CHAPTER III

Exploitation of Labour

Man works to eke out a livelihood. And for his work, he should be paid just payment depending on the nature, duration and place of it. Lord Ruskin, in Unto This Last, has aptly commented on this matter, "... the just wages of any quantity have to be ascertained and paid for any given labour!" (155). When the labour is not paid well, his wages will not meet the maintenance of his family. And when his employers enjoy enormous advantages at his cost, humanity suffers. Society would have gone on well, had the workers been well paid and not mercilessly exploited. When one section of people, the capitalists, derives manifold advantages and accumulates wealth, and the other section, the working class, is not paid wages commensurate with the work, then society will find itself at its worst vortex of degradation and has to fight hard to disentangle itself out of this impasse.

Anand and Rajam Krishnan lay bare their indignation at the callousness, exploitation and avariciousness of the capitalists and concern for the utter poverty, starvation and struggle of the deprived working class in their novels. And for this study, Coolie, The Big Heart and Two Leaves and a Bud by Anand, and Kutukunikal, Alaiyaikaraikal, Ėṭrilmanitarkal, Karippumanikal and Pāṭaiyil Pāṭinta Aḍigal by Rajam Krishnan are being analysed.
Both Anand and Rajam Krishnan have been personally affected by the sufferings of the labourers in their lives. They project their tribulations with avowed purpose in their creative works for the whole world to witness. Moreover, to justify their purposes and strengthen their natural sympathy towards the working class, their visions have been sharpened by the principles of Marxism and Communistic ideals.

The influence of Marx on Anand can be evidenced by comparing his writings prior to 1932 with what followed. Cowasjee points out that “Marx’s “Letters on India” were to revolutionize his thinking completely” (18). Anand bought a copy of the Communist Manifesto and began attending a study circle in Marxist thought at the home of Allen Hall- a well-known trade unionist and Pamphleteer. Anand writes, “a whole new world was opened to me... I began to see not only the history of India, but the whole history of human society... The fact that Marxian dialectics had naturally developed out of Hegel, whom I had read, added to the zest of my pre-occupation with it” (AFH 67 – 68).

Anand has utilized this rare opportunity to apply the Marxist methodology in his analysis of Indian society; but he has noted in Apology for Heroism that all this was in the “first flush of my enthusiasm” (128). Rajan comments on this aspect of Anand’s growth as a left-winger, “His socialism originated as the embodiment of an ethical creed from Tolstoy, Ruskin, Morris and Gandhi” (19-20).

Communism is an international movement, which is not restricted to any group,
country or nationality. And sympathy for Communism reached its peak in Europe about the time Coolie was published, and even a moderate like E.M. Forster felt that “no political creed except Communism offers an intelligent man any hope” (Cowasjee 50). Anand feels aggrieved when he is charged as a ‘Communist Propagandist’ for championing the cause of the lowly-placed people in his novels and so on his return to India, he was to deny the influence of Marxism on his writings, mainly because some critics began dismissing him as a ‘fellow traveller’, a ‘naïve Marxist’ and a propagandist. Anand says in Apology for Heroism that “he could never accept the almost religious discipline demanded by a group of people who evolved changing tactics around a minimum manifesto with maximum sanctions” (129). Anand insists on the fact that he took his Socialism from Tolstoy, Ruskin and Gandhi rather than Marx and that “he did not join the Communist Party” (185).

Though the real fact is that Anand’s thinking has been, to a certain extent, conditioned by Marxian dialectics, he avoids many of the pitfalls of the wholly committed writer and calls himself a humanist “to avoid being labelled a Marxist”. (Cowasjee 7). He attaches much importance to his theory of humanism, since he believed, first and foremost, in human beings, in Man, in the whole man. He has been addicted to the ideal of Protagoras (500 B.C.): “Man is the Measure of all things” (140). Anand concludes: “... like many of my generation, I accepted Marxism as a fairly good historical yardstick but considered humanism, the view of the whole man, as the more comprehensive ideology” (185). It can be seen that his humanism has Marxism as the very cornerstone, though humanism means much more. Thus the close relationship
between Marxism and Humanism in Anand’s early novels could be easily established. Marxian dialectics, that is, the social impulse is at the heart of his writings.

Like Anand, Rajam Krishnan unmasks her predilection for the portrayal of the lowly-placed and so she takes up the cause of fishermen in Alaiyarkaraiyil, the poor match-factory child labourers in Kūtukunjukal and the farm-hands, in Cōrīlmanitarkal and Pātaiyil Patinta Adigal. As she hails from an orthodox family, she may not have had any chance to read about or associate herself with Marxian principles (Nalinadevi 276). Her later-day forays into the working-class domain to do field-study would have brought out the requisite humanism from her. She, too, does not like to be called a propagandist, since there is no question of her joining or propagating the Communist principles. Yet the layout of her novels depicting the pathetic plight of the workers has been based unconsciously on Marxian framework. (181)

Though Rajam Krishnan has not openly avowed her leanings towards the Communist principles, her characters in her novels talk, work and die for them. Maniammi, the widowed revolutionary in Pātaiyil Patinta Adigal starts her social work as a Congress Party leader; but disillusioned over the corrupt mentality of Congressmen, she changes her affiliations and develops the cause of Communism in and around Nagapattinam. Along with the devoted members of the Communist Party, she propagates the party’s principles, by creating awareness of their rights, dignity and fellow-feeling among the farm workers.
Maniammai attends a Communist meeting in which the social codes of Marx and Engels and the teachings of Lenin are explained by the party leaders. They further explore the possibilities of creating such an atmosphere in India. Such meetings are clandestinely held and enthusiastic members sacrifice their lives to propagate Communistic principles. Maniammai becomes a member of the Communist Party and she moves with them during night-time attending party meetings and redressing workers' problems. (PPA 129)

Maniammai, exhorts her fellow-workers, "We should be united by joining the Community Party which has the red flag with the symbols of sickle and hammer" (193). Her fiery speech, of course, brings out the Communist in the novelist. When Maniammai is being released from the jail, a co-member informs her, "Comrades, our movement has been stifled. Our comrades may not be outside to welcome you." (249). Rajam Krishnan writes, "Her mind (Maniammai's) becomes deeply saddened with grief" (249). Thus the author identifies herself with the personal involvement of Maniammai.

Anand, after reading Marx's Das Capital and his "Letters on India", became quite obsessed with the egalitarian principles of Communism. He was carried away by the ideal, which Lenin put before mankind: "That one day the state must wither away" (AFH3) "Lenin echoed", Anand writes on, "the ideal of Marx, who criticised the functioning of capitalist society and foretold its doom" (182). As novelist grew, he has shifted his affiliation from Marxism to Humanism.
Anand funded the All India Progressive Writer's Association; but owing to differences of opinion, he kept himself away from its activities in the 1940s and then the Association denounced him as a 'decadent' in 1949. Cowasjee concludes the theory of Anand's humanism in the following:

Anand by accepting humanism is simply liberating himself from the rigidity of Marxist philosophy. Marxism does not reject the individual; and his development is at the centre of Marxist thoughts. One must not lose sight of the close relationship between Marxism and Humanism in Anand's mind—a relationship that is better evident in his works than in his numerous protestations... (14 – 15).

Against the charge that Anand is a propagandist, he reacts vehemently. The fact that he disapproves of it does not mean that "His writing is free of propaganda. But he is no facile propagandist: he is... an expositor, a political novelist, one who sees his characters and their actions in relations to the social, economic and political upheavals of his time...." (Cowasjee 11) Cowasjee comments that Anand had been blamed for writing propaganda and for distorting facts concerning the lives of the planters and coolies. The writes, "Propaganda is the dissemination of information in a systematic manner with the avowed intention of persuading people to a particular line of thinking: its chief merit being that it is deliberately one-sided. The issues involved in Anand's novels are two-fold and distinct from one another..." (84). Thus it has been vilified beyond doubt that Anand has not been an international propagandist.
Anand's novels suffer owing to his propagandistic intentions which override his critical faculties. Likewise, Rajam Krishnan's novels too suffer the same fate. In her preface to *Alaivaikaraiyail*, she says, "My whole pre-occupation has been on social and labour problems which affected my thinking and I do not intentionally pay attention to the literary aspects of the novel" (3). Since she analyses the realistic problems of the workers and the society, the artist's function of adding aesthetic flavour to the work has been lost sight of. There are no overt expressions of propagandistic intentions in her novels; yet her plea for eradication of poverty snags of Marxian principle.

Rajam Krishnan opposes tooth and nail both capitalism and feudalism which try to justify in apportioning possession and enjoyment of rights to only one class of people. This privileged section, free from manual labour, retains the right of owning wealth. She states irrefutably that reformist and welfare measures will be an eye-wash yielding no benefit to the working-class (CM 6).

What Anand fails to do, Rajam Krishnan succeeds in her novels. As a Marxist he has been vociferous in voicing the sufferings of the labourers at the hands of the capitalists under the British government. After the exit of the British, the new government did not effectively implement the welfare measures to better the lives of the poor labourers. Utilising the mighty weapon of his pen, Anand could have exposed the inefficiency of the Indian government. Cowasjee, in this context, writes, "Anand should have taken to task the bourgeois government which replaced the British" (15). Rajam Krishnan, on the other hand, expresses her indignation at the capitalists and feudalists.
under the Congress rule after Independence in Pāṭaiyil Patinta Adigal and Cēnalamanitarkal. Maniammai questions her brother: “Do you know that the outcaste farm worker has been waiting expectantly for your thirty rupees for three days, while you enjoy life wearing silk-dhotis, drinking coffee in silver tumblers and munching almond” (PPA 112). Such caustic remarks bring out the hidden facts of life to the readers.

Many of Anand’s heroes exhibit Communist principles. Ananta and Puran Singh Bhagat are considered “Communists who receive ... orders from the King of Roos (Russia)” (TBH 147) Communists are supposed to the destroy personality or the soul of human beings and they are called as ‘Reds’, ‘Bolshies’, ‘Soulless Machine Men’ ‘Robots’ ... (148). The poet, Puran Singh Bhagat explains the Communist policy, “The power of the State to rule should come from the striving people rather than from a small group of old families...”(89).

Both Anand and Rajam Krishnan project the exploitation of workers by the capitalists and feudalists in their novels. Labourers are not only overworked or under-paid but also misused (in the case of child labour and women workers) and ill-treated (in the case of tea-estate workers). When the works are unorganised and basic rights and facilities cannot be demanded or are deprived, there is no relief to the pathetic condition of the workers, which remain unameliorated till their inevitable end.

Anand brings Munoo from the Kangara hills to be employed as a house-servant in Shamnagar in Coolie. Rajam Krishnan’s child labours come from rural villages to work
in the match and fire-works factories in Kūṭukunjugal. In both the cases, their expectations are too great to be realised. For Munoo, there is no fixed duration for work. He is a full time servant-boy with no rest and holidays with pay. In the case of the child-labours of Rajam Krishnan, they are not paid on Sundays and they have to get up at 3 a.m. in the morning and return late in the night. Thus in both categories there is no leisure for their tired limbs and all Sundays are unpaid rest days.

Factory workers in Kūṭukunjugal know the government ban on child labour which came into operation in 1948 (Nalinadevi 317). Yet they clandestinely employ them with the connivance of the Factory Inspectors. Moreover, greedy parents send small children above six years to augment their daily earnings and no parents make any report of the breach of the government ban. Anand’s Munoo, in Coolie (1936), has had no such protection in his days. Besides, the novelist is more concerned about human treatment to Munoo than the ban on the type of employment.

Employment of children below the age of fourteen is inhuman and the government has banned this practice in all fields. Even twenty years after the publication of Kūṭukunjugal (1980), the situation in and around Sivakasi remains the same. In The Hindu dated 30 May, 2002, it has reported that the collector of Virudunager has been exposed the prevalence of child labour in the match manufacturing units in Sivakasi, by undertaking ‘wee-hour raids’. Three flying squads have inspected the factories in the wee hours, for nearly four hours. They found out that children from remote parts of the district, and the neighbouring districts were forced to board the buses as early as 3.30 am.
and return home at around 8.30 p.m. Long travels in odd hours would naturally affect their spinal cords and the nervous systems. In some cases, children were made to stand throughout the journey in lorries. The said collector has found out that a willing medical officer was involved in issuing false age certificates to the working children.

Working condition of the labourers is far from satisfactory. For instance, in Kūjkunjukal, the nature of work in the fire-works and match factories is very hazardous. Carelessness will result in explosion. Moreover, inhaling the pungent odours of the chemicals will impair the lungs. (Nalinadevi 171). In the case of Munoo, wherever he goes, the work is temporary. And he leaves Shamnager, since he cannot put up with the utterly merciless treatment of the mistress of the house. He is an orphan and the society is not kind to him. He works hard from early morning till night. Even then the lady is dissatisfied, hurling at him the most violent invectives and insults. In The Big Heart, the coppersmiths are uncertain of their future, after the establishment of a factory in their neighbourhood. And out of frustration, they gate-crash into it and damage the machines.

In Two Leaves and a Bud, Anand makes use of the Whitely Report which made a detailed study of the condition of workers in the estates of Assam and Ceylon. The Report noted that children of four, five and six were employed in the plantations. In this novel, Gangu’s son, Budhu is only eight years old and is forced to be employed to augment the family income, yet the total earnings add up to eight annas a day. Cowasjee writes, “The wages in the mid-thirties were pitifully low and there was no food or canteen available on many of the plantations and the only thing the workers got free from the
management was their midday tea but without milk or sugar” (85).

And Hari, the Bombay-friend of Munoo in Coolie takes his ‘brats of six and eight’ along with his wife to Sir George Cotton Mills for work and he is prepared to accept any amount of wages for the children, since some money brought by the kids would lessen his burden of paying for rent and food.

In Kutukumukal, mostly children are employed in the match and firework factories. Since Rajam Krishnan was a member of the commission appointed by the Tamil Nadu government to find ways to upgrade their working and living conditions, she has personally seen the horrid working conditions of the child labours employed like ‘bonded labourers’ almost for the whole day (Nalinadevi 188). How the innocent young boys and girls are forcefully woken up early in the morning and brought to the factories is given in the following lines. “Their eyelids have not opened well to come out of sleep and they squeeze them to alight from the bus” (KK 46). Viji, the heroine of this novel is informed that, “From morning three o’clock till late in the night, children are away from their huts and they may be working around thirteen hours for a petty wage of two to three rupees a day” (21). This amount paid in 1980 cannot be in any way better than the paltry wage of eight annas paid in 1937. In Karippumanikal, Ponnachi’s younger brother aged ten is misused to sell arrack (155). Rajam Krishnan points her accusing finger at the parents of child labour, “Poor parents sell their children to those who offer advance money, instead of sending them to schools” (KK 26). Ponnachi’s uncle Arunachalam says, “Female children are dove-like and they need not be sent out of homes” (KM 75).
Anand does not lag behind in writing about the hard work done by the child labours in *Coolie*. He describes,

They worked from day to day in the dark underworld full of the intense heat of blazing furnaces and the dense malodorous smells of brewing essences, spices, and treacle, of dust and ashes and mud which became kneaded a sticky layer... and plastered the bare toes of the labourers (110).

In the night the young coolies fight among themselves for a share of the market courtyard to rest their naked bodies. In the morning they shove and push each other in a mad rush to carry heavy weights on their backs for a pittance (141). Anand thus exposes the hard work done by the poor nut honest child labours.

Next to child labour, exploitation of female labour has been the target of Anand and Rajam Krishnan. Since they have been inspired by the socialistic principles of Marx, they point out the sufferings of the female labourers in their novels. When Gangu’s wife (TLB) dies of cholera in the Macpherson tea-estate in Assam, Gangu is not provided with any compensation by the British planters to observe the funeral rites and meets his death at the hands of the British planters, when he asks for it. Rajam Krishnan’s hero, Murugesan faces the same situation, in *Mānikka Gangai*, and loses his wife in the tea-estates of Ceylon and returns to Tamil Nadu as a repatriate.

Narain, the friend of Gangu, in *Two Leaves and a Bud* tells him that no one
knows what will happen in the estate. His final advice to his friend is: "Nobody's mother or sister is safe in this place" (42). It is all owing to the 'much-dreaded cock' (49), that is, Reggie Le Hunt, whose presence in the tea-estate makes the male labourers wary of their wives and daughters.

Rajam Krishnan makes a bold dig at the atrocities done to the female labours in her novels. In Karippumanikal, she points out the fact that even a carrying woman is not provided leave with pay. Ramasamy carries an advanced pregnant lady worker in his bicycle but she delivers the child on the way (89). Apart from this failure of necessary provisions to the female workers, they are much harassed while at work. When Ponnachi, the young worker is molested by the agent of the salt-pan's, she kicks him away but she cannot repeat the same when confronted with a mighty co-worker who finally rapes her (80). In Küpukunjukal, Alagayee is raped by the agent of the match factory who promises her many luxuries, on a Sunday (79). In a similar manner, in Cērilmanitarkal, Shanmugam's wife has been raped but he saves her. She leads a peaceful life with her husband after the incident (57). Through these examples Rajam Krishnan proves her point that women labourers are not safe in their work-spots and they are subjected to various forms of harassment.

Anand brings about the climax of Two Leaves and a Bud, when Reggie Hunt tries to molest Leila, daughter of Gangu. She escapes but her father is shot dead in the process. The other female labourers become Hunt's preys. His lust for the coolie women is paralleled only by his brutality to and hatred of the coolies themselves. One of his
mistresses “yielded to him, her body limp and contorted into a silent despair, her eyes agaze at the sensual heat in his face, her heart turned inwards at the cold virginity that seemed to freeze her at the contact with him…” (167). Anand thus artistically brings about the sexual harassment female workers undergo in Assem tea-estates.

Maniammai, in Pātaiyil Patinta Adigal, complains of the local Panchayat President and his son’s harassment of female farm-labourers. She tells her uncle, “No young outcaste girl in my village is safe with these rich landlords” (106). And in Cērīmanitarkal, Shanmugam’s father an old man, narrates how in former days, the agent tyrannized the outcaste farm-hands, “Female workers cannot raise their heads up to chew betel nut, since the agents would force them to raise their sarees up to thigh level and kick them at the private parts with their footwears” (56).

Gangu and his family are inveigled into indentured labour on the Macpherson Tea Estate in Assam, in Two Leaves and a Bud by Anand, and Murugesan and his family, in Mānikka Gangai by Rajam Krishnan, in the tea-estates of Ceylon. They flee from drought and famine of their respective villages. Both the families, in the respective novels, are enticed by the agents with the fabulous promise of heaven in the estates. For Gangu, the greatest temptation has been the possibility of receiving a plot of land free of charge—a temptation which the peasant with his roots firmly embedded in the soil can never resist. Once he reaches the estate the promised land turns out to be a prison with no bars but ‘nevertheless an unbreakable jail’. Paid a starvation wage, compelled to live in unhygienic conditions and undernourished, Gangu and his wife fall a prey to cholera
the latter dying of it. Murugesan’s wife also dies in the Ceylon Tea Estates. Murugesan says, “When we left Tamil Nadu, where our forefathers were born, bad times have started” (MG 22). They have shed blood with tears in forming tea-crops in Ceylon but are not well paid (30). At times they exist on eating only roots. Murugesan remembers a poster he has seen in the estate compound walls with “a picture of a tea-estate lady plucking the tender leaves with her mouth closed with a lock. Under the picture is written the slogan “Mouth was locked on 16.11.48”’ (226). Rajam Krishnan, in her preface to Manikka Gangai, depicts the pathetic appearance of a tea-estate worker she has seen in Coonor. The pity is that the labourer had trekked eight kilometres to meet her. When she asked him why he could not travel by bus, his reply was “I cannot afford to spend for bus travel” (2).

Problems of tea-estate workers have also been attempted by Dr. Daniel, an Englishman in his novel Red Tea (1969) and he also narrates similar events as Anand has done in Two Leaves and a Bud. Cowasjee informs that Red Tea has been set in the late twenties and the working conditions described in it are as deplorable as Anand has tried to project in his novel (86). The Whites are shown as flirting with the coolie women in the presence of their men; the coolies are locked up like cattle during nighttime, and those trying to escape are often beaten to death by the chowkidars. Cowasjee writes, “Once on the plantations, the labourers were guarded not unlike prisoners: chowkidars were posted, high palisades erected and savage hill men employed to track down deserters” (86).
Anand’s fury at the British management of the Assam tea-estates has arisen out of the western dual attitude towards humanity. The British, he argues, are known for their liberalism and broad-mindedness, but when it comes to the question of workers, that too. Indian coolies, profit alone has become their only objective and thus they have failed to provide the unfortunate coolies, wherever they are, with basic facilities (AFH 67). Rajam Krishnan in a similar vein, has projected the sufferings of Tamil tea-estate workers in Ceylon in Manikka Gangai. Thus Anand and Rajam Krishnan provide ample evidences of the exploitation of tea-estate coolies in their novels.

The life of a factory hand is contrasted with that of a coolie in Anand’s Coolie. Lives of the coolies are only a shade worse, because they do not have a union and so they are always at the mercy of their masters. Cowasjee writes, “Whatever functions the dictionary might ascribe to the word ‘Cooie’, in India, he serves as a beast of burden—more manageable, less expensive, and eager to carry his load” (36). In the grain market, the coolies and the bullocks are shown lying huddled together. They sleep amidst “the smell of stagnant drains, rotten grains, fresh cow-dung and urine, the foul savour of human and animal breath and the pungent fumes of smouldering fuel cakes...” (Coolie138). In the city of Bombay, the conditions of labourers are in no way different. Anand pictures them poignantly in the following lines:

The bodies of numberless coolies lay strewn in tattered garbs. Some were curled up in knots, others lay face downwards on folded arms, others were flat on their chests, pillowing their heads on their bundle or boxes, others crouched into corners talking, others still huddled together at the doorsteps
of closed shops or lay on the boards in a sleep which looked like death... (188).

Rajam Krishnan provides many instances of such unlivable dwellings in her Kutukunjikal and Pataiyil Patinta Adigal. When Maniammai of the latter visits the Harijan huts, she is shocked to notice the utterly unhygienic atmosphere. They do not grow any vegetation in between the huts and since earnings are almost spent on arrack, coolies beat their wives in inebriated condition. Brats of the dalits do not have the habit of applying coconut oil to their shabby hairs. Inside the huts, no kerosene or fuel can be seen (142). In Kutukunjikal, Rajam Krishnan pictures the agonising scene of their habitations. Men and animals live together. Pigs are the commonest animals prowling in stagnant ditches (40).

The most pathetic scene in Coolie is as follows. Hari, a labourer-friend of Munoo, along with his family, and Munoo, reaches a clearing where they chance to notice a half-naked woman who has been sitting nursing her head in her hands! She speaks between smothered sobs: "My husband died there last night!" "He has attained release", says Hari, "We will rest in his place" (190) Narasimhaiah comments on this scene, "... Death has ceased to frighten the poor - they are past all fright, it is life that is a threat, and death is a release as Hari puts it" (126).

Rajam Krishnan narrates another moving scene of the fireworks-factory labourers in Kutukunjikal. They have the habit of stealthily bringing in explosive chemicals,
thread, paper and other items necessary for the manufacture of fire-works. They will sell
them secretly prior to Deepavali, to earn extra amount to celebrate it. On one occasion,
Kathamuthu and his family have a stock of such stolen goods and by mistake the toddler
of the family makes the chimney lamp fall on the explosive powders and immediately it
is all explosion and burning. The whole neighbourhood goes on fire and since the village
is far away from the fire extinguisher unit of Sivakasi, nothing could be saved by the
labourers (142).

Rajam Krishnan identifies the reason as to why the villagers migrate from rural
pockets to semi-urban and urban areas. In their native places, drought continues for
decades together and since carrying on life without the means of satiating their hunger
and thirst is very difficult, they trek towards towns (PPA163). Anand also adduces the
same factor for the likes of Hari and his family leaving their totally dry native villages to
Bombay (Coolie 178). They reach Bombay with high hopes of bettering their lives but in
vain. Indian coolies are therefore shown as exploited, starving, cheated, dirty, diseased as
the true heirs of one of the world’s great civilizations. In The Big Heart, the poet Puran
Baghat Singh answers Ananta conciliatingly in the following:

Those famished men in the streets of our cities, for instance, come from
their villages to this world built upon pain, their few belongings on ...their
shoulders, their families behind them, trekking the dusty way to the gates
of nowhere, where the jaws of hell await all newcomers. Irretrievably
they leave native fields in ever growing numbers... They travel through
the nights, ... and the hounds of big houses at their legs. And in our cities
of death, they breathe their last breath..." (92).

In large numbers, villagers go to cities, and towns to better their lives, for the prospects at home does not seem better and their decisions appear to be just.

When the competition among the coolies in the grain market becomes sharper, a coolie asks for "an anna a sack" (142), but he is finally refused employment. With all his sufferings to help his benefactor, Prabha, Munoo does not mind sleeping with the fellow-coolies and bullocks. Anand’s symbolical message has been that the man has stolen into the animal world and carved out a niche for himself. The colour of their bodies mingles with that of the earth, perhaps an ironic fulfilment of the prophecy that the poor shall inherit the earth. (37).

Rajam Krishnan is not lenient in chiding the feudalistic village-president and his son in Pātaiyil Patinta Adigal. Her sympathies are with the farm-hands. She writes, "Six annas may be the wage of a labourer, but he may not receive the full amount. Moreover, whatever he receives will be spent on arrack and toddy. In this town, for everything you have to pay..." (141-142). Maniammai reflects the personal opinion of Rajam Krishnan in her view kof the outcaste labourers.

To get employment or any favour from the employers, the workers have to pay bakshees (something) to the agents. Such base and corrupt practices are adopted not only by the Indian managers but also by the British higher officials. In Two Leaves and a Bud, Shashi Bhushan demands a share of Gangu’s meagre earnings and in Coolie, Jimmy
Thomas, the British foreman does the same from Hari and Munoo when they approach him for employment. Rajam Krishnan describes similar corrupt practices adopted by the agents in Cetrij Maniarkal and Karippu Maniaka where the farmhands and the salt-pan workers are paid less than what has been agreed in the wage settlement, since a part of their earnings goes to the pockets of the agents who provide them with employment.

In Two Leaves and a Bud, Gangu is shot dead and the culprit, Reggie Hunt, is exonerated by the British jury by a majority-vote. “In actuality”, writes The Times of India, (Bombay 18 Feb 1938) “in 1938, a young girl aged about 16 was shot dead and the Assistant Manager of a tea-garden sentenced to three years’ rigorous imprisonment on the charge of culpable homicide”. (Cowasjee 87). Rajam Krishnan also writes about such shoot-outs in the Ceylon tea estates in Mānikka Gangai, as narrated by Murugesan; but the difference here is on the level of politics, since the Ealam Tamils fight with the Sinhalese government over their political rights (131).

Nature also plays a harsh role in troubling the coolies. In Mannakatu Pūntairkal, Vadivu raises the crop of groundnut in her small land but owing to severe drought, the crops wither and she incurs loss (77). Likewise, Gangu bemoans the loss of crop he has raised in the plot provided to him by the timely intervention of Dr. John de la Havre in Two Leaves and a Bud. Anand writes, “Gangu watched this violent play of God, this storm with an almost imperturbable calm, as if in the moment of his uttermost anguish, in the very moment of his despair at the loss of his harvest...” (249-250). Anand coolies invariably fail to thwart the wily designs of men and nature.
Anand repeatedly drives home the point that coolies are victims of both men and the gods. In a similar way, Leila’s encounter with the python anticipates symbolically an equally deadly encounter with Reggie Hunt later. “She comes unscathed through both these, the only difference being that she kills the python but the human python, that is, Reggie Hunt kills her father” (Naik. 51).

There are generally two types of exploiters as pointed out by Anand and Rajam Krishnan. The first of these two is the capitalists, and the second, the feudalists. The first list includes monied, influential and powerful people like industrialists, factory-owners, estate-owners (here the British government), and organisations like the Church. And the landlords form the list of feudalists. Viji’s husband Mayilesan and his brother own the match-making factories and fire-works in Kutukunjukal but they do not have any concern for the welfare of the child labours. The British management of the Macpherson Tea-Estates, Sir Reginald White of Sir George White Mills and Todar Mall of the pickle factory, in Coolie, Lala Murlidhar of The Big Heart, are extortioners of cheap labour from innocent labourers, coolies and servants. They never care for the workers. Pattamaniam and his son, in Patayil Patinta Adigal, and the nameless upper caste landlords, in Cerril Manitarkal, are the merciless feudalists stifling the evolution of the outcastes. Strangely, the bishop of the Church, in Alairvaikaravil, turns violent against the requests of the poor fishermen and demands the ‘thuvi’ (offerings of fish) to the church.
The British government not only exploited the country's natural resources but also debased the character of those Indians who were in its service. Indian people have been leading a life of terrible, awful suffering, and poverty under the relentless oppression of the British and the rich people. Anand, in *Coojie*, brings in the example of Babu Nath Ram who cringing tries to solicit the favour of Mr. England requesting him to pay a visit to his house and offering him savories and a cup of tea. The British government created a body of sycophants, looking up to the English, fawning, cringing, and becoming a ready tool of exploitation in the hands of their masters. And they lost their sense of humanity and human decency. Nathoo Ram and Daya Ram and later the Todar Malls have been dehumanized in the service of the English and have lost all fellow-feelings (Cowasjee 26). Cowasjee adds, "The evil, one sees in his poor, is the direct result of capitalistic exploitation and the indifference of the British Government towards the lives of millions of its subjects" (35).

Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud* and Murugesan in *Mānikka Gangai* are victims of capitalism. The former loses his wife and family at the end, whereas the latter loses his wife and family in the Ceylonese tea-estates under the tyranny of the Britishers. Anand makes the character of Dr. John de la Havre, a mouthpiece to utter his diatribe against the British rule in the following:

I tell you, the white sahibs have done nothing. Only imposed machine civilization on people with the sword. Money is the white man's god. Exploitation is his religion! They have sapped the energy of the people everywhere! Climate does the rest! (TLB 186).
M.K. Naik succinctly sums up the callous attitude of the British:

The average British attitude to the Indians is well represented by Croft-Cooke and Reggie Hunt. For them, the Indian labourer is just a piece of property, a sub-human being with no rights and all duty, whose only utility is to be a serviceable tool in the vast machine of the plantation (47).

By the time Rajam Krishnan started her writing career, there was no question of the British tyranny and callousness, but what the British did is naturally followed by the factory-owners, in Kūṭukunjukal, the salt-pan owners, in Karippu Manikal, and the landlords, in Pāṭaiyil Patinta Adigal and Čēril Manījakal. In the case of the fishermen the church has replaced the British in its tyranny in Ālaivaikkaṭaiyil.

Anand’s sympathies are with the poor, but it would be a simplification to presume that all virtues are embodied in them. What Munoo suffers at the hands of his masters is less than what he suffers at the hands of fellow-workers as downtrodden as himself, who are capable of cruelty and callousness born out of a savage struggle for survival. In Gangu, Anand sees the typical tea-estate worker and makes the reader feel but pity for him, when his wife is dead and he has to perform the last rites. When Gangu asks "Do all good men die here and others live on?" (TLB 115), the readers feel but pity for his hapless situation. Rajam Krishnan is all pity for the poor, and through her fictional and biographical characters, she tries to highlight their sufferings. Viji, in Kūṭukunjukal, is ready to get out of the wedlock just for championing the cause of the outcaste child labour, and in Pāṭaiyil Patinta Adigal, Rajam Krishnan immensely identifies herself with
Maniammai, who works for the upliftment of all the poor communities in and around her locality.

Agents or middlemen are the executors of the orders of rich landlords, factory owners, and capitalists. What the labourers suffer at the hands of their master is less cruel than what they receive from these greedy and expropriating agents. Since the agents serve not only the masters but also their selves, the take-home pay of the workers is less than what the master is supposed to dole out.

Maniammai does her best to eradicate the system of agents in her brother's farm first and then in her own farm, in Pataiyil Patinta Adigal, to help the poor farmhands. She charges them, "If you, agents, are good both to the owners and the workers, it is welcome, but what you do is only to enhance your interest. I know what type of unilateral decisions you take to mind your welfare. Not only that, you even become procurers for the landlords" (48). In Karippumanikal and Cetril Manirkal, agents cheat innocent labourers of their regular wages and molest female workers. Kathamuthu of Kutukunjikal, and an unnamed accountant, in Karippumanikal, molest female workers.

Sashi Bushan, an employee of the Macpherson tea-estate demands a share of Gangu's wage in Two Leaves and a Bud. Reggie Hunt, the manager has to be looked after to get any favour from him. Buta, the agent who makes Gangu an indentured labourer gets his commission from the estate management. Jimmie Thomas, in Cookie, refuses employment to Hari and Munoo, since they do not gratify him. He asks Hari, "What have
you brought as a gift from your village for the Memsahib that I should be kind to you?
You have never given me or the Memsahib a basket of fruit on the big day” (199).

Labourers are brutally manhandled and even done to death. When they are alone,
any ill treatment can be meted out to them, since masters are above the forces of law.
Anand has a classical example of the death of Gangu at the hands of Reggie Hunt in Two
Leaves and a Bud. Hunt has been finally acquitted of the charge of murder.

Rajam Krishnan describes the atrocities of the landlords on the outcaste
farmhands in Pățavil Paținta Adigal, Maniammai, the biographical heroine accuses her
opponents, “These landlords will beat men folk in the presence of their wives. Even the
wife will be ordered to pour the watery mixture of cow dung into the mouth of her
husband. She may at times, be asked to fetch toddy to her beaten husband to make him
still more unconscious…”(162).

In Coolie, Munoo is verbally abused by his mistress, when he playfully bites
Sheila on the cheek: "May you never rest in peace... Lustful young bull from the hills.
How did we know we were taking on a rogue and a scoundrel” (71-72). Kathamuthu and
his outcaste child labourers are scolded as ‘pigs and sons of pigs’. It is a pity that
labourers do not react to such abuses. When unions are formed in the factories or in
agricultural belts, no such oral abuses are now tolerated.

Wage earners do not and naturally cannot live within the means of their earnings.
They invariably seek the help of moneylenders to adjust the gap in the budget. The common dictum being, that 'once a debtor always a debtor', they find it difficult to pay at least the interest which in most cases is charged at a higher rate. The creditors are more numerous and wicked and the world of the poor remains unchanged.

Seth Badri Dass, in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, sells his goods at higher rates in his shop and if the coolies do not have enough money, he advances it at an exorbitant interest. Gangu, on landing at the estate, borrows money from him and fails to repay it till his death. Not only the capitalistic machinery but even small individuals in the name of creditors fleece the labourers.

Exploitation of labourers takes place in many forms. Suffering a lot at the hands of unscrupulous and usurious money-lenders has become a common feature in the lives of Indian coolies, peasants and labourers. Malcolm Darling underscores the plight of such labourers, who fail to get themselves disentangled out of the steely clutches of these baniyas in the following: "Nowhere has money-lending been brought to a finer and more diabolical art than in India"(XXI). He has concluded that more than eighty percent of Indian coolies, peasants and labourers wallow in debt. The money is loaned at an exorbitant rate of interest and from the start there is little hope of its being repaid. Money-lenders are in fact the most sought after persons in the villages, since the poor peasants and coolies invariably need some amount to tide over their financial burdens. Anand captures such a scene in *The Village*. "The money-lender is surrounded by the dourest and most ruthless peasant stock in the Punjab, people who were not averse to
chopping off a man's head if there was a quarrel even over a trickle for water from the canal" (158).

The debts multiply, land is mortgaged to pay the rent, and the poor harvest hardly yields enough to pay for the seeds and the interest owed to the money-lender. The rent finally falls into arrears, and the lawyer enters the picture. The farmer is evicted; if he is lucky, he becomes a mill-hand or joins the army. Thus after their belongings, they are driven from pillar to post to receive harsher treatment. This is briefly the pathetic story of a vast majority of Indian peasants and labourers. Anand and Rajam Krishnan portray such scenes in their novels to expose how poor peasants and workers are mercilessly exploited by the money-lenders.

Hari and his family, in Coolie, undergo the same treatment at the hands of the usurious Jimmy Thomas, the white foreman of Sir George Cotton Mills. The whole working class is in fact indebted to him and thus Jimmy earns his livelihood both ways. But Prabha Dayal is the worst affected person, in Coolie, since his factory has been seized from him at his failure to pay back the loan borrowed by his disloyal partner, Ganpat.

Rajam Krishnan too describes about many wicked moneylenders who exploit poor workers. Shanmugam of Ceyril Manitarkal is unable to pay the amount he borrowed to build the house. Moneylenders, in Alaivaikarasvily, lead a prosperous life by lending money to the fishermen at higher interest. But, of all such usurious characters, Rajam
Krishnan draws an exceptional and kind-hearted money-lender, in *Karippu Manikal*, in the person of Sengamalathachi, who has seen hey-days in her life and wants to help the suffering salt-pan workers by lending money at lower interest. She is neither greedy nor expropriatory but fights along with other indigent workers against the monopolistic attitude of the salt pan management.

Working-class people lead horrible lives. Their pathetic plight remains forever aggrieved and they need union leaders to fight for basic rights and better pay, by forming unions. Naik offers his critical comment on their condition:

The ill paid, ill housed, under-nourished and bullied labourer is broken, both in body and mind... capitalism and industrialism are not the only forces, which exploit Munoo and his like. Communalism too lends a hand... The fires of communal hatred are further fanned by politicians, who have their axes to grind. In the whole process, the exploited labourer loses his job, his livelihood and sometimes even his life (42).

Among the exploiters of Anand, Reggie Hunt is the most wicked one. He is the villain of *Two Leaves and a Bud* and is presented as a lecherous being. Anand brings out the coarseness of Hunt's mind through the latter's choice of words, such as when he is speaking to another planter: "Dirty cheats, the whole bag of them. And not here, too, the deceitful bitches. They try the same game in bed, leaving you high and dry at the critical moment". (52).
Comparatively, Rajam Krishnan’s villains are either a group of landlords, or nameless owners of factories and mills. She has not developed any individually named exploiter, as Anand has done. Her fury has been aimed at a class, or institution and not on particular individuals.

In the treatment of the problems of the labourers, Rajam Krishnan differs from Anand in one aspect. Anand plunges headlong to champion the cause of the poor, whereas Rajam Krishnan concerns herself mostly with the atrocities on female workers. Her warning to the union leaders has been that without alleviating the sufferings of female labourers, no union activity can be successful. Her concern for the labourers is seen in the introduction to Karippumanikal, where she underlines the need for uplifting their condition. She writes, “They work from morning till evening and there is no pay for the holidays. Moreover, basic needs are not provided... Medical facilities and retirement benefits are unheard-of things for the poor coolies” (1). Rajam Krishnan expresses her grief over the employment of children in salt pans and fireworks and match factories. She makes it public that government schemes have not reached the child-labours and their pitiable lives move on unreported and unearthed to the public gaze. Like the child labours, women workers are also ill paid and over worked. Since they are docile by nature, they do not protest. Moreover, they are more concerned for the immediate wage to meet the urgent needs than for other necessary facilities. Till union leaders appear on the scene, they keep themselves low. Rajam Krishnan brings to the fore such inhuman treatment meted out to child labours and women workers. Her reportage of the men-workers is in no way a different one.
Anand and Rajam Krishnan having been influenced by Marxism and Communism, have depicted the activities of Trade Unions in their novels. In the early stages, the trade unions were not effective and their roles had been only to collect subscription fees and running libraries for the benefit of their members. Anand finds fault with Ananta of _The Big Heart_ for his failure to form a union to fight for the Coppersmith Community. Rajam Krishnan in _Kutukunjukal_ mentions about Shanmugam's attempt at forming such unions for the welfare of the labour force in and around Sivakasi. He is not very assertive and his attempts are now and then foiled by the owners of the match factories.

For the labours, forming unions is almost a must. Only then their grievances can be looked into and solved by the efforts of 'selfless' leaders. Anand says,

Co-existence between the factory-owners and the workers may be a solution, but not as long as the capitalists control the means of production and dictate the prices of goods. The workers must come together and form unions and, with their collective strength bargain with the employers for their rights: (Cowasjee 128).

In spite of Anand's Marxist leanings, he can see that the tyranny of the proletariat is as repulsive as the tyranny of the capitalists. Anand expects workers to give up in-fighting among themselves and to put up unity to extract concessions from the management.

Revolution has become necessary and Ananta, in _The Big Heart_, says, "Any
change can be effected only through devotion and thought. The factory which Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar have opened has taken in the men they want, to make gadgets for the army, leaving the rest of us on the doorsteps” (39). Realisation has thus dawned on the workers themselves and so they decide to form unions to fight for their cause. Ananta says "We must not fight among ourselves" (62). He continues:

The working men of Vilayat took their destiny in their own hands and banded themselves into the new brotherhood of unions. At first they were persecuted and penalised by the employers and the Sarkar, which was behind the employers. The men stuck together, and struggled and struggled, until today there are few working men and women in factories who are not members of union. They bargain together for higher wages, shorter hours, against bad conditions, for holidays with pay and defend their rights by strike action... (200)

Rajam Krishnan has foreseen the necessity of trade unions and she describes the fervent attempts of leaders to form unions in Ḵuṭ̤ukunjukal and Čęṭ̤al Manītarkal. Shanmugam of the former is very tentative and not determined, whereas his namesake in the latter, a Communist propagandist, is one with the farm-hands and tries to rouse their feelings against the feudalists and the callous institutions. (159). Workers must come together and form unions and, with their collective strength, bargain with the employers for their rights. Rajam Krishnan's Viji, in Ḵuṭ̤ukunjukal, throbs with the ambition of fighting for the demands of the labourers in the match-manufacturing units and firework factories. She spearheads the labour movement by associating herself with the
labourers. She is even ready to disassociate her marital status with Mayilesan. Viji’s father tells her:

Trade Unions do not effectively work here. They are here to press for the revision of wages or other concessions. Factory owners solve or accede to the demands put up by us. For the owners of factories, unions are necessary, since the banks advance loans only when the demands of the workers are met (71).

In this changed atmosphere, Rajam Krishnan conveys the message that forming and running unions are necessitated by many factors. The managements and the unions have to amicably co-exist to solve any problems arising between them.

Union leaders should be strong characters. They should set exemplary lives, for the labourers will lose hope in the leadership, if the leader’s personal life is fraudulent. Ananta of The Big Heart fails in this aspect, even though he has the lofty ambition of leading his coppersmith brotherhood against the owners of the factory. He has been scandalised as a ‘whoremonger’, since he lives with Janaki without marrying her, and a ‘drunkard’; but he has been to Bombay and seen trade union activities. Owing to the susceptible personal traits, he is unable to muster the courage of his fellow-workers and gets killed by his friend Ralia by mistake.

Rajam Krishnan accuses Maruthavanar, a trade union leader in Kiliukunjukal, since he himself becomes a factory owner when the opportunity comes his way. Such
opportunistic leaders forget the welfare of the workers for whom they fight, and make use of their position as leaders to better their personal prospects. Ramasamy of Karippumanikal becomes a union leader by dint of hardwork, dedicating his life for the welfare of his co-workers. But when he goes to solicit the support of the trade union leader for his reinstatement in the factory condemning the dismissal, the leader asks him to be obedient to the management (114). Ramasamy is thus disappointed not only by the curt reply of the leader but also by the rich ambience of the leader's house. He concludes that this leader must be misusing the union to lead a luxuriously personal life.

During the 30s and 40s trade unionism was in its formative stage. Leaders were from the same industry, since only they could influence their fellow-workers But in the time of Rajam Krishnan, leaders from other industries or even political parties are brought to lead the unions. Ramasamy explains, in Karippu Manikal, why leaders are brought from outside. It is due to the lack of education and experience of the local leaders (149).

Anand and Rajam Krishnan similarly portray the fervent attempts of the leaders of the workers to form unions. Since both of them have come under the spell of Marxist principles, they express the inevitability of organising unions, in their novels. Anand, in The Big Heart, says, "... We will form a union to ensure their right to a proper wage. They are strong enough to displace their exploiters and seize the factory, which by all the right is theirs" (155). Rajam Krishnan expresses similar thinking of Maniammai in Pataiyil Patinta Adigal. Maniammai informs her followers, "Just ten years back, we could not have imagined of the welfare measures of the government. Now we are doubly
confident of organising our labourers together to form a union and fight for the workers...” (104).

When trade unions strike work to press their demands, the management will not at first yield to them at once. They adopt coercive measures and underhand means to suppress the strikes. In Coolie, Sauda of the Red Flag Union asks all workers to strike work and the workers too, willy-nilly, participate in it, since they do not have the means to satisfy their hunger and thirst. Yet the British management cleverly twists the situation to its advantage by secretly creating the Hindu-Muslim communal problem and the whole purpose of the strike is thus thwarted. Anand has a different approach to the general strike of the plantation workers in Two Leaves and a Bud. This strike also fails and the contributory factors for its failure are: first of all, there are no efficient leaders, secondly, the British management is very powerful in bringing in the military to suppress the strike and the last, tea-estates are not a small area to organise an effective march to the office of the Management to demand their rights. Thus labour union strikes fail in The Big Heart, Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud.

Anand reflects the troubled times of the workers in the pre-Independent India. But during the days of Rajam Krishnan, unions have become powerful and they have able and dedicated leaders to work for their brethren. Moreover, the management’s counter-measures are not always successful. The success of the strikes, in the novels of Rajam Krishnan, reflects the evolution of the trade union activities. Shanmugam of Kittukunjugal and Cetti Manitarkal and Marian of Alaiyakaraiyil do their best and
achieve their aims. Due to their best efforts, work-time of the child labours and farmhands is reduced and the demands of the fishermen are also achieved. Rajam Krishnan portrays the real strikes of her times and hence the success rate is comparatively higher in her novels. Moreover, workers are now aware of their rights and so leaders can easily muster the combined strength of the workers.

Anand’s revolutionary leaders fail to bring about the desired changes. The reason for the repeated failures of the strike in his novels is due to not only the inefficiency of the leaders or the oppressive measures adopted by the capitalists and feudalists but also the period of occurrence. In the 1930s, the unity of the workers was unexpected and so most of the agitations fizzled out. It took longer even for a determined and wholehearted Mahatma Gandhi to convince the Indian ignorant masses of his intention and the need of the hour. Contrarily in the novels of Rajam Krishnan, the processions, agitations and strikes are well manoeuvred and leaders work day and night openly and even furtively to organise massive processions. With the government’s support, the leaders of her novels, like Shanmugam in Kūṭukunjukal and his namesake in Čētril Manītarkal, bring in a lot of welfare schemes for the oppressed. Maniammai also achieves many goals through her agitations. Yet Marian and his fellow fishermen are proscribed by the church authorities, when they refuse to offer ‘thuvi’ and in the end a lot of blood shed occurs, when they oppose the machine-boats and trawlers which deprive them of their livelihood.

When Anand’s fictional leaders fail to achieve their goals, Rajam Krishnan, by her firm touch, makes them realise their demands. Anand’s novels dealing with the union
matters leave a "hope of better days to come and each novel ends on a note of optimism" (Cowasjee 50), which presages the message that future generations will become later-day torch-bearers in the human race. Rajam Krishnan's Maniammai and Sengamalathachi along with Ramasamy and Thanapandian bear on their shoulders such herculean responsibilities. By means of unstinted efforts, they try to alleviate the untold sufferings of their fellow workers. Thus the post-Independent India has ushered in drastic changes in labour union activities.

Anand's Bakha does not have a union to retaliate the slap he receives from a caste Hindu in Untouchable (1935); but Rajam Krishnan's scavengers in Pāṭaiyil Patinta Adigal (1991) have Maniammai amidst them to lead their Nagai Scavengers Union towards victory. Her exhortation to the workers has always been: "Let us unite, oh, oppressed people, wherever you are, form unions and fight for rights" (152). Their just demands of dearness allowance, maternity leave, and gratuity are achieved. Moreover, many ration shops are opened to cater to the poor outcastes.

Among the working force, women form a considerable strength as farmhands, mill-workers, salt-pan workers and in households as servant maids. Therefore for the successful running of trade union activities, women should be involved (Nalinidevi 187). In Karippu Manikal, Ramasamy tries to organise a massive procession by bringing in the whole working class people. He requests the female workers to join the strike without fail. To help his cause, Sengamalathachi exerts her influence to bring all female workers to participate in it. Maniammai, in Pāṭaiyil Patinta Adigal, does not encounter any resistance
from female workers for her processions and union activities. In Alivaikaraiyil, Marian and Nasarein along with Solomon bring in female members of their families to make the strike a success. In Kūtukunjukal, Viji lends a helping hand to her father's effort to form a union and then later to start small match-making units for the labourers. Rajam Krishnan, therefore through her novels, leaves the authentic message that to make union activities effective, involvement of female workers is more important. Her firm standpoint has been that women’s role cannot be lost sight of in such matters.

On the contrary, Anand does not have much to say on this aspect, since there are less female workers in his novels. Hari's wife, in Coolie, and Gangu's wife in Two Leaves and a Bud, are ineffective characters. They along with their men folk join the strikes, but union activities then were considered exclusively male domains. Janki, the ailing unwedded wife of Ananta, has been asked by the poet, Puran Singh Bhagat, after the death of her husband, Ananta, to continue his work. He tells her, "... And when you get a little better, then you can organise the women comrades who come there" (TBH 230).

Ananta, the hero of The Big Heart, maintains an attitude of compromise between tradition and modernity. He can visualize the good and the bad in each. Though he hates the idea of men becoming slaves or being addicted to machines, he propagates the good uses of the machines. He says, "If you have the controlling switch in your hand, you can make the machine a slave rather than your master. It is that switch or destruction"(90).
Rajam Krishnan brings to the fore the fear and restlessness of fishermen after the introduction of machine-boats and trawlers. They are afraid of the fact that owners of machine-boats will definitely deprive the traditional fishermen of their rights. Marian tells his family members, "Our government has issued licences for six thousand launches. We should form unions to oppose this move" (AK 249).

Anand has written of the wholesome aspect of industrialization, when India was about to usher it in; but the consequences have been detrimental to the labourers, because owners of factories and mills have fattened themselves. Rajam Krishnan writing two decades after Anand, observes all around the affluence of the capitalists and the misery of the poor.

In conclusion, both Anand and Rajam Krishnan convey the realistic picture that the exploitation of hapless workers, male, female and children, go on unchecked. The rich take undue advantage of the availability of cheap labour and the pathetic position of the working class remains for ever unameliorated. For the novelists, "There are just two types of people in the world - the rich and the poor and money decides both caste and class" (TBH 10-11)

Capitalism, according to their views, means exploitation. The British management of the tea estates in Two Leaves and a Bud, the owners of Sir George Cotton Mills in Coolie, and Murli Dhar Lal and Sadanand in The Big Heart are ruthless exploiters of the labouring class. Rajam Krishnan has a long list of cutthroat
exploiters mostly unnamed, like the owners of salt pans, match manufacturing and fire-works factories, landlords and the church authorities. All of them plan to extort cheap labour and fleece the poor workers.

Industrialization and machinization have rather worsened the plight of the labourers. Gandhi has shown his aversion to the introduction of machines; but his ideas were unacceptable and the introduction of industrialization has become inevitable. He advocated, fervently, the practice of working on spinning wheels and the use of Khadi dress. Though Anand’s characters are not influenced by the teachings of Gandhi, Rajam Krishnan’s heroines respond effectively to him. Maniammai personally wears Khadi dress and propagates the message of Gandhi in regard to homespun Khadi and untouchability.

Union leaders take up the cause of suffering workers. Ananta, in *The Big Heart* has been advised to serve the poor working class. He tells his fellow-workers, “And forget yourself . . . if need be, sacrifice yourself for the good of others. It is the welfare of the people which counts” (194). Under the leadership of union leaders, workers need not feel disheartened despite the rampant growth of the capitalists and the advent of machinization in India. They should fight for basic rights through unions. Ananta asks his coppersmith brotherhood not to be intimidated by fate, but to rise above them.

Rajam Krishnan’s sterling heroines, Viji in *Küükunjukal* and Maniammai in
Pāṭaiyil Patinta Adigal devote their lives for the upliftment of the suffering workers. Maniammai even transgresses the orthodox Brahminical code of widowhood and, donning male-dress does social service. Shanmugam, in Cēṟil manitarkal and Ramasamy, in Karippumanikal, operate as dedicated leaders of the workers. Shanmugam tells his co-workers, "We are now slaves to none. Agriculture feeds humanity and for farm-hands, hard work is their right contribution" (266). Rajam Krishnan brings to the fore the awakened consciousness of the workers.

As happened in the western countries, social revolution here seems the right panacea for the sufferings of the exploited. Anand exhorts his brethren, "The Revolution is not yet. And it is not merely in the shouting.... It is only through a great many conflicts between the employers and their workers, in a whole number of battles, ... that there will come the final overthrow of the bosses" (TBH 194). Anand tells, in Apology for Heroism, that "neither power, nor money would solve the world's problems" (4). And he ends each of his novels in a note of optimism with the clear message that "the road to socialism is clearly mapped; but to traverse it is no easy matter" (Cowasjee50).

Rajam Krishnan conveys her standpoint in her prefaces to the novels like Cēṟilmanitarkal, Karippumanikal and Kūṟukunjukal. Her firm conviction has been that to make a strike or a procession successful, the whole-hearted participation of all workers including females, is imperative. Through Ramasamy and Sengamalathachi in Karippumanikal, and Viji and Maniammai, she proves this point. Trade union activities
in her novels, have achieved a lot, like the enhancement of wages, reduction of work time, maternity leave, equal pay for women and others (Nalinadevi 212). She advises unions not to be affiliated to political parties but to fight independently for their rights.

Among outcaste workers, the inborn abject nature is quite common; but it can be removed only by societal transformation. Age-old traditional values should be set right by the spread of Marxian principles of equality, as Shanmugam in Cērīljanitarkal and Maniammai in Pātaivil Patinta Adigal carry on to educate the illiterate masses. What Anand has started in Untouchable and The Road in regard to the untouchable coolies, Rajam Krishnan tries to solve through her characters, like Viji in Kūṭukunjukal and Maniammai in Pātaivil Patinta Adigal.

Workers struggle to earn a decent wage and coercive measures are repeatedly adopted to suppress their inner spirits. They may die of beating or starvation; but once they are united, awareness will be implanted in their minds of their just needs and rights. Times are changing and the labourers of Anand and Rajam Krishnan are marching towards their goals of good pay, ample rest and nutritious food.

Women are at times considered as divine beings; yet the same society degrades them. This ambivalent attitude towards the opposite sex has been deftly handled by both the novelists in their works. An attempt is made in the next chapter to unfathom the possible analogous treatment of the exploitation of women.