CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

VI.1 Introduction

VI.2 Class Conflict and its Consequences

VI.3 Discussion

VI.3.1 Dr. Arjun Jadhav

VI.3.2 Dr. Ashok Chaskar

VI.3.3 Dr. Asrin Fakhr

VI.3.4 Dr. P. R. Bhabad

VI.4 Academic Significance
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

VI.1 Introduction:

In the previous chapters the researcher carried out a thorough analysis of the novels selected for study. On the basis of this analysis, the researcher arrived at certain conclusions regarding the issues of caste and class that are reflected in the selected novels. The researcher has summarized the major findings and conclusions in this chapter. The selected novels stretch over a long period of time. Hence, the researcher has traced the changing attitude of writers and the Indian community towards caste and class. The issues are also handled in different ways by those writers, depending on their own background, experiences, attitudes and philosophies. Yet, some parallels are observed between writers from different parts of India. The researcher has pointed out the similarities and differences among the writers by comparing them.

A large amount of research is done in caste and class. In this concluding chapter, the researcher has summarized her own major findings with relation to some other major researches carried out on the novels. The researcher has shown the strengths of this research and explained how it is different from other researchers on the same novels. The researcher has finally stated that this study has made valuable contribution to the vast research on literature and suggested a few related topics that can be considered for further research.
This is a summary of conclusion about ‘caste’ that the researcher derived on the basis of a thorough study of the selected novels.

The worst indication of caste is untouchability. All human beings are equal, yet, man has divided people on the basis of caste. Caste is decided by birth hence, there is no real rationale behind it. A man like Bakha is strong and good looking. He shares some qualities with children of the upper-class. He has a sincere desire to learn. But he is destined to clean latrines. Velutha in *The God of Small Things* is a skilled mechanic. He is capable of honest love and has self-discipline. He is cruelly treated and dies a miserable death. Amongst lower-castes, there is further hierarchy. Tanners or chamars are also looked down upon. Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve* does not approve of the idea of her sons working in a tannery.

While some people like Rakha or his father Lakha in *Untouchable* accept their lot meekly, the more energetic individuals try to revolt against their lot. As they grow up, they realize the injustice inflicted upon them. They despise being humiliated due to their profession. This leads to conflict, which can have two kinds of consequences. The peace-loving, matured, contented people like Bakha’s father accept everything meekly and mutely. Bakha and his kind become restless but finally come to terms with their condition they hope that the future would bring something new and good for them. Like Bakha, Rukmani’s sons in *Nectar in a Sieve* also have great ambitions in life. Although Rukmani and her husband are against the idea of working in a tannery, their sons don’t care as long as they get money. This shows that opinions about caste are changing gradually. Rukmani’s sons belong to the next generation.
Generally, the low-caste people are ill-treated and humiliated by the high-caste people. But all high-caste people are not the same. The Hindus have orthodox ideas to lower caste people. Christians and Muslims are more liberal in their treatment of caste people. Bakha is offered tea and a hockey-stick by the Havildar Charat Singh. He is consoled by a Muhammadan, the tonga-wallah when the Brahmin created a scene in the street. Another surprising fact is that the upper-class people do not have any objection to availing services of the low-caste. The priest at the temple asks Bakha’s sister to clean the temple courtyard. Velutha is allowed in the pickle factory and sometimes even in the house when there are little jobs to do. Mammachi knew of Chacko’s physical relations with the lower caste women in the pickle factory. The temple priest also tries to molest Bakha’s sister.

The untouchables were considered to be polluting the purity of objects, places and persons. Many writers have hinted that attitudes have changed during the course of time. In the time of Velutha’s father, they were made to crawl backwards on the floor. Today they are treated like human beings with physical strength, honesty, sincerity and loyalty, immense mental abilities and artistic potentials. Velutha is a skilled artisan and Kalo in He Who Rides a Tiger is a great master in his own profession. Kalo’s daughter Chandra Lekha wins the first prize in the essay competition. Any other high born student would have been applauded for the meritorious performance but Kalo’s daughter was ignored, simply because she was lowborn.

The caste victims perceived British arrival to India an opportunity. Thousands of outcastes were converted to Christianity. Hence, Syrian Christians were referred to
as Rice Christians. They soon realized that the caste hierarchy was maintained among the converted Christians and they were given a separate priest, a separate church etc. Moreover, after Independence, the government introduced several beneficial schemes for the backgward classes but convert Christians could not avail of them. Hence, they were losers either way. The plight of such converts in South India is depicted by Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things*.

The caste issue has been handled in an entirely different way by Bhabani Bhattacharya. Caste is connected with religion, which is extremely important in Indian life even today. Kalo poses to be a Brahmin and fools those who were bloated with caste pride. The hypocrisy, the vanity and selfishness with regards to caste are exposed by Bhabani Bhattacharya. Kalo breaks the caste system and upsets the age-old social order by investing himself with Brahminism. On the other hand, Biten who is born a Brahmin, discards the sacred thread to shun his identity as Brahmin. Thus the high-caste Brahmans also suffer when caste becomes an obstacle in the path of happiness.

Overthrowing caste system when it is a matter of hunger and need is also pointed out by Adiga in *The White Tiger*. Ram Prasad is a false name assumed by the Muslim driver of Ashok’s family. He had to assume this name and pose to be a Hindu because there is a general hatred for the Muslim community in India. Adiga shows that Balram and his brother kept getting jobs easily at sweetshops because they were ‘Halwais’ by caste. Balram knows that a worshipper of God is one to be trusted; hence, he always pretends to worship the numerous pictures and idols of deities in an attempt to create a respectable and god-fearing image of himself in the eyes of his
master. However, men have become opportunists in these hard times and Balram feels no sense of guilt when he cheats his master under the guise of religion, even when he goes to the extent of killing his master.

Through the character of Balram, Arvind Adiga has looked at religion and caste from a different perspective. Rather than harping on the miseries of the caste system, and highlighting the miseries and sufferings of the untouchables like Anand or Kamal Markandaya, he has depicted a different picture. He has traced the changes that have taken place during the period of globalization. We observe a vast difference in the attitude of people towards caste and untouchability in Anand’s *Untouchable* and Adiga’s *The White Tiger*. The passage of time between the two novels has enabled the writers to note the changes.

The high caste Brahmins enjoyed all the privileges that life had to offer. It is natural for any individual to wish to continue enjoying those privileges. This would have been impossible had the lower castes raised their heads and arms and confronted the Brahmins. It was necessary to keep them in their low position. Religion was strategically used in those days. The Brahmins assigned the structure to religion, so that without being blamed, they could continue to enjoy the highest position in society. The oppression of the low caste people was the result of this general human tendency to retain a position of power and suppress those who might pose a challenge. Kalo too knew that only a religious stance could give him an opportunity to gain what he deserved in life. He proved it, again, without a sense of guilt like Balram Halwai, using religion to advantage and cheating the world in its name.
VI. 2 Class Conflict and its Consequences:

C. J. George maintains that “Class system is a greater evil than caste system. This is obvious from the fact that the rich low caste is better placed in society than the poor high-caste. The caste victims can at least draw sympathy and support from members of their own caste whereas the class victims have no such consolation and have to suffer perpetual deprivation.” (George: 1994)

This is a general opinion that seems to be shared by every author from Mulk Raj Anand to Arvind Adiga. In Coolie Varma and Lehnu are Brahmins by birth and Munoo is a Kshatriya. But they are compelled to work as coolies. Here, their caste does not matter but their class does matter. The coolie caste/class is a creation of a social system. The origins can be traced in the caste system. As caste-barriers were gradually shaken off, the people could easily be identified as the poor and the rich. In feudalism, it became the system of master-servant and in capitalism, the employer-worker. The pattern remained the same. Previously, the low-caste people labored for the high-caste. Now, the poor labour works for the rich on their terms and conditions. The rich become richer, taking care that the poor remain poor. Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya show that the gap between the rich and poor keeps widening.

Once again we see that the rich do not take the risk of allowing the poor to rise themselves against the rich, or else, their happiness and comfort would be at stake. Keeping the poor away from education is one way of keeping them in the low
profile. There are few like Balram who succeed in rising above, with or without education.

An important conclusion that one can draw from the reading of these novels is that the writers show that a ‘class-free’ society can exist in normal times. It is only in times of war, famine, and crisis that the socio-economic conditions in rural as well as urban areas are seriously affected.

In Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* the happy family of Rukmani and Nathan fell a prey to the vagaries of Nature and had to sell off everything that they possessed, until there was nothing left to sell. With no work on farms, people move to cities in search of work. In the overcrowded cities, their condition worsens. All the dignity, self-respect and stability that they possessed in their own villages are lost in cities. They are reduced to beggarly status without an identity and have to accept any job that would fetch them money. Young women and girls are compelled to sell their bodies. This is the case with Kajoli in *So Many Hungers*, with Ira in *Nectar in a Sieve* and even with Chandra Lekha in *He Who Rides a Tiger*.

Poverty literally cripples an individual, kills talent, and dampens the spirit, preventing him from reaching up to his goals, as is evident in the case of Chandra Lekha. The poor do not even dare to dream sometimes, like Appu in *A Handful of Rice*. However, characters like Bakha, Ravi, Rukmini’s sons and Ira do dare to dream. They remain mute and passive as they are powerless against the rich. On the other hand, Balram, Gyan, Rukmini’s sons and Velutha not only dream but act and revolt.
Murugan and his wife had to work like servants in rich people’s houses. City life often makes them forget their values and they often fall prey to bad habits like drinking and smoking. The attractions in city life make them acutely aware of their poor conditions and in an attempt to earn quick and easy money, they commit crimes. In spite of him, Ravi threatened Apu and broke the window of his house. The most prominent example is that of Balram. He killed his boss and stole his money. Ravi regretted his action, but Balram was proud of his deed. This is the changing view of crimes over a period of time.

Another consequence of shifting to the urban centres is that people lose their sense of responsibility towards their family and relatives. Murugan abandons his wife and child. Balram is totally cut away from his family in the village. All sons of Rukmani and Nathan are lost to them forever. The boys in America avoid meeting their friends and relatives in America. Munoo also severs all family ties. Ravi begins to shrink from his responsibilities.

The effects of famine are portrayed in Bhabani Bhattacharya’s *So Many Hungers*. The Bengal Famine as well as the political movement of the Independence struggle was responsible for disturbance of normal life in the villages as well as cities. Thousands of destitute persons sold off their land and belongings and moved to the city of Calcutta. Thousands of destitute died due to hunger in spite of the Relief Camps. Young girls like Kajoli had to sell their bodies. Kalo and eventually his daughter also moved to Calcutta. The rich person like Samarendra Basu looked at it as an opportunity to earn more money at the expense of the poor. Samarendra Basu’s family was also shattered. Disturbance and political unrest disrupt normal life and
often innocent people become victims. Velutha turns communist but his party fails him when he is in trouble. Gyan in *The Inheritance of Loss* becomes a victim to the Gorkha Insurgency and poor Sai is also affected indirectly. The peaceful life of all the residents in Kalimpong is affected in one way or the other.

Industrialization is supposed to be a sign of progress and development. However, it comes hand-in-hand with evils. The tannery that is set up in the village is a symbol of industrialization. Rukmani hates it from the beginning. Two of her sons die at the tannery. It changes the face of the village. The advent of industry creates competition. More and more agricultural land is occupied for industries. Prices of commodities go high and food becomes scarce. The coolies are made to work hard for long hours with low wages. They are weighed down by loans. Labour unions lure the uneducated coolies to their doom. This is shown by Mulk Raj Anand in *Coolie*. On the whole, it is misery all the way for the poor, whether they go to the city or remain in villages. Almost all writers share the view that it is as difficult to cross class barriers as it is to cross caste barriers, until and unless, one does something as atrocious as murdering and robbing, like Balram in *The White Tiger* there is no rescue.

The researcher has arrived at some general conclusions about human life, based on the study of the selected novels. It has been noticed that human beings are hungry for money and power. Money allows them to enjoy comforts and pleasures while power gives them a privilege over others. They would try to attain and retain power given either by caste or class and there is a general tendency to suppress the powerless lest they rise above and challenge the powerful. The rich and powerful are selfish and
uncaring with exceptions of course, and obsession with money renders an individual
devoid of love, attachment, and finer feelings and emotions in life.

Another sociological reality which is reflected in almost every novel is that society is
always stratified. In fact, every sub-strata of society gets stratified eventually on one
or the other criteria, whether it is caste or class. Stratification on the basis of caste in
India was replaced by social stratification on the basis of economic status. Real
social equality in its true sense seems to be almost impossible. Inequality leads to
restlessness followed by struggle and conflicts. Hence, in every social unit at any
given time, there is some kind of conflict which originates in stratification.

Too much money and power can make a man pervert and sadistic. Powerful ones
seem to get sadistic pleasure in torturing the powerless. Cultural traditions in India
prevent most individuals from revolting against existing circumstances. They are
more or less passive in their attitude, although they have the power and capacity to
overpower their tormentors. If at all anyone dares to do it, like Balram in The White
Tiger, he gets tremendous joy and satisfaction, not sadistic but ‘tongue-in-cheek’
type.

VI.3 Discussion:

The researcher received a number of books and revised her own research in the light
of other studies. A discussion of this study is carried out by the researcher.
VI.3.1 Dr. Arjun Jadhav


Mulk Raj Anand has a special place in Indian literature in English. He is a committed writer with a social purpose. Mulk Raj Anand wanted to bring out the sufferings and miseries of the untouchables and outcastes. He also shows the attitude of the rich people and privileged, upper class Brahmins towards the low-caste people. Attitude is chiefly reflected through the kind of language used for the poor. Dr. Jadhav has thoroughly analyzed the speech acts in the novels, revealing the potential of linguistic experiments made by the author. The nuances of culture and the dimensions of social stratification with their deep impact on the personality and behaviour of characters Speech Act analysis leads one to concrete and most authentic findings about human behaviour. Dr. Jadhav has closely examined the abuses, diminutives and arrogant utterances which reveal the attitude of the speakers. The socio-cultural context in which the characters in the novels are placed can also be best understood through Speech Acts. There are various dimensions of meaning associated with the linguistic utterances of the characters. These utterances can be better understood by applying certain pragmatic principles, especially the principles of Speech Act Theory. Literal meaning or denotative meaning is insufficient to comprehend the interpersonal relation among the characters and their social circumstances.
Mulk Raj Anand’s novels are replete with abusive expressions. The abuses are dominated by social stratification in the Indian context. The abuses are flung at the lower caste people by the upper class people. The abuses are mostly in the name of dirty and worthless animals, such as, pig, swine, son of a bitch etc. The extended meaning implied is that these animals are dirty and live in dirt. When Sohoni is addressed as a bitch, it also indicates her as an immoral girl having illicit physical relations. In short, Dr. Jadhav is highly successful in recreating the cultural reality.

The Speech Acts are related to honorifics, abusive terms, diminutives, blessings and curses which add to the authenticity of the characters and their actions. What is extraordinary in these novels is the aggression and self-humbling, which is expressed through the distinctive use of language making explicit the social stratification, either class-based or caste-based. The powerful people use abusing and arrogant expressions while the powerless ones use self-humbling language while addressing the superiors. In both these novels, power Semantics is the governing factor which shows the relations between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’.

While Dr. Arjun Jadhav’s study focuses on the use of language the researcher has tried to analyze the hidden implications in the expressions. The researcher has considered the thematic issues going beyond language and has made an attempt to find out the feelings of the characters when they are abused and ill-treated. The researcher has also tried to find out the motives and inner thoughts of the down-trodden characters and the social consequences of their misery and sufferings. The conflicts that can arise out of caste and class issues are thoroughly dealt with by the Researcher.
A review of Dr. Arjun Jadhav’s thesis enabled the researcher to better understand the various levels at which the language expressions used in the novel can be interpreted in order to arrive at a better understanding of the novel.

VI.3.2 Dr. Ashok Chaskar

“Multiculturalism in Indian Fiction in English with Special Reference to Selected Novels” (2007)

Dr. Ashok Chaskar’s thesis is about multiculturalism, one of the novels under consideration is Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Untouchable’. His main argument is that the rigid caste system in India has created social inequalities and injustices. The untouchables, who are members of the subordinate cultures, are kept away from the mainstream society. The upper class privileged elements of culture, make the untouchables economically, culturally, socially and politically powerless and weak. The dominant culture systematically side-tracks the minority cultures and pushes them to the periphery.

Multiculturalism always helps to challenge the dominance of one culture over the others and protects the idea of equality of opportunity and equal rights to the minority cultures. However, the Researcher points out how in this novel, instead of granting opportunities and rights, the minority are inhumanly victimized and oppressed by the dominant culture. Throughout the novel, the sharp rift between the dominant and the subordinate cultures promotes social disharmony and disrespect in the village. Members of the subordinate cultures are always deprived of their basic rights. They are socially marginalized. Ideologically, multiculturalism and
democracy are very close to each other, as both concepts promote equality of rights and non-discrimination. But the members of minority cultures remain passive and inactive on account of the pressure of cultural dominance, exploitation, oppression, social inequality, injustice, caste-discrimination, intolerance, social marginalization, economic marginalization and subordination.

Another major novel considered by Dr. Chaskar is Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*. A more revolutionary form of Mulk Raj Anand is found in this novel which is the story of man and woman who have been neglected as ‘marginal’ in a society, either because they are untouchable or women. The culture depicted in the novel upholds patriarchy. Ammu is not allowed to continue with her studies because of the pre-conceived patriarchal notions against women. On the other hand, her brother Chacko can enjoy all support and privileges. Multi-culturalism demands equal opportunities for all cultures, castes, communities and genders. But the principle of equal opportunity is violated by the dominant patriarchal culture. In fact, all cultures are valuable but the validity and authenticity of each culture depends upon how much that culture protects and projects the basic human rights, irrespective of gender, class and class. Ammu, the heroine in the novel, becomes the victim of injustice, exclusion, marginalization, dispossession and gender discrimination. Thus, Ammu is not a victim of any single force. She suffers on account of all factors which are part of the cultural set-up. Ammu and her lover Velutha’s attempt to retaliate from the dictates of culture are not successful. Their attempt to establish a sub-culture did not gain acceptance due to the pressure of the main-stream culture. According to Dr. Chaskar, Arundhati Roy has tried to expose caste issues in the
novel with minute details, but she is skeptical about the disappearance of the caste
system. She brings to our notice that the reality about the caste system is something
different from what is reflected in the Constitution.

While Dr. Chaskar has perceived the novel from the point of view of multi-
culturalism, including all factors of culture like caste and gender, the present study
focuses on the handling of the caste system by Arundhati Roy in addition to class
factors, as they emerge from the caste system.

VI.3.3 Dr. Fakhr Asrin Bahaeddin

“A Critical Study of Recent Booker Prize Winning Novelists”
(2012)

The purpose of this study was to understand the evolution of Indian literature in
English over the years. The researcher analysed three major novels by eminent
authors, casting light on many aspects of India, Indian people and Indian literature.

According to the researcher, The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy deals with
the themes and phrases of the caste system in general. She has demonstrated how
small things can have a total affect in the final scheme of things. Love and emotions
are the governing forces of the family.

The second novel, The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai is about isolation and
degradation of old values and traditions. The researcher perceives it as the story of
Sai and her lonely life. Her first and honest love for Gyan is never understood by
him, as he becomes an insurgent of the Gorkha Movement. Biju becomes the victim
of globalization in U.S.A. The notable feature of the novel is that all characters suffer in one way or the other. It is observed that Indians are ready to go abroad at any cost and face the hassles of immigration. The author tries to explain the pitfalls and loopholes associated with migration.

Arvind Adiga, the author of The White Tiger belongs to a younger generation. The burning issue is the acceptance of global economy by India and its adverse effects on poor people. According to the researcher, this is one of the best novels on the issue of globalization. The novel refers to the modulating tensions between superpowers of India and China.

Globalization has not only affected the class system but also the caste system indirectly. Adiga has portrayed the true picture of Indian society and the changes taking place. While the researcher Miss. Asrin Fakhr has dealt with the plot, themes and characters of the selected novels, the present researcher singles out the issues of caste and class and places them on the background of globalization in order to analyze its consequences.

Globalization has brought in its wake different methods and approaches to trade and commerce and one modern feature is outsourcing. Balram in The White Tiger refers to it as the phenomenon which is about to shake the world by storms. We are witness to this fact in current times.
VI.3.4 Dr. P. R. Bhabad

“Exploitation of Nonverbal Strategies in Indian English Novels”
(2006)

A very interesting study is carried out by Dr. P. R. Bhabad, titled “Exploitation of Nonverbal Strategies in Indian English Novels.”

While Dr. Arjun Jadhav has brought out the attitude of the higher caste people towards the untouchables through the use of language, Dr. Bhabad has made the Non-verbal aspects of communication the focus of his study in Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Untouchable’. Paralanguage consists of gestures, eye-contacts, silence, demonstration, distance, kinesics and also the tone and quality of voice. He has observed that while the high class Indian women have a high-pitched voice quality to create the atmosphere of dominance, the power suppressed women have a low-pitched voice that represents a non-aggressive approach. ‘Silence’ also conveys humiliation.

Bakha’s sister Sohini sits mutely at the well, waiting for water. Bakha is silent when humiliated in the street. The researcher points out that the Indian culture incorporates distinct meaningful behaviour possible within the society. The overall space in Indian society is dominated by high-class Hindus, in which Bakha, the untouchable has to be silent and defensive. Bakha’s emotional display and reactions in the novel are gestural and proxemic behaviours. Bakha sits away, at a distance in Charat Singh’s house. He hesitates to enter the kitchen. In the crowd where Gandhi holds his meeting he was frightened that he might touch someone accidentally. He does not
wish to repeat the unpleasant scene which took place in the street earlier that day.

The researcher has aptly pointed out that paralinguistic features have general social meanings which identify the social group or class. These social classes or groups interact by maintaining the established role relationships and the true meanings are conveyed through Non-verbal features.

Thus, whether it is through words and phrases or expressions or Non-verbal behaviour, it is seen that the higher caste people are rude. While the present study points out specifically to the treatment meted to the individuals, it is supported by the researches carried out by Dr. Arjun Jadhav and Dr. P. R. Bhabad, who have pointed out the same attitude reflected through language and paralanguage respectively.

VI.4 Academic Significance:

Indian writing in English has acquired international status during the last twenty-five years. There are hundreds of Indians who are writing in English on a score of topics. Previously writers dealt with poverty, illiteracy, child marriage, superstitious ideas, problems of rural folk etc. Caste and class discrimination was an inseparable part of such writing. Indian writing has matured in themes, treatments, style, characterization and aesthetics.

This research has taken into consideration nine novels encompassing a vast period in our literature. Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable was published in 1935. The last novel under consideration The White Tiger was published in 2008. This means this study in a way takes into account seventy-five years of Indian English Literature.
Indian universities have prescribed Indian novels in their syllabi. Hundreds of researches for MPhil, PhD and post-doctoral degrees have selected Indian literatures. This study will provide some help to such researches.

Many universities have prescribed Indian English poetry, fiction, drama, travelogue, autobiographies for undergraduate Special English courses. Teachers and students of English literature will certainly benefit from this work.

Indian English Literature is our own literature. Its language may be English but the spirit is Indian. Its body may have come from Europe; its soul is indigenous. This study will certainly help to find our ‘self’ through foreign language.

Recommendations for further study:

- A similar study can be carried out on selected modern novels which show a marked difference in the change in attitude towards caste and class.
- Novels written by other authors who are not included in this Research and who belong to other parts of India can be considered for a similar study.
References: