terms of the predicament of vast majority of Indians. He pays tribute to Anand's rich repertoire of novelistic techniques and his fecund imagination. In fictional techniques and topics, Anand is declared a pioneer, a trail-blazer, not withstanding his occasional failure as a craftsman or his passionate social philosophy getting the better of his artistic judgement. His novel can be called the novel of human centrality according to C.D. Narasimhaiah. S.C. Harrex has a fine study, in his book, *The Fire and the Offering: The English Language Novel of India*
1935-70, Vol. I (1969), of Anand's literary career and his achievements as a novelist. He severely criticises Anand for his lapses or shortcomings in style and language, pointing out samples of such "slipshod writing" to illustrate his criticism. He comments on the realism of Anand as portrayed in his novels and appreciates the manner in which Anand identifies himself with his protagonists and looks at the sordid reality and the revolting situation, through the soul and the eyes of the victims of exploitation. While Harrex is inclined to accept the term "Proletarian art" as applied to a novel like Coolie he is opposed to the neat schematization of values and people according to the Marxist dialectic allegedly operative in Coolie.

Margaret Berry has published a full length study of Anand and his works in her book, Mulk Raj Anand: The Man and the Novelist (1970). Her approach to Anand's novels seems to be dictated by her conviction that Anand is a die-hard socialist with a humanist depth and a Marxist bias. She focuses her attention on the novels as a product of Anand's socialist and humanist persuasions and therefore as reflective of the oppressive mechanism underlying the unjust social reality and the iniquitous relationships. Understandably she examines the various novels from the parameter of forces that impede social change and social and economic transformation, thus proceeding to determine Anand's solution to the impasse. Having abjured his
faith in God and as a consequence having renounced religion and all forms of worship except the worship of man, Anand becomes a social iconoclast. He demolishes most of the accepted traditions and practices, that, in his opinion, militate against social equality, freedom and brotherhood.

Thus social institutions like religion, caste, certain traditional aspects of marriage and sex and system of education were construed by him as detrimental to the natural growth of the individual and society. He attacks these social and the other economic and political evils with vehemence and the passionate zeal of a crusader.

According to Berry Margaret, Anand offers a plausible solution to this deadlock by advocating bhakti-yoga understood as the relation of personal, efficacious love as the integrating factor. She believes there is a credible attempt on Anand's part to blend humanism, socialism and bhakti in his The Big Heart. This new religion, for Anand, will combat not only the external symptoms but also the root of all this in the socio-politico-economic structures.

Balarama Gupta has to his credit a voluminous work entitled Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective (1974). The central interest of the author is riveted on the humanism of Anand. Therefore, Gupta strives in all the chapters to marshal all his critical matter to establish his premise that Anand is first and foremost a humanist. He has
listed the characteristics or tenets of Anand's humanism in chapter 2 titled "The Humanism of Mulk Raj Anand". He undertakes thereafter to make a close reading of all his fictional works and shorter fiction from the perspective of Anand's humanism. Balarama Gupta winds up his study by stating that Anand as a humanist has surpassed Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the first Bengali novelist and even Tagore, his mentor and model, in respect of the psychological approach in fiction, as Tagore's interest was confined to the genteel upper middle class and affluent society. Anand has scored a point over Prem Chand, Gupta concludes, in this, that the former's fictional men and women are by far more reflective, speculative, articulate and even assertive than Prem Chand's ensemble of docile, submissive, static, helpless characters. Gupta has also underlined some of Anand's defects as a writer, specially his preoccupation with an ideology at the expense of his style.

Alastair Niven's *The Yoke of Pity: A Study in the Fictional writings of Mulk Raj Anand* (1978) offers a whole spectrum of insights into the techniques and fictive approaches of Anand as exemplified in his novels. He has tried to investigate the message of Anand in each of his novels by situating the story and action of the novel in the overall perspective of his social philosophy and aesthetic principles. Niven's perceptive study of *Gauri* and *The Big Heart* have yielded
some refreshing and exhilarating insights that make the message of Anand come home to the reader with great force. He affords some rare modes of critical appreciation of characters and Anand's techniques. Moreover he is not blind to some of Anand’s flaws and pitfalls, where it concerns language. Niven upholds the view that Anand’s intellectual formation and systematic training in Western philosophy and literature provided the soil in which his compassionate humanism is founded and without it, his fiction might have plunged into "ranting hysteria". According to him, both the intellectual desire for objectivity and emotional urge for commitment qualify and stimulate each other in Anand and account for his central energy and tension.

Marlene Fisher's *The Wisdom of the Heart: A Study of the Works of Mulk Raj Anand* (1985) is a laudable work, that, as the title signifies, reduces all the impulses and sensibilities portrayed in Anand’s novels to the basic, primal experiences and impulses stored in Anand’s heart. In other words, Anand looks into his intimate personal storehouse of impulses, good and bad, right and wrong, sad and happy. However, Fisher has discovered a deep quest in and through all Anand’s chain of sufferings, sorrows, struggles and failures. Love, in the end, seems to provide the answer to all the problems of Indian society, as projected in his novels *Untouchable, Coolie, Two Leaves and a Bud* and *The Big Heart*. Technically, Marlene Fisher admires the first novel and *The Big Heart* as both these have a compact
structure and plot. In Two Leaves and a Bud Anand is so overpowered by his sentiments and social and political principles, that the ultimate impact of the novel suffers in the process. All said and done, Marlene Fisher's analysis is more descriptive and confined to the perspective of the wisdom of the heart that should rule all areas of human life, communications and relationships.

R. Shepherd, in his essay "Alienated Being: A Reappraisal of Anand's Alienated Hero", maintains that Anand's perception of revolution as stated in his novels, springs from his consistent theme of the individual's struggle against social injustice. In a very scintillating essay entitled "Quest for structures: Form, Fable and Technique in the Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand", S.C. Harrex has through a systematic approach, arrived at the conclusion that Anand's art form or genre is Western in origin and form; yet he has used it so intelligently and creatively as to make it an apt medium to convey Indian ideas, ideals, values, symbols and facets of reality. Thus he appreciates the unique contribution of Anand to the sphere of Indian fiction in English.

In the book of the title Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand, there are some interesting essays by different scholars. Gillian Packham, in his essay entitled "Mulk Raj Anand and the thirties movement", has tried to trace the roots of his humanism to the different political happenings in Europe and India,
particularly to the Marxist protest movement in literature of which Anand became an ardent member. Anand's concern with the development of individual consciousness and individual values seems to have sprung from his Marxist roots, by now radically altered or transmuted into humanism. Dieter Riemenschneider, in his article "Alienation in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand," deals with the concept of alienation as represented by Anand in his novels. The concept stems from a Marxist understanding of labour, which is at the root of alienation in capitalist form of production process. He points up the paradox in this that the working classes or the labourers are alienated precisely because the objects of their labour in effect rule over them. This concept is being creatively used by Anand in novels like Coolie, Two Leaves and a Bud, The Big Heart and The Old Woman and the Cow, where the whole action and plot seem to hinge on the fact of alienation at different levels, and in different forms. The author makes an analysis of two characters: Panchi in The Old Woman and the Cow and Lalu in The Village, who are considered to be the owners of their means of production.

H.M. Williams, in his book Indo-Anglian Literature 1800-1970: A Survey (1976), is merciless in criticising the artistic lapses of Anand specially in Two Leaves and a Bud and the propagandist vein in the same novel. He is unwilling to accept the Marxist interpretation or economic colouring given to
the different situations in *Coolie* where Munoo is involved. Williams makes out the story of Munoo, to be part of a long line of innocents in literature, thus becoming archetypal in nature.

In his book *The Literature of Labour: 200 years of writing* (1985), Gustav Clans has included a brief examination of Anand's novels *Coolie* and *Untouchable*. He praises the taut plot and the psychological growth of Bakha so meticulously observed and depicted by Anand. He, however, faults Anand with having precluded any wider vista of Indian society, by choosing a protagonist from the lowest stratum of society. Munoo typifies the millions of Indian peasants who have per force to adapt to the capitalist mode of production as they are pulled to the cities in search of employment/livelihood. Anand has creatively appropriated the picaresque tradition in order to project the inevitability of the advent of modernity. The author, moreover, appreciates Anand's deliberate and conscious avoidance of the pitfall of naturalism in such a situation and his bold presentation of antifatalistic and defiant attitudes in characters like Ratan and Sauda who strive to form a trade union, despite initial opposition and failures.

There is a fleeting but incisive reference to Anand's *Gauri* in Shantha Kirshnaswamy's thought-provoking work titled, *The Woman in Indian Fiction in English* (1974). Anand is hailed as a pioneer in championing the cause of the woman in the
post-independence era. He takes up the cudgel in literature on behalf of the silent half of India, the women, who are the poorest of the poor for Anand. His novel is a historic landmark in terms of authorial shift in sensibility in Indian fiction towards the woman.

Saros Cowasjee's fairly lengthy article titled, *Coolie: An Assessment* (1976) has a brief life sketch of Anand and a lucid exposé on Anand's literary creed in addition to a fine analysis of the artistic highpoints of *Coolie*. While assessing Anand's literary creed or his avowed humanism, Cowasjee cautions that we must go by what is expressed in Anand's concrete creations, that is, his novels and not get played out by his numerous protestations, generalisations or definitions. Anand has set himself, according to his own protestations high standards, of a writer being the fiery voice of the people or the great god Brahma. Notwithstanding the flaws in his style and technique, Anand is, in his own right a good artist as, despite his emotional involvement in his subject and characters he is able to command a detachment from his work. He has a "Christ-like, all embracing compassion" as Arnold Bennett termed it. *Coolie* is a big departure from *Untouchable*, as it ushers the readers into a more complicated and devious world built on profit-seeking and cash-nexus. Anand, through Munoo's predicament, raises the question of freedom in a capitalist society.
From among a whole mass of articles and papers dealing with Anand's literary creed and achievements, published in leading national and international journals, it may be worthwhile reviewing a few notable and recent ones.

M.K. Naik's article under the title, "The Achievement of Mulk Raj Anand" published in *Journal of Indian writing in English* (JIWE) (Jan. 1973) probes the question of how far Anand succeeds in reconciling his humanistic ideal with artistic integrity. Based on the premise that a writer has a right to be judged by what he attempts to do and can do rather than by what he cannot do, Anand emerges as a committed writer by conscious intention. Further Naik lists Anand's own views on commitment and art and comments that there are a few questions unanswered in Anand's self-defence. There are a few defects in Anand that flaw his art and constantly interfere with the progress of the action and plot and the organic growth and interaction of the characters. The *Banasthali Partriika (BP)* 1969, carried G.S. Balarama Gupta's article, "Anand's The Big Heart: A study". The author calls this novel an effective dramatisation of the consequences of industrialisation on the conservative and closed-up community of the thathiars. It is a compact novel with Anand cutting out unnecessary details of early life of Ananta and making him ready for action when the novel opens. The author praises Anand for having successfully avoided the danger of producing a
propagandist work, given the theme of conflict between the labourers and the capitalists.

The BP (12, 1969) includes Saros Cowasjee's essay, "Mulk Raj Anand and his critics", wherein the author summarises some statements of select critics and assesses the same. After quoting extracts from some of the outstanding Western critics, he singles out Mrs. Meenakshi Mukherjee's criticism of Anand. Mrs. Meenakshi Mukherjee's criticism appeared under the title "Beyond the Village" in Critical Essays on Indian writing in English (1968). He takes exception to her statement that Anand has been subjected to the least amount of critical scrutiny. He blames her for making some unwarranted and generalised allegations on Anand's writing. She attacks his "habitual overstatement and translation of Hindi and Punjabi idioms into English and disapproves of Anand interpolating Hindi words in English sentences and changing the spelling to imitate the speech of the uneducated.

The main section of her criticism pertains to Anand's characterisation. According to her, Anand's characters fall neatly into three types: the sufferers, the oppressors and the good men. Cowasjee challenges her to place characters like Lakha in Untouchable, Babu Nathoo Ram, Mr. W.P. England and Mrs. Mainwaring in Coolie in their proper niches.
Mrs. Mukherjee points to the lack of a "sustaining myth" as the major cause for Anand's failure as an artist. As a result, she adds, Anand's characters are "rootless and mythless and appear somewhat unnatural". Mrs. Mukherjee should recognise that Anand has tried to create a new myth, and that is, his projection of social outcastes and eccentrics as heroes, thus exploding the myth that only aristocrats could be heroes.

Saros Cowasjee has an essay entitled "The Big Heart: A New Perspective" in ACLALS Bulletin (4th Series, No.2, 1991) where he traces the different conflicts in the novel to the one basic or fundamental economic problem. Hence he concludes that all freedom is reducible in Marxist categories to economic freedom. He moreover, commends Anand for making a significant deviation from his earlier narrow frame of interest in order to recognise the good even in an otherwise evil system like, for instance, the compassionate factory owners and machines in the context of individualistic profit-seeking industrial capitalism. The article throws light on the humane and positive side of Anand's personality.

The spring 77 issue of the Kakatiya Journal of English Studies (KJES) has articles by Jack Lindsay and G.S. Balarama Gupta. In "Three views on Coolie", Jack Lindsay sets out to prove that Anand was a trail-blazer as one, who in his novel, presented the manifold and variegated glories and aspects of India and its
people. In this way he has made it possible for Indian novel to enter the realm of world literature and for a whole new literature of the oppressed and colonised people to make its debut in the world arena. Anand as a pioneer drew on the works of the Spanish writers, Latin American poets and novelists and joined hands with African, West Indian and other Asian writers to constitute a new brand of internationalism.

G.S. Balarama Gupta in his essay "Anand in Letters", provides a brief and illuminating summary of Anand's letters to him on the model of Saros Cowasjee's *Author to Critic*. According to Edgell Richwood, *Coolie* is a rich panoramic spectacle of India's life in the villages and the cities. Anand has taken a poetic view of life and given it a fictive representation. In this, his Western masters' quintessential ideas have been of great help. The second view expressed by Edward Burra is that Munoo is a universal figure. Hilla Vakeel observes that *Coolie* presents the moving tragic drama of the life of Munoo, a harassed underdog, a victim of fate and circumstances. The human depth that offsets all the unmerited sufferings and buffetings of Munoo is the central strand of the whole novel.

R.T. Robertson has written an article under the title "Untouchable as an Archetypal Novel" in *World Literature Written in English* (WLWE). He has explored the possibility of categorising the novel *Untouchable* as an archetypal novel, as it
displays characteristics of an individual, typologically representing a group and of the conflict reaching epic proportions at the end. The novel leaves the unmistakable impression of the central paradox of Bakha being both isolated and entangled in a society, torn and fragmented by the colonial confrontation. The archetypal figure is Bakha and the concept is that of untouchability. As the context is the colonial situation, it becomes a pattern for all commonwealth literature. Robertson's approach is original and hence may be an impetus to further investigations along this line.

There is an enormous amount of scholarship and criticism on Chinua Achebe. More than books, we have a lot of articles, papers, essays and monographs published on Achebe and his fictional achievements. Arthur Ravenscroft's Chinua Achebe (1969) is one of the early commentaries on Achebe's first four novels. Ravenscroft displays good grasp of the history and past traditions of the Igbo clan in his critique of Things Fall Apart (TFA) and Arrow of God (AOG). Moreover he is quite nuanced in his comparative analysis of TFA and AOG, the two novels dealing with the Igbo past and A man of the People (AMP) and No Longer At Ease (NLE), the ones representing the modern, urbanised ethos of the Igbos. Ravenscroft compliments Achebe on his range of the English language and his adaptation to suit a given character or situation. Even Achebe's use of pidgin, although presenting a
difficulty to non-West African readers, makes for authenticity, according to the author. The author admires Achebe's ability to vary and change the style and tone in accordance with the theme of the novel. The satiric mode and the sardonic and cynical tone of Achebe in AMP and NLE are preeminently suited to the novels, their themes and characters.

G.D. Killam is one of the more popular commentators of Achebe. He wrote his first book on Achebe's novels in 1969 under the title, The Novels of Chinua Achebe. He has a lucid and informative introduction wherein he presents Achebe as a committed and supremely endowed artist. Achebe is said to be convinced that a writer's task in Africa today is to recreate its glorious past and achievements in all departments of human affairs and to restore dignity and pride to the African race. Killam's detailed analysis of the action, characterization and structure of each of Achebe's first four novels is quite illuminating and elucidating. He has a good grasp of the matter he is criticising and therefore his commentaries are a useful guide to understand the spirit and texture of Achebe's novels. Although Achebe's basic vision is tragic, there are reasons to affirm that he believes in the ultimate triumph of the African spirit, as Killam avers.
Charles Larson, in his book titled *The Emergence of African Fiction* (1971), commented on Achebe's unique contribution to the novel in Africa and attempted to elucidate the different scenes and actions in the novels. According to Larson, TFA is not a novel about an individual, but about a community: it is not a novel of character, but a novel of situation. Larson moreover praises Achebe for his creative, artistic and effective use of Igbo figures of speech and proverbs.

In M.G. Cooke's book, *Modern Black Novelists: A collection of Critical Essays* (1971), Anne Tibble has a brief article on Chinua Achebe. According to her, in all his novels Achebe is preoccupied with the moral conflict of values and is trying to sift them and show them as the perennial challenge to the race.

David Cook's book entitled *African Literature: A Critical View* (1977) has an essay on Chinua Achebe under the title "The Centre Holds". This essay in effect turns out to be an in-depth examination of the character of Okonkwo. The ultimate question is: "Is Okonkwo dishonoured in his death or the people who did not have the courage to defy the whitemen's messengers?" The answer is evident. Okonkwo even in his abomination of death by suicide rises over the others in eminence and dignity. The irony is quite poignant.
Jonathan A Peters has in his book, *A Dance of Masks* (1978), lengthy critical sketches on the first four novels of Achebe. What is novel about his critical writing, is his approach from the assumption, that it is the cultural heritage and its traditions and symbols, like the mask, that constitute the substance of Achebe's stories. Peters perceives a well-conceived plan behind all the four novels commencing from the glorious pinnacle that was Igbo past as portrayed in *TFA* and deteriorating gradually with the advent of the white men's religion and administration, as represented in the other three novels in subtle situations and actions shot through with an ironic and satiric vein.

**Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe** (1978) edited by Innes and Bernth Lindfors contains some useful, informative essays. The pieces included here are not all that new, even as the purpose of the editors was only to offer a good collection of critical writings on Achebe to readers. The articles on *TFA* are certainly qualitatively superior to others.

Bernth Lindfors has an essay titled "The Palm Oil with which Achebe's Words are Eaten", in *African Literature Today* edited by Eldred D.Jones. The author's main argument is based on Achebe's successful and effective use of the English language and specially his inimitable employment of Igbo proverbs, similes and tales to evoke the cultural milieu where the action takes
place. The way Achebe varies his similes in the rural and urban novels is striking.

Eldred Jones in his article, "The Decolonization of African Literature" in *The Writer in Modern Africa* edited by Per Wastberg, contends that in the postcolonial era colonialism or decolonization has become a common and predominant theme of most African writers and rightly so. He points out the two approaches to the problem, one of pure invective against the foreign rulers and the other of extolling the past civilization and traditions of Africa in a bid to restore her to former glory and dignity. Writers like Achebe and Soyinka have struck a balance by not glossing over the imperfections of modern Africa.

Robert M Wren's study entitled *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of Chinua Achebe* (1979) provides a refreshing peep into the assumptions, allusions and the novel's context in general. He goes on to unravel some of the mysterious and unexplained symbols, practices, rituals and terms so commonly used by Achebe in his novels. His illuminating commentaries and explications are a great help in appreciating the beauty of Achebe's art.

Ulli Beier has edited a collection of essays on African writers, entitled *Introduction to African Literature: An Anthology of Critical Writing* (1980). Ezekiel Mphahlele's article under the title, "Writers and Commitment" is a lucid presentation of
the concept of commitment and its relationship to literature as defined by Marxist critics and writers of the left and as applied in practice to African literature by leading poets, dramatists and novelists of Africa. While admitting that commitment implies the propagandist vein in practice, he asserts that it depends on the handling of propaganda. He cites "negritude" as one eloquent example of this type of writing. The novelists who document even as they dramatise are committed, with the abler kind of novelist allowing for a free use of irony. Achebe's themes of the conflict between new ways of life and new beliefs and the old and of the consequent frustration and disillusionment are expressive of his commitment to the African setting, origins, history and past. The writer expects that any African art should give expression to a new spiritual point of view that explores the human situations in general and concedes our weaknesses.

Abiola Irele in the same anthology has an essay entitled "The Tragic conflict in Achebe's Novels". It is a perceptive analysis of Achebe's art which is at home with the tragic medium. The tragic vision permeates not only the situations but also the individual characters. The author examines the first four novels of Achebe from this perspective. The strength of Achebe's tragic presentation depends largely on the central character whose tragic destiny is symbolic of the social drama. By the same token, the writer points out, No Longer at Ease is a
disappointment because the central representative character is inadequately drawn. He doesn't possess the tragic substance or the stuff of which a tragic character is made. Abiola Irele characterises his style as sober, disciplined and economic, and his prose as utilitarian. He is not only a keen observer and recorder but a committed African novelist who is involved in the process of "African Becoming".

In *Twelve African Writers* (1980) by Gerald Moore, there is an article on Chinua Achebe. He perceptively points out the circularity quite evident in the principal characters of Achebe's novels. The fate that is met by Obi in *NLE* is in no way different from that encountered by his grandfather Okonkwo in *TFA*. By striving to do better than their progenitors or fellows, they do worse and end up most pathetically. According to Moore, there is a certain similarity, cyclical fate that hounds the Okonkwos. The author, further, refers to Achebe's style and range of language and his capacity to enrich and embellish his language with a judicious intermingling of Igbo proverbs, myths and anecdotes. He discovers subtle manifestations of racial superiority on the part of the British officials created by Achebe. For him *A Man of the People* is a disappointment as compared with the tragic grandeur of *Arrow of God*.

Nkosi Lewis has published a book entitled *Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles of African Literature* (1981), wherein he has
commented on Achebe’s style and fictional strategies in several places. In chapter three with the title "History as the Hero of the African Novel", Lewis holds up Achebe as a superb model of how the African past can be put to good use by an imaginative writer. Achebe has proved that he is both an inventor of "fictions" and a recorder of "social history". He is devoted to the past not merely as an auditor of his people’s past traditions but also a creator of "fictions". While exploring the inner dynamics of an Igbo society steadily reeling under the impact of an outside power Achebe highlights the inner movements and conflicts of the protagonists.

There is no dearth of journal articles and essays on Achebe. We are forced to make a good selection and confine it to the recent ones. In Black World (June ’73), Omolara Leslie has analysed the first four novels of Achebe from the point of view of alienation in her article entitled "Nigeria, Alienation and the Novels of Chinua Achebe". Basing herself on Rousseau’s definition of alienation as representation of a community by a smaller group, the writer concludes that it is the colonial administrative and political set up that caused the upheaval in the Igbo society and even politics.

Ihechukwu Madubuike in Black World (Dec, 1974) has an article entitled "Achebe’s Ideas on Literature" wherein he sets
out three areas of concern for Achebe: the interpretation of the
African past from within; the problem of interpreting this past
in a foreign language; and the responsibilities and obligation of
the writer to his own people. The writer goes on to show how
these concerns blend in all Achebe’s novels. In the same issue
Mavreen Warner Lewis in his essay “Ezeulu and his God” probes
the novel’s central and dominant characters’ internal conflict
as mirroring and to a large extent triggering the strife in an
already disunited clan.

The Literary Half Yearly XXI, I, Jan’80 issue has the
following articles on Achebe and his art. Robert Wren titles his
article "Achebe’s Odili: Hero and clown". According to Wren, it
is the natural wisdom of the past, preserved in traditions,
proverbs, tales and songs that finally infuses hope into Odili
who is otherwise a natural opportunist and holds out hope and
promise to the nation. "Chinua Achebe and the structure of
colonial tragedy" by Bruce F. Macdonald is an attempt at
projecting Okonkwo as a tragic hero, not cast exactly in the
mould of an Aristotelian tragic hero, but in his own right
fitting Achebe’s vision and parameters of a tragedy. Here the
social disintegration wrought by the colonial forces and the
inner chaos caused by Okonkwo’s excessive fear of annihilation
are presented. Thirdly, Hugh Webb has tried to discover a
reasonable theory underneath the fictional matrix of A Man of
the People.
His article, "Drawing the Lines of Battle: A Man of the People," argues that Achebe's approach in this novel is realistic and therefore the actual military coup in Nigeria in January 1966 was not a mere coincidence. It was a vindication of Achebe's "realist" presentation, he asserts.

Andrew Peek's interesting article, "Betrayal and the Question of Affirmation in Chinua Achebe's No Longer At Ease" throws light on a dimension probably little probed earlier. The author concludes that it is the so called betrayal of Obi, by his elitist Western education, symbol of the overall situation of chaos and ambiguity in the colonial period, that people at large find it difficult and challenging to cope with.

Lastly there is the essay by Rosemary Colmer, "The start of Weeping is always hard: The ironic structure of No Longer at Ease," where the author's main contention is that Achebe denies the novel and robs Obi of the only chance of a tragic moment by placing his public humiliation at the beginning. There is no time for a tragic understanding on Obi's part or for cathartic experience on the reader's side.

Kalu Ogbaa writing in World Literature Written in English (WLWE) (Aut. '81) puts forth a new interpretation of the cause of Ezeulu's death in his article, "Death in African Literature: The Example of Chinua Achebe". It is interesting to read his arguments to show that Ulu, the God of security of Umuaro is
different from the Ulu created by Ezeulu or his personified obsession for revenge. In this opinion he differs from better known earlier commentators such as G.D. Killam and David Carroll. The same writer advances a variation of this view in his article "A cultural Note on Okonkwo’s suicide" that appeared in *Kunapipi* (III, 2, 1981). According to his perception Okonkwo commits suicide because he feels abandoned by both his clan and his god for his triple murder. Murder, according to the Igbo beliefs, is an abomination and is avenged by Ani, the earth goddess.

In the journal, *Research in African Literature* (RAL) (vol. 13 1982), Simon Simonse has an essay titled "African Literature between Nostalgia and Utopia: African novels since 1953 in the light of the modes of production approach". Simonse’s argument is that it is more fruitful to approach the African novel from the Marxist perspective of the modes of production and their articulation than from an approach that focuses on its specific African content. The writer describes Achebe as being particularist and opposed to universal themes or problems to be treated by African writers. Achebe has tried to define the boundaries of African literature. He assumes the Marxist view of the novel as literary form in which fundamental social contradictions are reflected. According to him, Achebe concentrated on the symbolic order of the pre-capitalist tribal
society. Thus it becomes the confrontation between the social order of the African society and non-African within these societies and within the tribal society, between the insiders and outsiders.

Ibe Nwoga has an article in Literary Half - Yearly (Jan. '86) entitled "The Igbo World of Achebe's Arrow of God" where the writer establishes the artistic credibility and mastery of Achebe. He maintains that Achebe first settles on a particular theme and chooses events and characters and the social and historical material suitable for his specific treatment. His focus is not so much on the individual as on the clan or society.

Catherine Lynette Innes has produced several useful and illuminating studies on Chinua Achebe. Her expertise is discernible in every one of her studies. Her book entitled Chinua Achebe (1990) has an interesting introduction wherein Innes has attempted a profile of Achebe as a novelist. She has restated some of the major tenets and key principles of Achebe's fiction writing. She spells out his main themes, of rejection of the image of Africa as a cultural foil to Europe, of offering new alternatives and of challenging the Western view of individual autonomy. The essay on Anthills of the Savannah is rich in new and original insights. What is most interesting is Innes' perception about Achebe's investigation of the concept of power, of its different manifestations, corruption and distortion in this
novel. Her insights about the multiple narration and its relationship to sharing power and decentralizing administration and the satiric vein that runs through the whole work are worth pondering. The final point about the racial and historical importance of stories and story-telling is quite illuminating. She throws a lot of light on Achebe’s presentation of the role and function of women in this novel and of the eschatological or apocalyptic elements contained in the novel particularly after the death of Ikem and Chris.

In *Journal of Black Studies* (JBS) (June 1990) there is an essay by Joe E. Obi, under the title, "A Critical Reading of the Disillusionment Novel". The writer devotes quite a lot of space to discuss Achebe’s contribution to this type of fiction in Africa. The fiction that came into vogue in the mid-sixties is significantly known as the disillusionment novel. The novelists of disillusion like Achebe and Soyinka, reflect the present disaffection of the people, the lack of clarity and political will among politicians and in general, the existential angst and anger of the people and therefore they are very much circumscribed, and operate in a limited framework.

In *Aspects of Common Wealth Literature* (Vol I, 1990) we come across the essay by Mary Ebun Modupe Kolawole entitled "The Omnipresent past and the quest for self-retrieval in African Novel". The author’s thesis is to establish that among other
objectives, African novelists desire to reflect the past as well as reflect on it in order to understand the present better. Writers like Achebe have been consistently focussing on the past so that identifying the root of the present problems, a search for solution may be initiated. There is a good analysis of Achebe's latest novel *Anthills of the Savannah*. The ultimate goal of all this retrospection is not romanticism but a transformation of the present.

In the autumn '91 (Vol 37, Number 3) issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* we find three fine studies on Chinua Achebe. Robin Ikegami has offered a new interpretation of the role of story telling as a political and social act, as a demonstration of knowledge and an exercise of power. The author proceeds to investigate the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* from this angle. There are several story-tellers each with his or her own way of story-telling. Probably the most reliable and informed story-teller is Beatrice who eventually proposes a new role to story-telling, that of doing something. She believes in initiating changes at all levels. Her performance of the naming ceremony of Elewa's daughter too is symbolic of the convergence of the past and the present and the emergence of women as a powerful segment. The focus of this novel is on the future. The second essay is by Kofi Owinsu under the title, "The politics of Interpretation: The Novels of Chinua Achebe". The main thesis of this essay is the importance and inevitability of interpreting stories. The role
of interpreters or critics is important and responsible. The author infers from this that rereading and relearning of Achebe, and indeed of all African writers is called for today. The third piece is "Achebe and Negation of Independence" by Onyemaechi Udumukwu. The author sets out to clarify the nature of Achebe’s reaction to the negation of expectations of independence from colonial rule. The postcolonial rule can be identified as neocolonial. He takes two novels of Achebe, A Man of the People and Anthills of the Savannah as the basis for his investigation. Achebe points out the inherent truth or rather the mistakes and lapses of the rulers and exposes the nature of the security apparatus. Achebe is not pessimistic but offers signs of hope, hope of change and transformation.

The above survey is certainly very impressive and the extent and quality of the scholarship extant on both Anand and Achebe, are commendable. While Anand has had a rather biased critical review at least from some scholars in India, he has been reviewed objectively and in fact positively by a good number of Indian and foreign critics. Nevertheless it has to be admitted that Anand as a writer is not altogether free from flaws. His artistic failures as pointed out by even neutral and scholarly critics both foreign and Indian, have a basis in his works. While it is difficult to agree with Mrs. Mukherjee with regard to some of her charges, one has to concede that Anand oversteps his limits when his humanist impulse gets the better of his artistic temper.
All credit should be given to Anand, as critics have never failed to point out, for his pioneering efforts and fighting qualities so evident in his introduction of and persistence with the marginalised and outcast people in his fictional works, notwithstanding an orchestrated propaganda against him.

Achebe, on the other hand, has had a fair critical review. There has been hardly any adverse or deliberately maligning propaganda against his works, barring perhaps the controversy over his alleged denigration of the British colonial agents. This allegation, however, could not mar the overwhelmingly positive response to him, as his novels on the post-independence rulers and educated elite are a powerful and at times devastating critique of their topsy-turvy and anti-people attitudes, values, corruption and abuse of power. Achebe's artistic excellence, range of his language and style, grasp of Igbo culture, history and ethos, have all been meticulously observed and praised by critics and commentators. All said and done Achebe emerges as a consummate artist, always striving to create and innovate in terms of style, techniques, characterization and theme.

A run-down of the survey of critical scholarship on both Anand and Achebe amply justifies a comparison between the two. They share a whole gamut of interests, concern and artistic traits. Both the writers are confirmed as committed writers, committed to the cause of the downtrodden each in his country.
Both have stuck to the parameters of creative writing whose fictional matrix is the colonial history, the culture, life, toil, struggle, the aspirations and hope of the masses of their countries, labelled as third-world countries. They have been consistent in addressing people's problems in a bid to create awareness and conscientization not only in the victims but also in the victimizers.

There are, however, areas where both these writers differ as it is clear from the critiques of several scholars. While there is a near unanimity among critics about Achebe's artistic achievement and virtuosity, the decisive verdict of critics in the case of Anand's artistic competence is not forthcoming as yet.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY:

Many of the above-mentioned critics have investigated the themes of Anand and Achebe by making critical analysis of individual novels. The interpretation of Anand's ultimate goal or thrust is understood as the representation of the stark reality of poverty and exploitation on the one hand, or the exposure of the culprits who are the British colonizers, or the ruling classes. Individual emancipation is said to be Anand's ultimate vision of society, but an overpowering pessimism and fatalism, an integral part of hereditary or cultural inheritance of every individual, come in the way. Personal conversion or transformation or amelioration through self-realization and
self-awareness is held out as one mode of changing society. Compassion or bhakti or Yoga is projected as an efficacious way of combatting social evils such as casteism, class conflict, exploitation, alienation and social inequalities. There is, however, a hint, according to a few critics, to collective action or bold individual decision geared to making a dent in the citadel of outmoded thought patterns and actions.

Achebe's fictional aim or purpose has been interpreted by a number of critics, from an analysis of both his fictional and non-fictional output, to be, to teach his fellow-Nigerians, Africans and Europeans about the past glories of African tradition, culture, religion and literature and to restore dignity and pride to his people who lost it in their encounter with the white race. Achebe's nostalgic and grandiose evocation of the Igbo tribe's harmony and its unparalleled religious practices and convictions is cited as irrefutable proof of his espousal of the cause of his people's freedom. Achebe is open to change and to any democratic system of government that is willing to accord top priority to the needs of the masses. According to some critics, Achebe engages in a systematic analysis of power equations, use and abuse of power at different levels in precolonial tribal society, in the colonial administration and in the post-independence days. Power is said to be at the centre of all the activities of the tribe, and therefore Achebe probes the different approaches to it in the different novels. He seemingly advocates shared power and group
leadership in preference to centralised, autocratic power structures.

The specific purpose of this study is to prove the possibility of a liberationist interpretation of the themes and stories of the novels of both Anand and Achebe. As committed writers both have identified themselves with their people, specially the oppressed and exploited masses. The rather strident voice of anger and protest heard in Anand's writings and the subtle notes of protest sounded by Achebe in his novels are sufficient indication that they are committed to a cause.

Reading the novels of Anand and Achebe and making a deeper analysis of the same, one cannot fail to perceive the underpinning ideology. In other words they are both political writers. They have a basic perception of their respective societies vis-a-vis the larger society, the different organisms and structures that go to make up their worlds and their people's lives. Anand's ideology may be prompted or illumined by Marxian tools or method of societal analysis. Achebe's perception has to do with the havoc wrought to a harmonious tribal society by the colonial masters and rulers who introduced forms of religions, administration, trade and education which had unsettling and destabilising effects on the African society. The contradictions caused by capitalism are discernible in every third-world reality. Anand and Achebe are aware of these contradictions and the subtle and intangible causes underlying these.
Liberation as a process and an end, is claimed to be the universal clamour and experience of all oppressed peoples of the world. While this process may have the special cultural hues and historical trappings of a particular nation, the general ingredients and basic impulse and thrust are common. The ideology component is very important and therefore, it may be prescribed that a liberationist writer has a corresponding creed or philosophy or vision as Anand illustrates in his non-fictional writing as well as in his fictional works. Achebe has time and again voiced his concern for the liberation of his fellow Africans and has articulated his motives and goals in writing.

What follows in the thesis purports to elucidate the hypothesis that such a liberationist framework is not absent from the novels of Anand and Achebe. Their protestations and confession relating to their literary creed and personal belief and vision, though very convincing and credible, do not deter us from delving deep into their respective oeuvre. What follows will demonstrate how a critical search into the works of art of these two novelists, will bear ample evidence to the fact that a liberationist interpretation is very much in order. This investigation will therefore not only take us into the labyrinth of the artists' wealth of material, content, story line or theme, but also bring us face to face with the techniques, linguistic and artistic variations, adaptations and innovation and stylistic patterns.
ABSTRACT

Chapter one, Introduction, introduces the topic and furnishes a critical review of the extant critical scholarship on both Anand and Achebe. It further provides an abstract of the matter dealt with in the chapters that follow and states the specific purpose or aim of the study.

Chapter Two, "The Historical Evolution and Relevance of Liberation in the Third-World Context", provides the historical and conceptual background of the term "liberation". It traces the etymological evolution of the term and the historical context in which it developed. A fairly comprehensive understanding of the connotation of the term is attempted. Anand and Achebe as third-world fictionists do fit into this liberation pattern at least germinally.

Chapter Three, "Mulk Raj Anand and Chinua Achebe among Contemporaries", situates Anand and Achebe among their contemporaries and proceeds to underscore their unique perception and singular contribution in the area of political and prophetic literature geared to liberation of the oppressed masses.

Chapter Four, takes up the study of the "Liberation Motif in the Delineation of Protagonists" by Anand and Achebe. Anand's protagonists like Bakha of Untouchable, Munoo of Coolie and Ananta of The Big Heart are not traditional or conventional heroes. However, they are representative individuals. They are
models of liberated individuals drawn from the class of outcastes, the marginalised and the labourers. Achebe's heroes are either tribal chieftains like Okonkwo and Ezeulu or the educated, elitist Africans like Obi and Odili. They are presented as types of their respective groups and therefore signify in their own persons, lives and manner of their end, the predicament of the Igbo tribe after the descent of the Europeans. *Anthills of the Savannah* is Achebe's critique of centralised power in the person of Sam, and his proposed alternative of a pluralistic leadership or shared power.

Chapter Five, "Tradition Versus Modernity", dwells at length on the manner in which Anand and Achebe have dealt with the burning issue of tradition as opposed to modernity. Although this topic is a pet theme with both Anand and Achebe, it is given an in-depth treatment in *The Big Heart* by Anand and in *No Longer at Ease*, by Achebe. Anand is a stout advocate of modernity and all that goes with it. His hero Ananta becomes his mouthpiece and is, in a sense, a symbol and prototype of all Indians, specially the rural segments, caught between the two realities. Anand's brand of modernity or modernism is marked by moderation, unwilling to jettison humanistic values and ideals while retaining a pragmatic approach to scientific and technological changes that are rapidly transforming the face of the earth in India.
Achebe's portrayal of this historic conflict boils down to Obi, the principal character's struggle to balance his idealism against the insuperable temptation of the consumer world and culture. He succumbs to the pressure of demands for leading a life in consonance with his high position and elitist education. Achebe projects the evils that can be spawned by an unrestricted or unregulated pursuit of comforts and luxuries without a basic moral consciousness. Obi has moral awareness and idealism but lacks the strength of character that alone can withstand the weight of materialistic and consumeristic demands. Achebe's context is the Nigerian scene in a state of turmoil and disquiet, as a consequence of the inroads made by Western ideologies, modes of production and ownership and the value-systems centred on money and acquisiteness.

Chapter Six, "Class War and Caste Politics" takes a critical look at the treatment of exploitation by Anand and Achebe. In Marxian analysis of social systems, class plays a crucial role in maintaining the exploitive character of a capitalist society. Class conflict or class war eventually yields to proletarian rule and the stateless and classless society according to Marx. Anand probes the class character of exploitation in several novels, the chief among them being, \textit{Coolie}, \textit{Two Leaves and a Bud} and \textit{The Big Heart}. Anand seemingly subscribes to the Marxist view of class struggle preceding final liberation in the form of
classless society and stateless socialism. Munoo and Gangu, although they are kshatriyas, are discriminated against and exploited simply because they are poor and downtrodden. The Big Heart is a moving and heart-rending tragedy of Ananta who dies a martyr for the cause of educating and conscientizing his people to accept the inevitability of modernity. Anand portrays the heinousness and dissects the per se evil of casteism and untouchability in Untouchable and The Road. This twin sin and shame of India is projected by Anand as equally responsible for the social and economic inequalities that persist so many years after Independence.

Achebe has not addressed class or caste problem explicitly in his novels. However, his approach to the theme of colonial confrontation includes a critique of the class distinctions that emerged from the prevalence of market-economy and liberal use of money. He deplores the fall in moral standards in the wake of the advent of capitalism and points to the monumental corruption in high places as an eloquent example of moral decadence. The only instance of "caste" that can be identified in Achebe’s novels is the ostracism of a slave caste known as "Osu" as presented in No Longer at Ease. Achebe does not hesitate to pinpoint the irrational beliefs or practices that are divisive, discriminatory or reactionary.
Chapter Seven, "Liberation from the Feminist Perspective", attempts a feminist interpretation of Anand’s and Achebe’s study of exploitation. Women’s Liberation as a political or social movement and feminism as a literary or artistic theory had its origin in the West and therefore the Indian brand of feminism is not without its Western trappings, biases, slants or excesses. However, the Indian equivalent has had its measure of success, specially, thanks to the numerous writers, particularly novelists, who have espoused its cause or the cause of the exploited and maltreated women of India, in their works of art. Anand without doubt, finds a place among Indian writers who have aided the cause of the Indian woman by drawing portraits of liberated or enlightened women who rebel against time-worn or outmoded traditions. Anand’s Gauri is a historic landmark in the evolution of the feminist novel in India. Achebe may not be a hardcore feminist. Nevertheless his presentation of women like Beatrice and Elewa in Anthills of the Savannah can be studied from the feminist angle fruitfully. For both Anand and Achebe, the woman is an integral and indispensable part of any process of liberation.

Chapter Eight, "Art and Commitment", tries to resolve the apparent dualism between art and commitment. It has been at the centre of literary debate over the years. It is contended in this chapter that art and commitment are not mutually exclusive.
In fact they are complementary and mutually enriching. Even the Marxist critics and theorists concede the autonomy of art and therefore a committed writer need not neglect art or make it subservient to content or subject matter. Anand’s subject matter reveals his profound involvement in the lives and fortunes of the people, specially the oppressed masses. Anand’s language, style and fictional techniques reveal certain flaws thus inviting unfavourable critical review. Achebe however comes across as a master craftsman whose identification with his people, the Igbo tribe, is near total. Literary commitment should not be equated with propagandism. While Anand has been searching for the right style and technique to suit his fictional matrix, he is not altogether free from propagandist pitfall. Achebe, on the other hand, has achieved the fine tuning between his art and ideological conviction, matter and form. He has a rich repertoire of fictional strategies, and a range of techniques which are fascinating.

Chapter Nine, "Summing Up", is a summation of all that has been said in the preceding chapters. We have gained a fairly comprehensive grasp of the liberation motif in Anand and Achebe through a systematic investigation of their stories, themes and artistic features, such as language, style, techniques of writing and characterization. The ultimate success of the two novelists is judged by the measure of success achieved by them in striking
the right balance or rhythm between their ideological sensibilities and the demands of the literary genre. Moreover this chapter goes on to maintain that the pioneering work of these two writers provides the framework for future research in the sphere of literature on liberation. The bold experiments done by both Anand and Achebe, in making heroes of the disinherited and the wretched of the earth, provide a fresh impetus to more such experiments in future. More innovative and creative work in fictional themes, forms, approaches and aim modelled on Anand's and Achebe's paradigm are in order. Novels with political and prophetic slant have a crucial role to play in the liberation dynamics of any third-world country.