CHAPTER VII

SUMMING UP
The purpose of the present study is to compare and contrast the works of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand keeping in view the society of their times, the themes selected by them, the art of characterization and stylistic devices used by them. But before declaring that they were humanitarian novelists it became inevitable to investigate the purpose of their novels. By having an indepth study of the major works by Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand it becomes apparent that they were novelists with a purpose and the chief objective of their works was to reform and reshape the degrading and debasing society of their times.

By comparing the works of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand one can say that there is thematic congruence, and it seems as if both of them posses the common characteristic of humanitarianism. At the very outset of the study of their novels, it must be understood that their art is art with a purpose. Charles Dickens, in his novels strikes from first to last a clear note of humanitarianism which is the most attractive note of the Dickensian orchestra. He can be called one of the greatest social reformers of his time. Many a novel of Dickens seems to have been built around a particular social theme. For instance, *Bleak House* attacks the legal delays *Nicholas Nickleby*, the abuses of charity schools and sadism of school-masters; *Hard Times*, the pet concepts of the then current 'political economy' which was also attacked by Ruskin and Carlyle; *Little Dorrit*, the inhumanities to which poor debtors are often subjected; *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* are based on the theme of maltreatment of children. But above all such social criticism in contemporary context is the basic lesson of humaneness and charity which almost all Dickens' novels teach implicitly if not explicitly. And then there is the most ebullient, convivial optimism of Dickens, which even though not altogether acceptable as the last word on the philosophical exploration of life and the universe, is yet acceptable for its basic good humour and throbbing humanity.

As with all great persons and works, Dickens' works have never lost their relevance and appeal, to say nothing about their artistic excellence. To this day, interesting analogies can be drawn between the conditions and the dreams and aspirations of the characters in the novels of Charles Dickens and the conditions and the ambitions and desires of persons placed similarly in the present.
The novels of Charles Dickens are copious both in terms of volume and quality. As such they afford ample opportunity for analysis and appreciation of characters representative of all strata of the society of his age. Needless to mention, he was a keen observer of contemporary social customs, prevalent mores, events, socioeconomic processes and politico-legal system. Apart from providing valuable data to the historians about the Victorian England, he was eminently successful in infusing life-like qualities in the fictitious characters. In fact, Charles Dickens' characters gain their full meaning from the structure to which they belong. Similarly, his novels resemble a diamond necklace which has a few thematic strands with various diamonds, each of which has a luster, brilliance and sparkle exclusive to itself.

Foremost was the propensity of the novelist to draw heavily and extensively from his experiences - the harsher the better. It sounds rather monotonous if one were to maintain that each and every writer relives his experiences through his writings. It was especially the case with Dickens. If one was to cursorily glance through the initial pages of David Copperfield, the first impression would be that one is perusing the autobiography of Dickens. So intense and so detailed are his descriptions about the scenes of the factories where children were forced to put in their labour that one is reinforced in his belief that this was possible not merely by observations but only by undergoing its severity. The fact that an exceptionally strong under current of autobiographical impulses flows through his narrative, irrespective of the period in which a particular work was written and published, needs no microscopic scrutiny.

Initially, happy childhood years and subsequent unpalatable experience in the workhouse filled Dickens with such bitterness that he was never able to rid himself of it. Perhaps, he himself never nursed a desire to absolve himself of the memory. This bitterness had been accentuated by the stance of his mother who wanted him to continue working in the depressing conditions. Though he did not let the conditions affect him physically, psychologically the scars of the experience turned out to be indelible.

This experience alone led Dickens to explore and under-score varied dimensions consequential to the sad plight of children in Victorian England. Selfish and insensitive parents, weak and sickly mothers, greedy relatives, overbearing and inhuman teachers, exploitative employers, and callous society were all elements which contributed
to the utter neglect of the children of the unprivileged section of the society. As everywhere else, these sections formed the majority. However, it may be mentioned that the scions of the aristocratic families also did not escape the effects of the attitudes of the Victorian Society towards its future members. The narrative of Charles Dickens, perhaps, would have been as powerful as was the case even without undergoing the degrading experience in the workhouse. But it goes without saying that the element of emotional attachment, which had the capacity to move the readers deeply at will, would have been missing from such a depiction. It would only be fair to state that even in the novels where the story is narrated in the first person (for example in *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield*) the characterization of the central figure does not run along the autobiographical details, and there are very material differences between the experiences and the environment of the child hero and that of the child Dickens. Nevertheless, it was Dickens' experience in his mid-childhood that prompted him to look for similar experiences of others in contemporaneous years.

Charles Dickens was a keen observer of men and matters. Overflowing with the milk of kindness and love for fellow-beings, he devoted himself to the social reforms of his age. He was a dedicated soul concentrating on the social problems of his day; his first business was to arouse a sense of social awareness in the people and the powers-that-be but they were steeped in selfishness.

The name of Charles Dickens is pre-eminently associated with the humanitarian novel. After the publication of *Nicholas Nickleby* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens became a professor of humanitarianism, and he held this position for nearly thirty years. He turned the light of his knowledge upon a great variety of English scene and character, but especially upon workhouses, debtor's prison, pawn broker's shops, hovels of the poor, law offices, dark streets, and dark alleys, the London haunts and hiding places of vice, crime and pain. His theme was always the downtrodden and the oppressed; he was their advocate; for them each of his novels after *Pickwick Papers* is a Lawyer's brief. He did not believe it possible for the lower and criminal classes to raise themselves by elective franchise to a higher moral and intellectual plane. To him parliament was the dreariest place in the world; so he sought to arouse the conscience of the British public. He accordingly attended meetings of philanthropic societies, visited jails and prisons, holding
long conservations with the keepers and went on addressing the ever-increasing audience of his novels. Through him spoke the heart and conscience of Britain.

Apart from his supreme value as an entertainer in fiction, Charles Dickens earned the gratitude of posterity for awakening the social conscience. In an age marred by callousness and complacency Dickens never lost faith in fundamental human goodness. Although he could see with clear eyes the stronger impersonal evil created by society, he continued to believe in the kindly fatherhood of God and in the triumphant power of love. Organization whether political or charitable or religious he rejected; the law killed; and systems, no matter how efficient, were no substitute for the warm human relationship that were based on man’s responsibility for his fellows. In his ideal of spontaneous benevolence flowing from some inexhaustible fountain of human goodness. Dickens saw the great solvent of the grief and misery that poisoned life around him.

Charles Dickens was no economist, no politician; he had no proper schooling. Poverty dogged his footsteps. But he had commonsense in abundance which is superior to bookish knowledge. Commonsense leads to wisdom. A proper appraisal is made of social evils by the novelist. Hence, his humour is grounded in sympathy for the erring. His laughter is genial, soaked in sympathy and none takes him for a social enemy. He is light and entertaining to the reader. But as he advanced in his understanding of human misery, his humour became oppressive and heavy, grave and serious.

It can be said and understood at the very outset that Charles Dickens’ art is art with a purpose like Mulk Raj Anand’s art. In his novels he strikes from first to last a clear note of humanitarianism which is the most attractive note of the Dickensian orchestra. He can be called one of the greatest social reformers of his time. Dickens works in unrest is unquestionable but he does not let himself fly into tantrums or slide into the quagmire of cynicism. Many a novel of Dickens seems to have been built around a particular social theme. For instance, Nicholas Nickleby, the abuses of charity schools and sadism of school masters.

Charles Dickens was representative of his times and its problems. Carlyle, a contemporary of Dickens, pointed out that his times could be called ‘mechanical’ since the human element was not predominant in the industrial region. Industrialization and
urbanization were growing fast side by side with all their evil concomitants for a considerable stretch of period, until a Messiah could come and reform the conditions of living. Congestion, poverty, crime and moral depravity were their everyday features and concern. He considered the steam engine to be a monster of terror changing the face of the region. He painted in terrible words the monotonous sounds produced by the steam-engine in and day out. He found ironically men and women yoked together with iron and steam.

The essential background of Charles Dickens's novels was provided by poverty, want and destitution. Though Charles Dickens himself did not hail from such a sordid background, he found it essential for germinating the seed of positive qualities in his characters. Most of his child heroes had a deprived childhood, emotionally as well as physically, for their families either belonged to the lowest strata of the society or to the grade of the emerging middle class by a hair's breadth. Dickens's propensity to make his child heroes emerge from the morass of deprivation was due to his ardent conviction that the psyche of his heroes can remain uncorrupted by the evil influences of wealth and plenty only in situations where they remain unaware of their power. Therefore, it remained with him a structural compulsion to portray poverty in its elemental form and to make his heroes and heroines undergo want, disease and squalor which are the direct result of poverty. It also had the added benefit of strengthening the moral fibre of his heroes in the sense that they became spiritually strong by undergoing this test of fire and not succumbing to the vicious onslaught of adverse circumstances. This strength of character helped his characters to combat the evil designs of persons with whom they came in contact in their later years.

Another important aspect which forms the common denominator of nearly all Dickens's novels is the abdication of duty by the adults towards children, which has been enjoined upon them morally by the society. These adults included male or female parents, relatives, step fathers or step mothers, instructors and employers. This neglect was not always voluntary. His writings enumerate numerous examples (Mr. Dombey, Clara Copperfield, Little Nell's grand-father, Mr. Murdstone, Lady Dedlock, Gradgrind, Mr. Blimber, Mr. Choakumbchild, to name just a few) wherein the adults consciously and deliberately avoid fulfilling their filial responsibilities for their own selfish ends in their warped hierarchy of values their own material ambitions and needs ranked higher than the
mental happiness and physical well-being of children. Thus the children have to suffer twice: they had to undergo the viciousness of poverty, and secondly, their experience was embittered further by the cruel apathy of those very persons whom they looked up to for spiritual sustenance. This adds to Charles Dickens’s works, a tragic aura which nevertheless, had the effect of enhancing the credibility and beauty of his novels.

The area which helped the child characters of Charles Dickens to stand out in bold relief pertained to the setting of factories and workhouses. Dickens, by virtue of having first-hand experience of the prevailing atmosphere, was a past master in outlying and filling in minute and grimy details of the finely tuned system of exploitation for monetary ends. Even if the aim of exploitation was not economic, exploitation was there for the sake of exploitation and for taking out their frustration of children by the adults. In the former case, the rich wanted to become richer on the sweat of indefensible children. In many ways, they behaved like the nouveau riche of the modern times. They had an insatiable desire for wealth, but were noteworthy for singular lack of decency, kindness and social obligations. Thus, in the first fourteen chapter’s of *David Copperfield* one can find young David searching for a satisfactory mother who would be morally strong enough to protect the vulnerable child against the injustices inflicted on him by an uncaring world.

Another classic example of tyrannical fathers denying life to their sons can be found in Barnaby Rudge. The novel abounds in cases where the sons of selfish and cruel parents suffer due to the sins of their fathers. The system of economic exploitation is reminiscent of the brutal treatment meted out to the slaves in the Southern states of America in the first half of the nineteenth century. In *Oliver Twist*, Oliver is neither fed nor instructed properly. In the famous scene where Oliver stands with his empty bowl asking for more gruel, his small request is treated “as a major insurrection.” (*A Reader’s Guide to Charles Dickens*, P.40).

Like the slaves of America, the young orphans had no right to ask for anything, their sole purpose being to work themselves to death for their over-bearing masters. The conditions of industrial England offered no choices to child labour - either one had to undergo the exploitation in the established system or be wiped out from the face of the earth due to hunger or mental retardation. Dickens’s tortured children had little choice even in the rural setting. They had only a choice between abject neglect of their parents in
their own homes or undergo corporal punishment, mental torture and under-nourishment in the boarding schools like Dotheboys Hall. Apart from the literary merit of Dickens's work, the plight of children as described by him has a sociological relevance also. Industrial advancement took place in different parts of the globe at different points of time. It is astonishing that mankind as a whole did not draw any lessons from the unfortunate happenings which were a by-product of English Industrial Revolution. The conditions of child-heroes found a ready parallel with the condition of child-labour in any other country which was being rapidly industrialized. Thus, Dickens was able to transcend unknowingly the national boundaries in correctly identifying and describing human greed, callousness, selfishness, and wickedness in a poor and highly stratified society.

Given the afore-mentioned circumstances, it came naturally to Charles Dickens to pick up the gauntlet of a social reformer. Instead of behaving like a demagogue or a two-penny pamphlet writer, he developed his novels as a popular and powerful vehicle to launch an attack on anachronistic social customs, biased legal codes, inhuman economic practices and hypocritical political institutions. The method of his attack was not that of a frontal assault, but was subtle and sophisticated. He described the conditions as if he were watching the happenings from a ringside seat or had undergone the experience himself and was making an entry regarding his experiences in his chronicle. It was because he himself underwent the agony as a young boy washing and labelling blacking bottles twelve hours a day that he was able to describe so vividly the frustrations of young David. Dickens left the readers to draw their own conclusions after going through the material, and it is to his credit that because of his brilliant and bitter penmanship, there is inevitably only one conclusion that the object of attack was a symbol of injustice.

Owing to his enthusiasm for social justice, especially justice for the poor and vulnerable children, the Marxists took him as very nearly one of their own. They were wide off the mark. For "he (Dickens) was also profoundly conservative; he loved the old England before the railroads, and was the last great chronicler of the stage coach, the country inn, the roast beef of old England. As for any program of reform he might have envisioned, as George Orwell has pointed out, it hardly amounted to more than this that we should all behave better, as indeed we should." (Dickens: Twentieth Century Views, P.168).
As Dickens was a novelist, he had the option of not following the logical consequences of societal behaviour. Maybe, given the impoverished conditions of his heroes, they would have languished in their poverty to the very end. That is the plight of poor children as we normally see for ourselves even today. It would be rather improbable for any such child to have elevated himself to a position of wealth and grandeur easily or to achieve peace of mind ultimately. These happened to Dickensian characters for facilitating the novelist to demonstrate that good triumphed over evil each and every time. Nevertheless, it generated a hope amongst his readers, who were largely from the oppressed classes of England, that the evil and pernicious practices of which they were victims shall be obliterated in the very near future. This gave his reformist attitude a unique image, so much so that one is left wondering whether he was a litterateur par excellence turned into a social reformer, or it was the other way round.

Quick industrialization of the country brought with it bitter consequences. The humanistic attitude to life gave place to materialistic attitude, labourers had to suffer untold misery caused by congestion in town-areas where there had been no town planning. Charles Dickens was very much depressed to notice that the corporations and municipalities did not come forward with their plans to improve living conditions of the citizens. Money and material progress were the watchwords of the people and hence the spiritually barren man could find no repose or peace anywhere in England. Farming and agriculture came to be mechanized and even rural atmosphere was not conducive to peaceful living. The parliament moved slowly and no reform bills could be passed. Most of the members of the parliament were capitalist mill-owners who would not pass any bill to reform the existing conditions of work and life for the labourers who formed the majority of the Population.

The Poor Law Act went against the interest of the poor and Charles Dickens had to take up cudgels against the parliamentarians to amend it. His was concentrated thought on the subject, mollified by the sweetness of his humour. *Oliver Twist* is an example of hundreds of boys who suffered inhuman treatment at the hands of the masters of Establishments; Dickens exposes to shame their flint-heart which by no means could be softened unless they underwent a psychological revolution. The next generations alone could be soft-hearted and help the poor working class, to maintain themselves
comfortably. There were no trade unions to support their cause. Dickens hence, spoke on
their behalf and became their powerful voice; he could speak to thousands of his readers
simultaneously and draw their attention to social amelioration. Thousands of copies of his
books sold, multiplied his voice and men began to think of the problem he had raised for
their consideration and decision.

Even education had been commercialized and run like profitable concerns. Dickens exaggerated the want of knowledge of teachers and founders of such schools. For instance, Dr. Squeers had no knowledge of the spelling of English words and of grammar; yet he presumed to teach the little boys English. Instead of ‘water’ he spelled it ‘watter’; ‘clean’ ‘cleen’; etc. He adopted the practical method of teaching lessons. ‘Draw water from the well’ he taught and asked the boys at once to go to the well and draw water from it. Then he would say ‘clean the floor’; the boys would have to clean the floor also. They were not well-fed though he extracted much money from their parents for their maintenance. They were physically and intellectually starved. He declared no holidays for the children so that he could collect the fee for twelve months. The sensual parents were happy that they would have no hindrance from their own sons or step-sons. Dickens drew the attention of the educationists and parliamentarians of the day and motivated them to reform ‘education’. Educational establishments for children were nothing short of ‘hell’ for them. In Hard Times children are taught to become statisticians, delighting themselves in facts and figures at the cost of fancy, feelings and emotions. Fancy is shut out of their curriculum and life.

Again and again he harps upon the callous hard-heartedness of capitalists in his novels. One of them builds a house to live in and calls it ‘Stone house’. He is flint-hearted, inhuman and fancies himself ‘civilized and cultured’ contributing to the prosperity of England. Dickens slighted them publically and renders them despicable symbols of inhuman savagery totally devoid of humanitarianism in a country benevolently ruled over by an Empress.

Charles Dickens grew serious in his treatment of the social problems and he was not found humorous rather he was grave and severe in his treatment of the cases and like a famous lawyer, he argued in full earnestness to find a solution to them. He cannot be accused of want of seriousness and gravity. He acquired high degree of seriousness
because public or social life was his personal life. His personality can be gleaned from his attitude to public problems and humanity in England in general. For having a proper assessment of his personality, we should acquaint ourselves with those formative influences which played a prominent role in his early boyhood and youth. His early poverty drove him to the workplace to earn his daily bread. The books which he read with avidity, his love for the theatre and the dramas, the characteristics of the Victorian Age, namely its ideals, his life as a reporter and his unhappy love-affair, married life, etc., all these had left upon him a vivid impression that shaped his destiny and the nature of his novels. Despite all the depressing factors of his life, he kept himself cheerful and devoted himself to the amelioration of the poor people.

Charles Dickens became a novelist and entertained the reading public with his observations on human beings and social life of London. An estimate of personality of the novelist is made through his novels since his characters were real and some of them lived in flesh and blood, i.e., the characters in his novels are mirror image of his life. His creativity ran riot, influenced by his ebullient sense of humour. He holds our attention with his first sentence and carries it on to the end of the narration. His varied personality accounts for it: his sense of humour, his creative imagination, his reformative zeal and humanitarian appeal, his sense of suffering and pathos, his innate desire to bring in trifling and melodramatic scenes—all these factors make his novels realistic and made direct appeal to the heart. His realistic descriptions are based upon the true, actual experiences of his life. The English slums, the law courts, the Western civilization, the country sides, the suburbs, the factories and mills with their smoking chimneys, the abominable masters and their horrible treatment of children and elders, their inhuman conduct and the silent suffering of the workers—all these form the basis of his realistic or humanitarian novels.

Undoubtedly, Charles Dickens describes London life in his novels, as he witnessed it. He could well portray lower-middle-class life with which he was intimately acquainted. As a Londoner his creative activity is also limited to city life-high and low. He could be acquainted with the latter only since he belonged to the poor classes. So living men and women are his characters—whom he has caricatured to serve his purpose. Dickens has not given us a picture of the bare hard life of London, but all the facts of life are coloured by his vivid imagination. Exaggerated pictures are often offered so that he could
draw public attention to reform. What is ugly is presented uglier and sordid. So the world he presented is coloured, exaggerated, heightened or worsened, brightened or dulled. His novels are peopled with characters that are exaggerated in their appearance and conduct.

*Oliver Twist* despite its exaggeration speaks effectively of the gruesome treatment of children in workhouses and factories. Our sympathy goes to the children in a great measure as also our hatred of masters increases manifold. How effortlessly he succeeds in making us hate the capitalists and sympathize with the poor workmen and children.

Quite reckless with misery and hunger, he rose from the table, walked up to the master, bowl in his hand, and said, “Please, Sir, I want some more.” The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned quite pale on hearing these words.

“What!” he said astonished.
“Please Sir”, replied Oliver, “I want some more.”
The master aimed a blow at Oliver’s head, seized him by the arms and shouted for the beadle. (*Oliver Twist*, P.13).

By making an indepth study of his works it can be concluded that Charles Dickens was a confirmed humanitarian and social reformer. He awoke to the social injustices of the day, like the ill-treatment of children in schools and workhouses, long hours of tedious work for the elders, litigants hopelessly wandering from court to court in hope of justice, inordinate legal delays, etc. He wished to reform England and its society which was inhuman, mechanical and hard-hearted. Had it not been for the presence and activity of Charles Dickens, a dedicated soul to reform, England would have gone to dogs and human dignity would have completely been lost. Through his novels Charles Dickens smilingly reproached them for their lapses and administered sugar-coated sermonic pills.

Mulk Raj Anand championed the cause of the underdog of Indian society with all vehemence and skill at his command. He raised his strong voice against the exploitation of the poor and the weak by any class. This included the British masters, the village money-lenders, the businessmen, the native rulers, priests and tea planters. The writer’s sympathy for the poor and the oppressed is so acute that we sometimes find the author cry with anguish against the injustice, which was so common in those days. In
novel after novel one can see simple noble human souls pitted against the soulless poverty of industrialization or indentured labour or priestly exploitation or simply individual selfishness. The labour problem of textile mills in Coolie, slave driving of the labourers in The Two Leaves and a Bud, the problem of introduction of machines and consequent unemployment in The Big Heart, untouchability in Untouchable, all prove this point.

Mulk Raj Anand suspects all institutions, temples, charity houses, government offices, laws and even religion. He feels that they attempt to do artificially and by mechanical means the good which would only come from the spontaneous action of the individual. Class distinction and the aristocratic system are repugnant to him because they check the natural free current of fellow-feeling which should flow from one man to another. This is Anand's philosophy of life and it underlies everything that he writes.

Mulk Raj Anand's special field is problem novels. A problem novel is a novel written with the specific purpose of discussing a special problem. Novel is the most suitable medium that he could think of, through which to convey his views to the readers in a most effective way. In the most open and direct way Mulk Raj Anand addressed himself to the treatment of the various kinds of economic and social exploitations, and some topical political questions of the day that faced India and Indians in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Big landlords and the priestly class of Mahants, Mendicants and Brahmins had their own vested interests in helping the process of exploitation. Zamindars not only fattened on the labour, rent and the extortions from the poor peasants, but also extended a helping hand to the village Mahant and the Brahmins, who were the so-called custodians of religion and religious practices. By the same logic, the Sudras (untouchables) who were outside the pole of caste hindus had to suffer many kinds of indignities at the hands of caste hindus, particularly the Brahmins, who always paraded the superiority of their caste order. Among the untouchables themselves, there were gradations. The sweeper was the lowest in this grade while the cobbler was equally abominable. This was the exploitation based on caste considerations.

Mulk Raj Anand entitled a novel Coolie which deals with the exploitation of a young hill boy Munoo by all those who give him employment for sometime. First of all
Munoo works as a domestic servant in the house of a Bank Sub-Accountant. The novelist makes the reader see through the eyes of the suffering hero Munoo, in order to make him realize the wrongs and the injustice done to him by the mistress of the house. Even his uncle Daya Ram who took him to the Accountant’s house does not sympathize with the poor boy, when he is beaten and turned out. Prabha, his next employer seems to be a kind hearted man but his partner is a real devil. Munoo tried to survive by earning his living as a coolie in the shop of a grain merchant and after that as a railway porter. He could not succeed and ran away with a circus troupe to Bombay, to become a labourer in a Textile Mill. The hard, unhygienic housing conditions of this industrial city, the forcible extraction of money by foreman from the monthly wages of all coolies, the strike and lock out of the mill, are all described with realistic details by Mulk Raj Anand in Coolie. At last Munoo dies of strain and consumption. In this novel the plight of all kinds of coolies is shown, which Munoo experiences in quick succession. Through the method of direct narration of the omniscient author and through the dialogue between the various characters, the novelist succeeded in bringing out the pathos and poignancy in the life of coolies.

The miseries and total exploitation (economic, moral and racial) of coolies working in tea-estates and coffee plantations owned and managed by the white masters are vividly pointed by Mulk Raj Anand in Two Leaves and a Bud. These big estates were the property exclusively of British capitalists and they were in a way outside the purview of ordinary law. The word of the white managers was the law. The managers belonged to the superior white race and they could with impunity play with the honour and the lives of these coolies and their women folk. Gangu, a middle aged man as distinguished from the immature boy Munoo of (Coolie) is the hero of this novel. When he reached Macpherson tea-estate with his wife and two children, harsh realities of the situation soon became evident to him. Reggie Hunt, the Assistant Manager who already kept three coolie women took a fancy to Gangu’s daughter. When Gangu objected, Hunt shot him dead. The white man’s jury declared Hunt not guilty. The novelist here combined the direct narration with the happening of incidents together with the reminiscences of an old coolie, Narain to give the readers a complete picture of white man’s atrocities on the poor coolies in big estates.
Exploitation based on caste consideration is presented in the novel *Untouchable*. It is called social exploitation, exploitation carried on by the entire society on the casteless people known as untouchables. Sweepers and Cobblers are regarded outside the fold of Hindu castes, though they firmly believe in the canons of Hindu religion. Leather workers and washermen, though untouchables are regarded superiors to sweepers. The very touch of sweeper is regarded polluting.

Anand painted very vividly and forcefully the mental anguish that Bakha, a sensitive sweeper boy who is the hero of the novel, felt at the treatment meted out to him by the Hindus. Untouchable is the most poignant novel written by Mulk Raj Anand. In this novel, the happenings of one particular day in the life of the sweeper boy are shown. These happenings are mostly psychological in nature and they bring out the poignancy of Bakha’s mental agony on this particular day.

Bakha is a sensitive, an ambitious non-conformist. He could not understand why he was regarded socially so inferior, while he discharged his duties so well. He had worked in the barracks of Europeans also and had known that the sepias did not hesitate to touch him. But the Caste Hindus treated him differently: “The outcastes were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the nearby brook as their use of it would contaminate the streams”. (*Untouchable*, P.2). In the midst of this background one day’s experience stuns him. While eating sweets which he had purchased in the fair, he accidentally touched a Hindu. That Lala gave a sharp slap to Bakha and began to abuse him as to why Bakha had not shouted loudly and warned people of his approach. A great crowd gathered and they all abused Bakha. Bakha, therefore had to shout now: “Posh, keep away, posh sweeper coming, posh, posh sweeper coming, keep away, posh, posh”? (P.13). The next blow was when the lady of a Hindu house threw down daily bread to Bakha soiling it with dirt and filth on the road. The attitude of the Hindus in general is heart-rending towards sweepers, who have become dirt because they clean dirt.

Mulk Raj Anand believes in the dictum of “Art for the sake of humanity”. For Anand writing novels with his definite purpose was a form of patriotic activity. Mulk Raj Anand’s avowed purpose of writing novels was, like that of Charles Dickens to focus the
attention of the reading public on the miseries and hardships of the poor underdog of Indian society. The purposive character of Anand’s novels can be seen from the titles that he has given to his novels. Untouchable, Coolie, Two Leaves and a Bud (symbolizing Tea plantation coolies), The Big Heart (of a thathiar coppersmith) are tell-tale titles of some of his novels. These titles are self evident and clearly manifest how Mulk Raj Anand’s heart bleeds for the miseries of these poor victims of social, political and economic order of the day. An angry young man that he is, he cannot forgive those who are the instruments of, and the perpetrators of, these undeserved wrongs to which these unfortunate and miseries are subjected. Mulk Raj Anand is a dedicated writer who is committed to exposing the part played by the various wrongdoers in crushing under their iron heels these poor social pariahs and economically backward people.

The novelist’s creative achievement is born of the union of his experience and his imagination. But in any writer there is only a certain proportion of his experience that can be so fertilized. A certain portion of what he has seen, felt, heard and read strikes deep into the foundation of his personality to fire his creative energy.

Most of Mulk Raj Anand’s novels have sprung from his early impressions of his youthful life that he spent in the army barracks of the Punjab and the then Frontier Province. All the vital part his work is about it and all his living characters are the members of the same family.

The technique adopted by Mulk Raj Anand in his novels suits his purpose. His method of story telling is dramatic. He picks up a character and then incident by incident builds up a background. Slowly and gradually the character becomes alive and begins to live and breathe under his expert handling. Details are piled upon details. Minute touches and suggestions are fully made use of, to throw the character in proper relief.

Mulk Raj Anand combines the method of the omniscient author’s narration with the scenic description, through the dialogues of the characters. He engages our attention with his first sentence and holds on to the end. He creates on a grand scale and covers a huge range of characters and incidents. As an adept in describing the rustics, and as a delineator of living characters he brings at the nobility of the hour. As a singer of fortitude the glorifies what he calls the positive values inherent in the victimized. Mulk Raj Anand
emphasises his conviction, though his heroes, which their uprising will eventually and inevitably result in the dawn of a new, better and brighter society. Though Bakha and Munoo seem to be passive they have a burning zeal in them for self-identity and self-recognition. Munoo’s journeying from innocence to experience and Bakha’s instinct to kill the temple priest exemplifies this.

Mulk Raj Anand keeps his eyes and ears wide open and whatever he observes and hears around him in ordinary life situation like cruelty of man to man, attitudinal change in the mind of man towards the society and fellow-man abounds in his novels. His fictional characters live in their surroundings which are not unknown or unfamiliar to the author himself. By the natural and eventual consequences they are involved in Anand and in no inexplicit terms make his intent and point of view clear. His novels are deeply rooted in his real life observations which strongly express his philosophy of life which is one of naturalism and humanism. Anand as a man of vision belongs to the school of realism. His choice of themes and characters are new and contemporary and a deviation from the traditional ones and this makes Anand not only a different but also a committed novelist with an inextinguishable zeal to found a new world based on ethical behaviour and a just social order and liberty, equality and fraternity. In short, in Anand’s fiction Anand the social reformer eclipses Anand the novelist.

Like the Victorian novelist Charles Dickens, Mulk Raj Anand’s ardent advocacy for the poor downtrodden ‘underdog’ is quite patient on the very surface. The titles of his various novels like Coolie, Untouchable, the road and the sword and the sickle are a clear pointer to the various types of exploited classes whose miseries and disabilities are highlighted in his novels. He uses all his skill in painting a more realistic, faithful and true to life picture of various miserable classes of Indian society. He brings out the pathos and poignancy of the feelings and thoughts of his heroes and heroines, who are poor, socially, economically and politically exploited illiterate, ignorant, and superstition-ridden people of the lowest rung of Indian society. The heroes are touched by the spirit of modern discontent and they try to revolt against the existing order. The smart under the dead weight of useless conventions and outmoded traditions. But when they try to throw off this weight, they find themselves breaking down under it, bringing to the surface all the
anguish and agony of their life and expressing the fury of the novelist against the unjust social, economic, political and religious order of the day.

Mulk Raj Anand’s indepth knowledge of the social history of his contemporary society till date, the rise and fate of human civilization forms the corner-stone of his creative vitality and imaginative fertility. The enchanted mirror with which Anand presents the society with a photographic accuracy enlightens his readers on the human, social and moral content of his writings. His point of view of the human sentiments and emotions against power and status power has unfortunately usurped the theme in the modern civilization. Mulk Raj Anand brings to the fore the inescapable and inevitable fate of the underdogs of the society in becoming the causalities of the rich and the powerful for whom poverty is a sin and the poor are not human beings but animals to carry their weights and yet another machine to serve them to amass wealth.

The four novels selected for the study invariably present the unpleasant picture of the society with its ever-widening and the never bridgeable gap between the rich and the poor. They also bring to limelight the various forms of exploitation and oppression of the gutless, spineless and gullible poor by the heartless, merciless and brutal rich and the powerful. True to the saying, “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”, the power and authority in the hands of selfish self-centred and self-interested men encourages them to initiate and perpetuate exploitation and oppression of all kinds in all walks of life.

The Indian society is vertically split because of the centuries-old caste system with “twice-born” caste-Hindus. The fact that the Indian society is corrupt to the core in fudging the importance of the individual on the basis of money and status and not on the basis of his selfless and ceaseless service for the well being of the community receives the major attack in these novels. It is the caste struggle in Untouchable and class-struggle in Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud; it is a conflict between tradition and modernity in The Big Heart.

Mulk Raj Anand is a socialist, humanist and a revolutionary romantic as well. He expects the victims of the society to protest against all sorts of atrocities and injustices inflicted on them by the profiteering - mindedness, selfish section of the society. His protagonists, therefore, revolt against the social evils metaphysical and inhuman
prejudices. They fight the inexorable destiny and thus stand unbowed. The charge that Mulk Raj Anand is a propagandist has been stoutly refuted by eminent critics like C.D. Narasimhaiah and Saros Cowasjee. The charge of propaganda is rejected by an artistic pervasiveness of humanism which peeps out of characters and situation which Anand forms personally. *Untouchable* and *Cooke* show this quality in abundance. Munoo and Bakha are innocent, dignified and loveable in spite of the conscious humiliation heaped on them.

As Anand is unbiased in the consideration of mechanization and in able to weigh both the advantages and disadvantages of the new technological development so does he does in the matter of character study too. As a keen observer of the society he is aware that the upper caste is not of good soul nor is the low is fully free from the wicked. Ananta's call in *The Big Heart* for togetherness among 'thathiyyars' to wage a united fight against fast growing industrial capitalism makes him the vanguard of liberation. His social realism born of his poetic and novel realism ensures the ultimate triumph of idealism in human nature.

The problems of oppression and exploitation has been examined in this research. The spirit of Renaissance and advocacy of freedom for many that in the novels of Anand are perennial and inexhaustive source of research. In this regard it is apt the conclude the study with the most suitable words of K.R. Srinivasa lyengar:

> There are novelists about whom one critical study could be written and one would be enough. There are novelists whose world is so effectively suffocated even by one research programme. And there are novelists who are -large-who invoke multitudes who survive several attempts to probe, and found at last a category. Each new study adds - little to our understanding of Anand's work, yet, leaves the subject unexhausted. (*Indian Writing in English*, P.5).

Mulk Raj Anand and Charles Dickens are humanitarian novelists as is apparent from the comparative study of their novels. But they were not born humanists rather the views and attitudes which condition their works are the result of a number of influences that operated upon them from childhood. Their heredity, social milieu, education, cultural and regional background, and the books they read, and people they met have all conditioned their art and gone into the making of Anand and Dickens spokesman for the
low and underdogs of the society. The familial-socio-economic-politic matrix of the society of their times made Anand and Dickens humanitarian novelists. They underwent severe torture of body and soul, which made them novelists with a purpose, whose ultimate objective was to ameliorate and uplift the existing contaminated and contaminating conditions. The autobiographical flavour is abundantly scattered in their novels and it seems that their novels are a sort of confession of their personal experiences.

Mulk Raj Anand and Charles Dickens are hardcore humanists and dedicated their lives to the cause of the exploited, tyrannized, underprivileged and browbeaten. The basic stream that runs through their works is social, economic and cultural upliftment which is central to the theme of humanism. Both the novelists were deeply affected by the evils prevalent in their respective societies. The artist in them irresistibly was prompted to create a social order where such evils do not exist. They highlighted some of the evils which were dwarfing the even development of man and which went against the principles of humanity. The major themes taken up by Anand in his novels are untouchability, exploitation of the poor, prostitution, religious hypocrisy, illiteracy, plight of the widow, imperial rule, superstitious outlook of the people, poverty, inequality of sexes and various other social constraints that stand in the way of man's progress towards a better and noble being. Similarly, Dickens boldly brought out the seamy side of human life to the limelight and focussed the attention of the powers-that-be to remove the defects. The poor law, the workhouse, prisons, worthless schools and damnable traditions of social life, tyrannical masters, indifferent parents, delays in court's judgement, nepotism and redtapism—all these have been dealt with in detail as to call for immediate attention of the parliamentarians. He did not merely portray but insisted upon reforms at an early date. There is thematic congruence in the works of both the novelists as they both favoured the removal of poverty, caste and racial barriers; the introduction of a new educational system; and freedom in the social, economic and political spheres.

Mulk Raj Anand and Charles Dickens are humanitarian in all respects even in selection of characters. Character is the mouthpiece through which the novelist gives shape to his ideology. The characters in the novels of Anand and Dickens are delineated humanistically so that the readers can identify with them, feel for them and proclaim that there should be an end to exploitation.
Mulk Raj Anand's novels are an expression of a deeply felt anger against the contradictions and oppressions of the Indian society, of his explosive rage against the iron grip and debasing impact of man-made institutions, reeking of exploitation and aggression, greed and selfishness, stupidity and violence. His rebellious themes conceived in flaming imagination and couched in a crisp, vigorous and earthy language to shake many a hypocrite's euphoric complacency and tranquil triviality. His characters like Bakha and Munoo are neither the embodiments of sophisticated platitudes, nor do they indulge in quixotic day-dreams of a miraculous social change. The naked truth about them is that they are dominated and exploited by external oppressors, by those who own and rule, but by forms of consciousness which prevent them from liberating themselves.

In the same way Charles Dickens' philosophy of life is marked strongly by enthusiasm and cheerfulness for life and living. Description of pathetic characters by Charles Dickens in his novels like Pip, Oliver, Little Nell, etc., moves our hearts deeply and souls cry for their help. It can be concluded that Anand and Dickens are humanitarian novelists and they shaped their ideas by picking characters from lower humiliated sections of the society. Art of characterization of both the novelists is highly impressive, praiseworthy, symbolic and purposeful. The basic purpose of creating life like characters was not merely the art of prefabrication, but of transformation, something connected with the artist's inner life.

After comparing and contrasting the novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand, it is concluded in the present study that they were giants among the humanitarians, the champions of the underdogs, the overworked and the underpaid. Both the novelists were humanitarian in selection of their themes, choice of characters and use of appropriate style. Their contribution to literature and society can never be negated. As far as literature is concerned, there is synchronization in their ideas, themes, characters and style. For the sake of society they dedicated themselves as long as they lived.

***