CHAPTER II

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004)

Untouchable (1935) and Coolie (1936)

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CHAPTER II

Mulk Raj Anand’s (1905-2004)

Untouchable (1935) and Coolie (1936)

II. Preliminaries:

This chapter deals with the analysis of Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable and Coolie selected for analysis. It also includes details of novels and a discussion of the plot in general.

The three chief aspects of fictions are setting, characters and conversations. The entire story of novel takes place in a specific setting. The setting also decides the atmosphere in which the story is enacted. A prior discussion of setting and atmosphere will serve as an appropriate basis for the analysis of characters and selected pieces of conversation in the novels. The important characters that represent their caste and class are analyzed, and an attempt is made to examine their general characteristics as representation of caste and class, individual features, their relationship with other characters in the novel, their significance in the plot and the role that they play.

Characters cannot be studied without referring to events in the novel. Characters are often better revealed from the way they talk. The words they use, their style of speaking, their tone, and the pragmatic aspects of their utterances are some factors that enable us to understand their mentalities. Descriptive paragraphs, parts of events
and conversations of characters are quoted from the novel as supporting evidence for observations regarding the issues of caste and class.

II.I. Untouchable

This novel was written in 1935. The novel depicts a day in the life of Bakha, a sweeper-boy, and brings out the impact of the various events on him, by giving us his ‘Stream of Consciousness’, in the manner of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Bakha is eighteen year old son of Jamadar, Lakha. He begins the day by cleaning the latrines. Then he spends some time with his father and sister. After a cup of tea and a poor meal, he sets off to clean the streets and the temple and meets with utter humiliation in both places. He meets with the same fate when he goes to collect food for the family. The afternoon is the better half of the day when he succeeds in extracting a promise from Babu’s son to teach him alphabet every afternoon. He is affectionately treated by Havildar Charat Singh and gifted with a hockey stick. The hockey match ends up with a fight and a child is hurt. Bakha’s kind move to help the child is mistaken and he meets with abuse. Later, he attends the wedding of his friend’s sister, enjoys some sweets, walks off alone and meets Col. Hutchinson who tries to persuade him to accept Christianity; Co-incidentally, Gandhiji visits the town that day and Bakha listens to his speech which instills him with hope of a better future for the sweepers, and with this hope in his mind, he returns to his miserable life.
II.I.1 Caste in Untouchable:

According to the Varna system, the Shudras belong to the lowest caste. Yet, as Bakha realizes in the novel, among the low castes too, there is further stratification. The birth of the man in a particular caste and his profession are associated with each other. The Priest must be a Brahmin by birth and the Sweeper must a sweeper by birth. Bakha’s sweeper caste never allows him to do any other work but cleaning the latrine and sweeping the roads. There are degrees of castes among the outcastes. The untouchables have their own social hierarchy. They have their own degree of caste. K. R. S. Iyengar observes, “….there are degrees of caste among the ‘low-caste’ people, there being none low without one being lower still!”¹ (Iyengar: 1884, 337)

Gulabo, the washer-woman thinks herself superior to every other outcaste because her caste is in a high place in the hierarchy of the castes among the low castes. Gulabo is very proud that she has a lover who is an upper caste Hindu. Ram Charan is the washerwoman Gulabo’s son. He tells Bakha that he is a Hindu. Bakha can’t claim that he is a Hindu. At the time of marriage of Ram Charan’s sister, he brings sweet sugar-plums for his friends. Bakha requests him to throw one of them at him. Ram and Chota both are surprised by his words. Ram Charan is considered higher caste among them because he is a washer-man. Chota is the leather-worker’s son who stands next in the caste hierarchy, and Bakha belongs to the third and lowest category.

Though they had banished all thought of distinction, except when the snobbery of caste feeling supplied the basis for putting on airs for a joke. Gulabo always scolds
her son for playing with lower caste children. However, Chota and Bakha ignore her suggestions. They eat together, if not of things in the preparation of which water has been used, at least dry things, this being in imitation of the line drawn by the Hindus between themselves and the Mohammedans and Christians. Sweets they have often shared together and they have handled soda-water bottles anyhow, at all the formal hockey matches they played with the boys’ teams of the various regiments in the Bulashah Brigade many children gathered to play a match. It is customary in the society to call children by their father’s profession such as armourer’s sons, tailormaster’s son, bandmaster’s son etc. At the match Chota told Bakha,

“I have told them that you are the sahib’s bearer: they don’t know that you are a sweeper.”

Bakha agrees because he knows the orthodox Hindu boys will not like to play with lower castes. They have a fear of being polluted by the untouchable, or rather being reprimanded by their parents.

Bakha realizes that he is on the lowest rung of the social ladder. These sweepers were looked down upon to such an extent that they were referred to as ‘outcastes’. This means that they were not even considered being part of the social system; they were separated from it, thrown out of it, and hence, they were ‘outcastes’. Since they were involved in doing dirty menial jobs, the society shirks from them and avoids them. Hence, they became ‘untouchables’.

Untouchability may have arisen out of the issue of hygiene; however, the Brahmins and upper caste Hindus began to look upon it as a sin. As untouchables, there were
many restrictions upon them. They cannot live among other citizens. They have their separate colony on the outskirts of the village and town. The ugliness, congested, filthy air and darkness are the common features of the outcaste colony. The colony of the outcastes means a dumping ground of the village. The scavengers, the leather-workers, the washer-men, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes must live away from the village. The place is a representation of misery and poverty. Altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in.

Air, water, food, shelter and education are basic needs of man but the outcastes never get water and food. Water is a life giving element which is Mother Earth’s natural boon to every living creature. Untouchables had to line up at a well for hours until some upper caste came for water, and had the time and kindness to pour a bucketful into an outcaste’s pitcher. Food is thrown from a distant.

Bakha’s house is a small thatched room, representative of all untouchables. There was no provision for lights in the sweepers’ street. Bakha’s home is a sweeper’s home. The broom, the brush and the basket is in one corner. A can, a jug, and some clay-utensils are near the fire-pot. There is a scarcity of water and on account of their profession and the filthy surroundings in which they are forced to live, they need more than a pitcher of water but cannot get it, they just do without. Sanitation, cleanliness and hygiene have lost their meaning for them. The outcastes were forced to live in this situation because of the twice-born people’s social rule. Dr. K. R. Shirwadkar remarks that: “On the one side is the infinite misery of untouchables
who living in filthy surroundings, are humiliated, degraded and, on the other is the
smugness and sense of false superiority of the arrogant upper classes, twice-born,
who are rude, ruthless, cruel, sadistic and inhuman.”³ (Shirwadkar: 1991, 70)

The sweepers always carried a basket and a broom to sweep the roads and collect
dirt. They have become the symbols of an outcaste like the white cane of blind men.

The series of different scenes from morning of the day are best examples of social
barriers for untouchable castes. Bakha, the protagonist of untouchable caste makes us
conscious about the duplicity of Hindu’s traditions and customs. His routine of a day
presents the wretched life of the sweepers.

Mulk Raj Anand begins to point out the suffering, humiliation and misery of
untouchables, right from the time Bakha does his daily morning round of cleaning
latrines. He is ordered to work fast and work properly. He is constantly abused. He is
angered by words like,

“defiled, polluted, dog, swine, son of a dog, low caste vermin, dirty dog, offspring of
a pig, cock-eyed son of a bow-legged scorpion etc.”⁴  

Early in the morning the half-naked brown skinned Hindus use the latrines. Some of
those who have already visited the latrines can be seen scrubbing their little brass
jugs with the clay on the side of the brook, rubbing their hands with a little soft earth;
washing their feet, their faces; chewing little twigs bitten into the shape of brushes;
rinsing their mouths, gargling and spitting noisily into the stream; douching their
noses and blowing them furiously. Bakha is ashamed of the Indian way of
performing ablutions because he knows the Tommies dislike it. He remembers the Tommies’ familiar abuse of the natives:

‘*Kala admi zamin par hagne wala*’ *(black man, you who relieve yourself on the ground).*\(^5\) *(pgs.10, 11)*

He also does not like the indecent behaviour of a Mohammedan purifying himself in the ritual manner. The whole morning he spends to clean the rows of latrines and barracks of soldiers.

Bakha does not like the ways of the outcasts; perhaps, he thinks that their foul ways were responsible for their fate. Bakha is different. He is unlike his younger brother Rakha who is a typical son of an outcaste. Rakha is a representative of the outcaste children. He is true child of the outcaste colony, where there are no drains, lights and water. People live among the latrines of the townsfolk, and in the stink of their own dung scattered about everywhere. Rakha has wallowed in its mire, bathed in its marshes, plays among its rubbish-heaps. His listless, lazy, lousy manner was a result of the surroundings.

“*Rakha was the vehicle of a life-force, the culminating point in the destiny of which would never come, because malaria lingered in his bones, and that disease does not kill but merely dissipated the energy. He was a friend of the flies and the mosquitoes, their boon companion since his childhood.*”\(^6\) *(pg. 75)*

Bakha does not like to do the ugly work, he likes to imitate the Sahib, he wants to learn, to speak the Babu’s language. The outcaste children cannot go to school because the parents of the caste-Hindus are frightened by the touch of the outcaste
which will contaminate their children. The teachers do not touch the book used by
the outcaste. Bakha learns the truth from the age of six that he is a sweeper’s boy and
he must clean the lavatory. Like his uncle he demolished his dream to be a babu, a
sahib. Bakha requests Babu’s son to teach him the alphabet and offers him fees for it
but he fears that his mother is a pious Hindu lady; she’ll never bear the ‘touch’ of the
untouchable or the slight contact of the outcastes.

Bakha has a passion for good, fashionable clothes of ‘superior’ people. But a
sweeper should be ‘unclean and uncouth’ is a general expectation because they do
the dirty work. Bakha is an exception who dreams to be ‘a sahib’, ‘a babu.’ The age-
old slavery never allows him to compare with superiors. He inherited his weakness,
inferior position and leanness from his forefathers. Bakha is not allowed to learn, he
is not allowed to do any other work but cleaning the latrines and sweeping the roads.
Bakha’s job is dirty but he remains comparatively clean. His neat, tidy and healthy
appearance made the ‘twice-born’ high-caste Hindus jealous.

‘A bit superior to his job,’ they always said.’76

Feeling happy and free while he sauntered through the market, Bakha indulged
himself a little by purchasing some jalebis from a sweet shop. Of course, he did not
approve of the way they were thrown at him by the shopkeeper although he had paid
for them. He was asked to place the coins on a board and the shopkeeper took care
not to pick them up before splashing water on them and purifying them. Bakha
continued on his way and so engrossed was he in the jalebis as he relished the sweet
sugary syrup that he forgot to announce his arrival and accidentally touched a caste
Brahmin. It is this central episode in the novel that makes Bakha realize the full purport of being an untouchable. The Brahmin was extremely angry and flew at Bakha with a volley of abuses for polluting him. He complained that he would have to take a bath again and purify himself just because of the negligence of the sweeper boy. Bakha was gripped with fear and humiliation as a crowd gathered in the street. Bakha made a meek attempt to explain himself and asked for forgiveness, but in vain!

A passing tanga-wallah helps Bakha to stand up and adjust his turban. The Muhammadan tanga-wallah is an outcaste from the orthodox Hindu point of view. The Muhammadan understands and shares the resentment and agony of the outcaste. E. M. Forster writes in the Preface of the novel, “The sweeper is worse off than a slave for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolation of his religion.”

(Forster: 2001, vi)

It is important to note here that Bakha realizes that he has strength enough to strike at the man, push away the crowd and proceed on his way. But the fear with which he was gripped was a barrier. This was not a physical barrier but a social barrier. While the people on the street raged and fumed, Bakha stood helpless. The brahmin’s comment in this regard is full of implications. Referring to the outcastes, the Brahmin says,

“They ought to be wiped off the surface of the earth.”

(pg. 56)
Little did he think how much dirt would pile on earth if the sweeper caste were wiped off! This incident set Bakha thinking philosophically why he was constantly abused and why his father was abused. He and his forefathers worked as sweepers, they cleaned the dirt. Therefore the high-castes didn’t touch them. The Muhammadan and the English Sahibs touch him but his touch is avoided by the caste-Hindus. Bakha’s self realization is,

“For them I am a sweeper, sweeper – untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! I am an ununtouchable!”10

Mulk Raj Anand comments,

“Like a ray of light shooting though the darkness, the recognition of his position, the significance of his lot dawned on him.”11

Bakha takes care to announce his arrival after the unpleasant incident in the street. As he walked, he shouted,

“Posh, Posh, sweeper coming. Keep away. Posh, posh.”12

Bakha observes that the caste-Hindus touch a cow to show their respect and gratitude. The animals have status but they do not. He observes the contradiction of manners – the Hindus call the cow ‘mother’ but never feed her enough. They offer the remainders of food and sprinkle the urine of the cow to purify the house if defiled by the untouchable.

Bakha as an outcaste can’t understand the reason of his inferior position. The untouchable must clean the courtyard of the temple but he has no permission to
climb the steps of the temple. He must clean the dirt of the caste-Hindus but his shadow or touch is strictly avoided. The untouchables are socially isolated and they are economically dependent on the upper castes. Their touch is polluting and their nearness is sufficient to defile a high-caste Hindu. They are debarred from using all public places, roads, vehicles, schools, hotels and shops. The religious disabilities debarred them from Hindu temples and places of worship though they are Hindu. The untouchable must clean the courtyard of the temple but he has no permission to climb the steps of the temple.

Bakha’s next destination is the temple. The very structure of the temple, the banyan tree outside and the several headed Gods and Goddesses had always struck him with awe. As he stood in the courtyard which he was supposed to clean, he was possessed by a strong desire to enter the temple and see what was there. Once again, his courage failed him. What held him back was the knowledge that an untouchable into a temple was past purification. Human beings believe that God has created the human race but the man-made abodes of God on earth are considered too holy to be entered by untouchables. Gradually, his desire to enter the temple became so acute that he climbed up the first two steps with a sense of determination. But he did not go beyond that. He retreated, thought, and then once again he was gripped by the desire and finally, made to the top of the stairs. He dared to climb all the 15 steps to get a glimpse of the temple inside. While he was watching the temple scene, fascinated, unfortunately, and as it was bound to happen, the temple priest noticed him and once again that day, Bakha became a butt of humiliation. Once again he was paralyzed with an unknown fear for no apparent fault or sin. He was ordered to step
off the staircase. While the priest and the other Brahmins argued about the extent of pollution, Bakha met Sohoni at the temple gate. She informed him that the priest had made foul suggestions to her while she was cleaning the latrines in his house at the back. When she screamed, he has treacherously started shouting

‘Polluted, polluted.’¹³

(Pg. 53)

Pt. Kali Nath’s misbehaviour with Sohini and his shameless accusation that she made physical contact with him and defiled him is a typical illustration of the general hypocritical behavior of the white-washed guardians of religion. It also shows that lust knows no untouchability.

Bakha clenched his fists at the indecent and hypocritical behavior of the priest, but controlled himself, thankful that his sister was not violated. The wild, strong, powerful, high-thinking Bakha was tamed by the pressure of social conventions.

“He could not overstep the barriers which the conventions of his superiors had built up to protect their weaknesses against him. He could not invade the magic circle which protects a priest from attack by anybody, especially a low caste man. So in the highest moment of his strength, the slave in him asserted itself, and he lapsed back ...”¹⁴

(Pg. 56)

He advised his sister to go home and went on to beg for food for his family. He stood at doorsteps and shouted customarily,

“Bread for the sweeper, mother. Bread for the sweeper.”¹⁵

(Pg. 59)
He was not heeded for a long time. He succumbed to sleep on a doorstep. Awakened by the voice of a sadhu who also came begging for food, he noticed the different treatment given to his lot. The sadhu was treated with respect and immediately offered food while Bakha was kicked off the steps for polluting them. Bakha had to pick up a pancake that was thrown at him.

During lunch at home, Bakha narrated his experiences to his father. Lakha was already tempered by his own experiences and he could understand the seething anger of his young son. He did his best to soothe and console Bakha. Lakha is not justifying the injustice and oppressive behaviour of caste-Hindus. He has accepted caste hierarchy as a part of life. There is no bitterness in his mind against it. It represents the impact of the religion on everyone’s life. Lakha remembers how the Hakim helped him to save Bakha from severe illness, Lakha was abused that he defiled the dispensary and polluted the place and people. But the Hakim came personally to treat the child. Lakha tells his philosophy as,

“They are really kind. We must realize that it is religion which prevents them from touching us.”

He had never renounced his deep-rooted sense of inferiority and the docile acceptance of the laws of fate. Dr. Balvinder Ghotra says, “Mulk Raj Anand examines the various issues pertaining to the problems of untouchability in a very systematic manner. While he exposes the hypocrisy and callousness of the caste-Hindus through the ironical portrayal of the behaviour of the upper-caste people, he does not fail to see the fact that the low-caste people too are responsible for getting
Agrawal: 2007, 152-153)

The afternoon begins with a hockey match. Unpleasant experience awaited Bakha that day. The hockey-match results into a free-fight in which a little boy is injured and bleeds. Bakha carries the child in his arms, but the child’s mother, instead of thanking Bakha rebukes him for having polluted her child:

“Oh, you eater of your masters! What have you done? .... Give me my child! You have defiled the house, besides wounding my son!”

Bakha has some good experiences during the day. A little good fortune came his way from time to time. Pleasant and unpleasant experiences follow each other throughout the novel. It created confusion and conflict in the mind of Bakha. After his morning duties, he meets Havildar Charat Singh who promises to give him a hockey stick that afternoon. He also wonders how the children of upper castes do not mind touching him while they play hockey together. He knows that they would not even mind having him at school with them. But the doors of education were closed for the outcastes. Even the masters refused to teach the outcastes. Bakha often has an impulse to study on his own, but he cannot proceed beyond the alphabet. He succeeds in extracting a promise from a fifth standard boy to teach him every afternoon Bakha is also ready to pay the boy for it. The Hindus looked upon the Muhammedans also as outcastes. Hence, Bakha is surprised when the Mussalman barber allows him to light his cigarette by himself, with the burning coal. Bakha is treated well and offered a cup of tea by Charat Singh. The cook also permits him to
carry out an errand for Charat Singh by entering the kitchen. Bakha has burning questions in his mind would his destiny and that of the other outcastes never change? A few incidents during the day raise his hopes.

Bakha learns from the British people that they can live with respect. They can learn, they can earn and make themselves babus. Bakha can revolt against the traditions. There is a hope to change from the old ossified order and the stagnating conventions of the life. He may be a pioneer in his own way, although he has never imagined of the change. The missionary Colonel Hutchinson is interested in converting the outcastes. He sings the prayers and talks about Yessuh Messiah. The missionary man said that the rich and the poor, the Brahmins and Bhangis were the same. Bakha tries to imagine the gods like Rama, the God of Hindus, whom his father and forefathers worshipped. Bakha thinks,

“Yessuh Messih must be a good man if he regards a Brahmin and a Bhangi the same.”\(^{19}\)

But he has shown a little interest in Colonel’s religion. Bakha finds the same hatred in the eyes of Colonel Hutchinson’s wife he has seen in the eyes of the man he unconsciously touched in the street. Mary Hutchinson did not share her husband’s views. The few words which she has uttered carried a dread hundred times more terrible than the fear inspired by the whole tirade of abuse by the touched man for Bakha. The social reference of this scene is related to the attitude of the Hindus and the missionaries who were interested only in spreading their religion. C. D. Narasimhaiah comments, “…..the Tommies have treated him like human being,
while to the caste Hindus he is untouchable. Great reformers of the nineteenth century have denounced the ‘touch-me-not’ attitude of the caste Hindus culminating in Gandhi’s attack on untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism.”20
(Narasimhaiah: 1987, 111)

The Mahatma, Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi refers to the Bhangi and the Chamars ‘Harijan’. The Congressmen have come to the outcastes’ street and lectured about Harijans, saying they are no different from Hindus and their touch did not mean pollution, The Mahatma has come to remove untouchability. Bakha doesn’t dare to rush with the crowd to see the Mahatma. He fears that he will touch someone and then there would be a scene. There is an inseparable barrier between himself and the crowd, the barrier of caste.

Bakha is in the midst of a humanity which includes him in its folds and yet debars him from entering into a sentient, living, quivering contact with it. Because Bakha hopes Gandhi will unite them with society. Bakha heard that Gandhi was very keen on uplifting the Untouchables. Gandhi was fasting for the sake of the bhangis and chamars. Gandhiji appeals that the upper-castes have trampled millions of human beings without feeling the slightest remorse for iniquity. The question of the untouchables is moral and religious. Untouchability is the greatest blot on Hinduism, it is a sin. He wished to be born again not as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, but as an outcaste, as an Untouchable. He further appealed public to open all public wells, temples, roads, schools, sanatoriums to the Untouchables. The things of the old civilization must be destroyed in order to make room for those of the new.
The poet Iqbal Nath Sashar points out that caste is an intellectual aristocracy, based on the conceit of the pundits. But we can destroy the inequalities. The old mechanical formulas of our lives must go, the old stereotyped forms must give place to a new dynamism. We must destroy caste; we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone. Caste is mainly governed by profession therefore the sweepers must change their profession; they will no longer remain Untouchables.

Bakha has three solutions to get rid of the ‘untouchable’ tag. He may become a Christian with the help of a missionary man, Colonel Hutchinson. The second solution is that he may believe in the appeal of the Mahatma to eradicate untouchability, wait till the social conscience of the people for the emancipation of the untouchables. The third solution is a machine. The flush system, the water-closets will clean the dirt. Bakha’s day ends with a hope, he returns to his mud-walled hut with the desire to tell his father all what Gandhi said about them and what the clever poet said about the flush system. Saros Cowasjee writes, “Bakha represents the mature and progressive image of the untouchables. Bakha wants to retaliate against caste-ridden conservative society and the social injustice done to the untouchables, he doesn’t revolt immediately against his abuse and humiliation due to his physical inability to revolt, his habitual subservience to superiors who either insult or patronize him.”21 (Cowasjee: 1983, 31)

Gandhiji’s speech inspires Bakha. In his speech he has given an example of a Brahmin lad who does a scavenger’s work and reads Gita. There is no relationship between birth and profession. Untouchables are cleaning Hindu society. They claim
to be Hindus. They read the scriptures. They should cease to accept leavings from the plates of high-caste Hindus. They should receive grain only. Gandhiji’s harsh attack on the caste-Hindus and suggestions to untouchables appeal the sensitive mind of Bakha. He listens to the words of the Poet who says,

“When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain Untouchables.”22

(pg. 146)

Bakha hopes that the machines will clean the dirt; then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability.

II.1.2 Class in **Untouchable:**

The chief focus of the author in this novel is to describe the miseries of the outcastes. However, it can be observed that in a society where central motif of life is the caste system and the hierarchical arrangement according to caste, caste also decides class. The sweepers do the lowest menial work and are the lowest paid. This makes it impossible for them to rise higher in socio-economic status. The Brahmins are higher in class because they are higher in castes. Caste offers them privileges which are denied to the outcastes. Education is the sole right of the upper castes. This enables them to carry on trade and professions that lead to better economic status. Naturally, they can earn money and improve their economic and consequently their social class. But the barriers are so strictly closed for the outcastes that they have no hope of changing their profession or improving their prospects. Anand wants to convey that
in spite of having a will to learn, a dislike for the work or a revolting attitude as in the case of Bakha, the outcastes are compelled to surrender themselves to the caste system, thus locking them up in a socio-economic class as well.

Premila Paul points out the intention of the author in these words, “Untouchable is a social novel. The purpose here is to emphasize the evil of untouchability. Anand wants to establish a just social order. The caste system over the centuries has degenerated into a hydra-headed evil, destructive of both self and society.”

The untouchables have the right to live with dignity and as useful members of a casteless and classless society.

II. 1. 3 Observations:

Mulk Raj Anand has pointedly discussed the miserable conditions of the outcastes, especially the sweepers whose work is to clean the latrines. Time and again, the author has stressed that the birth of an individual is responsible for his caste. Anand has pointed out the difference between the two brothers Bakha and Rakha. While the latter is a typical outcaste and has mingled with their lifestyle perfectly, Bakha is different. Anand’s protagonist does not merely posses a beautiful physique and immense strength, but he has many traits in common with the upper-caste children. He hates everything about the outcastes - their tastes, their way of life and their work. He has a thirst for knowledge and an extraordinary ability to think, to analyze circumstances, to make observations and also a trace of spiritualism. In spite of the paths shown by Gandhiji and Col. Huthinson, Bakha is not lured away from his roots.
in the country, its conventions and his belief in the Hindu religion. Finally, the conflict in his mind is set at the point - his temporary acceptance of his fate, with an added ray of hope of change in the future, symbolized by the so-called ‘machine’ for cleaning toilets. Hence, Bakha, belonging to the lowest caste among outcastes, represents a hero who comes to terms with life after a series of grueling experiences in a day, when all his potentials were intense and acute. Finally, he succeeds in resolving the conflicts in his mind created by social, cultural, economic and religious barriers that check his progress. Anand does not fail to hint that Bakha would have attained great heights had caste barriers not come in his way, since he has tremendous potential to grow and flourish. Outcastes who cleanse the society of dirt but they are humiliated and insulted. The novel enables to reconsider the belief that those who clean and dispose the dirt are not outcaste but angels of God. Karan Gutte has rightly observed:

“But Mulk Raj Anand had depicted the hypocrisy of the upper caste people that men like Pt. Kali Nath enjoy the touch of the Harijan girls. Mulk Raj Anand exposes all this hypocrisy and double standard or double dealing. In this novel Bakha is a universal figure to show the oppression, injustice, humiliation to the whole community of the outcastes in India. Bakha symbolizes the exploitation and oppression which has been the fate of untouchables like him. His anguish and humiliation are not of his alone, but the suffering of whole outcastes and underdogs.”

Mulk Raj Anand is a Kshatriya by caste and he lived in pre-independent India. The society at that time was caste-ridden and strictly followed the religious ideas.
‘Orthodox Hindus’ indicate the social tradition to observe the rule of ‘polluted’ and ‘defiled.’ Anand might have been expected to inherit the pollution-complex. But as a child he played with the children of the sweepers attached to an Indian regiment, he grew to be fond of them. Untouchable is the first ‘Dalit’ novel in Indo-Anglian literature. The novel is concerned with evils of caste system and untouchability in Hindu society. Anand is the first writer in Indian English to have depicted the stigma of this evil in the novel form. Bakha’s interaction with caste-Hindus, Sikh, Mohammadans and the Christian missionary forcefully indicate that the evils of untouchability that isolates man from his own community and religion. The novel is a forceful indictment of the evils of the fossilized caste-system and orthodox Hindu society. The novel is essentially a novel of ‘caste presentation’ which was everyday reality in the Indian context. The anguish and suffering of Bakha is purely and simply a scathing statement of the caste ridden Hindu society which blinds its adherents to humanitarian values.

II.II. Coolie

II. II. 1. A Brief Outline:

This is the novel of an orphan boy called Munoo who is a native of a hill in the North. His uncle finds it difficult to feed him and decides to make him work in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. Munoo’s uncle works in a bank in Shamnagar. Munoo is suddenly shifted to the town for the first time in his life, at a very tender age. He was expected to work as a helping hand in the house of the Babu Nathoo Ram who
lives with his wife, two daughters and a doctor brother. Everything was new for Munoo – the place, the people and the work. He did not find himself comfortable in the place he was allotted in the kitchen. The people were harsh and made him work hard. He had never worked in kitchens, lit fires, cooked food, attended Englishmen or handled delicate crockery. Unfortunately, he happened to drop the tray and broke some precious cups and kettles. He was so scared of the beating and the constant nagging of his mistress that he ran away from there. He took refuge in a railway compartment. Some merchants entered it later, and one of them, Seth Prabha Dayal, took pity on him and took him to Daulatpur where he owned a pickle factory in partnership with his friend Ganpat.

A new life, a new place, new people and new work began for Munoo. The work at the factory was not as exacting as the work in the Babu Nathoo Ram’s house. In Prabha’s factory, he continued to be tortured by Ganpat. But Prabha and his wife were very kind to him. Munoo was nicely setting into the place and getting along well with the other coolies. Unfortunately, Prabha’s partner Ganpat cheated Prabha and broke up the partnership. Prabha became bankrupt. The factory was shut down and all the workers except Munoo and Tulsi left. They remained faithful to their master till the end. Seth Prabha Dayal fell ill and was bed-ridden. He could no longer run the factory. While his wife tended him, Munoo and Tulsi worked as coolies at the grain market and vegetable market in the town and supported their master too. Prabha became seriously ill and decided to leave the town and go back to the hills. While another coolie Tulsi accompanied him, Munoo stayed back. He had heard about the enchanting big city of Bombay. He mounted a train and travelled to
Bombay without ticket. A circus man helped him reach safely to Bombay. Two other characters Lord and Lady Todarmal, who were Prabha’s neighbours, play a significant role in the novel.

The next phase of Munoo’s life began in Bombay. He met another coolie called Hari who also came from the hills. Munoo felt an affinity towards him. He worked at a mill in Bombay and had gone back to his village to bring back his wife and two children, with the intention of employing them also at the mill. Munoo clung onto this family and followed them as he had no other alternative. Munoo had now moved from North to South and it was a great shift in his life and fortunes.

Hari and his family and Munoo find work in Sir George White’s Cotton Mill. Munoo meets a hefty wrestler Ratan who helps the whole family to find lodgings and sympathizes with Munoo. The wages that Munoo received at the mill were the highest that he had earned until ten. The job at the mill was an enriching experience for Munoo. He saw a great deal of industrialization, the Babus, coolies, rich people, the attractions as well as the miseries of life in the city. Munoo was just beginning to get absorbed in the new surroundings. Unfortunately, a worker’s strike broke on account of rumours and illegal cut in the wages. The wrath of the labourers was diverted from the mill to the religious factions among themselves. The fires of communal hatred were further fanned by politicians and Munoo was caught in a riotous situation.

In order to escape from the riots he ran here and there on an empty stomach Munoo collapses when hit by a car. Munoo is taken up in the car by Mrs. Mainwaring who is
on her way to Shimla and in need of a servant. She treats Munoo very kindly all through the journey. Thus, Munoo is shoved back to the North by destiny, where he starts anew as an attendant of Mrs. Mainwaring. Although she is kindhearted, she does not spare him from heavy hard work. Munoo has to push the rickshaws every afternoon had to learn that difficult art. Due to constant suffering and an ill-nourished body, Munoo became a victim of consumption. He had observed blood in his spit but he did not mention it to anyone. It was too late when Dr. Little discovered about his condition. He had to be sent away to live in a small hut on the outskirts of the city, where his health deteriorated day by day, until he died at a young age. This is a representative story of most unfortunate coolies.

II.II. 2 Caste in Coolie:

It will be appropriate to start the analysis of novel with a comment by Saros Cowasjee. She says, “Munoo belongs by birth to the second highest order. What is questioned is his place in the new caste system, on the basis of cash nexus, that the Kaliyug, the Iron Age has established……and through him the whole misery of India speaks.”25 (Cowasjee: 1983, 6-7)

By birth Munoo is a Kshatriya, a Rajput and a brave boy. He was born in the poor peasant family. He was unable to attend school after the death of his parents because of poverty. He lived with his uncle and aunt. The uncle forced Munoo to work in Babu Nathoo Ram’s house. He was fed poorly, had to work hard there, and the wages went to his uncle. Munoo was good at studies and would have grown up to see better days. But without education he could not do anything. Hence, he becomes a
servant. His uncle hammers it upon his mind constantly that he is a poor servant and Babu’s family is superior. He was taught to respect the masters and serve them properly. Munoo does not understand this injustice of destiny. He meets two other servants like him in the neighbourhood, Varma and Lehnu, both Brahmin by birth, but engaged in menial work. He learns his first lesson in life as following -

“The caste did not matter. I am a Kshatriya and I am poor and Varma, a Brahmin, is a servant boy, a menial, because he is poor. No, caste does not matter.”

Munoo’s poverty had decided his caste – his only identification was being a ‘Coolie.’ As such, he went through a number of experiences that brainwashed all his self-respect, human dignity, dreams, and ambitions. He forgot his birth, his education, his native place, his parents, relatives and childhood friends. Deteriorating series of experiences began in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. Babu Nathoo Ram’s wife made him work hard in the kitchen. He had to clean the rooms and wash the vessels. She urged him to be quick and did not allow him to be idle for a minute. The worst thing that oppressed Munoo was her constant nagging and abuse. It seemed that the Babus had a birthright to abuse and ill-treat coolies. When he could not control himself, he relieved himself near the kitchen door on the first day. It drew curses upon him from the mistress –

“Eater of his masters. May he die,” “You scum,” “You Filth”, “You dirty hill men,” “Shameless, vulgar, stupid hill-boy”, “May you burn,” “An animal, a brute, a savage.”

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Bibiji always spoke to Munoo in harsh words and abused him and cursed him profusely for being a coolie. Munoo did not fail to observe that she kept separate teacups and a separate sacred precinct of the kitchen. She was an orthodox Hindu woman and knew that Muhammedan friends of the family had drunk tea from the teacups and desecrated them. His child’s mind was confused to notice that the Brahmin woman did not mind a husband who mixed with Muhammedans and the British and who ate meat. Prabha Dayal and his wife were different masters. They never derided Munoo as a ‘coolie’ caste. They never abused him. Like Munoo they did not care about the coolie caste. Their strongest bond was that they all belonged to the hills in the North.

It was on account of communalism that riots started in Bombay. Although the real cause was a cut in the wages, the slightest rumour was enough for the labourers to strike each other in the name of religion. Thus we find that caste led to severe conflict and violence that proved to be a turning point in the life of Munoo.

II.II.3 Class in Coolie:

According to C. J. George, “Class system is a greater evil than caste system. This is 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.”28 (George: 1994, 51)

This statement is indeed true in the case of the poor Brahmin boys Varma and Lehnu and also the Kshatriya born Munoo. Babu Nathoo Ram’s caste did not matter. He
was better off because he was rich, educated and held a good position in the bank. Munoo’s innocent childhood in his village was never touched by the concept of class. He met with the concept when he started working in Babu Nathoo Ram’s house as a servant. The first question that tormented the little boy from the beginning that he was the unlucky coolie and there were Babus? He had entered a big house of a rich family in a big town, but he was soon shown his place in the kitchen. He was dazzled by the things he saw in the Babu’s house. He longed to wear a coat and shoes like Prem. His mouth watered when he saw the sweets in the shop and in the Babu’s house. But as a coolie, he had to satisfy himself with the visions. Bibiji saw to it that he did not wander out into any other rooms when he was not wanted. Even little Shaila was ordered not to play with him:

“You are a servant. You must not play with us.”

She told him so and he felt humiliated. The sharp contrast between the fortunes of the Babus and the lot of the coolies is brought out by Mulk Raj Anand in incidents after incident. The daughter of the house attended school while he did not have the privilege. It was his age to play and romp like the girls, but he was tied down to work. Play and fun were not for the coolies. He was not even thought fit to eat in a plate. While the family gorged on rich fruit and sweets and cakes, Bibiji gave him chapatti and poured lentils on it.

“He had to eat on his hands, being considered too low in status to be allowed to eat off the utensils. The insult stung him. He could hardly swallow his food.”

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While Prem dressed himself up like the ‘Sahibs,’ Munoo was dressed in tattered rags. He was not allowed to use any of the rooms. There was a separate toilet block for all the coolie boys in the neighbours where they washed and cleaned themselves. The little boy was given a big responsibility of carrying the tea tray on the important occasion when Mr. England visited the Babu’s house. When he dropped it and broke the cups, he got a beating and insults like a dog. Unable to bear the cruelty of this family and lack of support from his selfish uncle, Munoo decided to run away.

“A whipped dog hides in a corner, a whipped human seeks escape.”

Life in Babu Nathoo Ram’s house had tempered his wild spirit considerably.

“Why am I here in this house? Because my uncle brought me here to earn my living.”

He would have liked to be anything but a coolie. He would have liked to be a ‘medicine man’ like the Chhota Babu or an official in the bank like the ‘burra Babu.’ He accepted his destiny as a servant. The relationship between Babu Nathoo Ram who wore black boots and himself, Munoo, who went barefoot,

“......was to him like sunshine and sunset, inevitable, unquestionable....”

Munoo pondered as he lay at night and realized that all the stories of his ancestors, of his village, of his province and country which he had read at school and remembered so well had all been records of the desire for power and property, desire for honour of a few chosen men. He wondered about the superiority of the Babus.
“They all wore nice clothes and had nice things. That was enough to convince him that they were marvellous, wonderful people. He did not know that the superciliousness, the complacency, the assurance, the happiness they radiated was built on the strong foundation of money.”

He realized it when he remembered his uncle’s words on the day of his journey to town, ‘Money is everything.’ For the first time, his mind dwelt on the difference between himself, the poor boy and his masters, the rich people. Munoo concluded a great harsh truth,

“….there must be only two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor.”

Munoo was branded as a coolie due to his poverty. Wandering thirsty in the streets of Bombay he could not resist the desire to enter a restaurant for a bottle of a soda water. He had money to pay for it; so when he went inside and sat on a chair, a waiter ordered him to sit on the floor. This experience frightened him and killed his confidence. He learnt that identity of a man is created by his clothes. Munoo’s dirty dress is the symbol of his poor class. All rich people wear clean and nice dress but his ‘dirty’ dress gives him identity as a coolie. He had an ill experience when he visited the hospital to see Hari’s injured son. ‘Coolie, Coolie’, the word reverberated in his brain, be it at the work place, in a train, on the streets, in a hotel or a hospital. He was never allowed to forget this ‘coolie’ caste imposed on him by the society.

Monoo wins the sympathy of his master Prabha at the pickle factory. Prabha shows sympathy and love to Munoo because they belong to the same religion and region.
The kind and gentle aspects of servant-master relationship are presented through the relationship of Munoo with Prabha Dayal and his wife Parvati. His new master and mistress treat him kindly, feed him well and take every possible care of the poor boy. This is in sharp contrast with the treatment meted out to him in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. Bibiji treats Munoo like a scum. She thinks that she has done a favor to monoo by giving him shelter in her house. To accept him in the house is a great insult to their grace and prestige. She angrily blames him,

“Our house used to be like the house of Sahib logs until this brute came from the hills and spoilt it all.”

When Prabha Dayal is ruined by the treachery of his partner Ganpat, Munoo works as a coolie to help the family. During Prabha’s evil days Munoo tries his best to help him out of his difficulties. He works as a coolie in the vegetable market and saves money for his master. He finds that there is cut throat competition. The traders exploit the situation. The coolies are paid extremely low wages, are made to carry excessively heavy loads and are abused, beaten and turned out at the slightest fault and sometimes merely at the whim of the trader. They are entirely at the mercy of the forces of capitalism. Munoo is one out of the countless victims of such exploitation. Munoo learns how difficult it is for coolies to find work. They have to crave and beg and work for meager wages or go without work.

Munoo manages to travel to Bombay in search of better prospects. He ends up learning that the fate of coolies is the same everywhere – the oppressors may be different. The coolies are ill-treated and humiliated because they have no money.
They have no money because they have no good job. They do not have a proper place to live in because they have neither a job nor money. Hence, it is a vicious circle. In Daulatpur, the traders exploit the coolies and in Bombay, the capitalists. Hari and Munoo have to pay a commission to the ‘chimata sahib’ to procure a job in George White’s Cotton Mill. The coolies were made to work hard for long hours and were exploited by the superiors in every possible way. Munoo witnesses that Shambhoo, a coolie in Bombay is compelled to sell his cocks to a Sardarji at a very low price for money. The Sardarji is aware of the weakness of the coolie and is not least affected by these pitiful words of the coolie:

“……But these cocks, Sardarji, they are the only things I had in the world. I am in debt. All my pay has been confiscated for damaged cloth and debts that I owe. There is nothing for my wife and child to eat. The seer of rice won’t last a day. And what can I buy in Bombay for four annas? Please be kind, I pray you, and give me a fair price.”

Shambhoo does not get a fair price. This is enough glimpse of the materialistic world for Munoo to understand the bitter state of affairs.

Mulk Raj Anand has brought out the difference in social class through detailed description of the clothes that people wear, their appearance, their dwellings, their behavior and their lifestyle. While the coolies are thin, dark and poorly dressed, the upper class people are portrayed as well-dressed like Babu Nathu Ram and his brother, with coat, tie hat and shoes. Munoo sees the women in Bombay wearing ornaments. The rich people live in big houses with spacious rooms. They live in
luxury, travel in cars. They eat good food and indulge in parties, games and fun. On the other hand, the coolies live a life of suffering and constant struggle. They dwell among rotting garbage in small huts with no facilities for water or lavatories. Munoo is shocked to see the exploitation of coolies in Mumbai as he has never seen before. The Pathan doorkeeper practices usury in drastic methods. The Sikh merchant is an authorized dealer in the colony and uses his authority to his personal advantage. The ill-fed, ill-nourished and ill-housed coolie is broken in body and soul. Hilla Vakeel argues, “For poverty, to the poor, is a matter of everyday life. In it they live and breathe and die, unconscious for the most part of the unjust social order which has led to their victimization – and not acutely mindful of the sordidness of their surroundings.” 38(Dhawan: 1992, 80)

Munoo learns that the poor, weak section of the society has no voice. K. R. S. Iyengar writes, “In Coolie the evil is more widespread, and appears as greed, selfishness and inhumanity in their hundred different forms. Yet the root of the matter is poverty. And poverty is diffused all over India, and like a poison infects all our society and renders it unsocial and inhuman.” 39(Iyengar: 1985, 341)

However, Munoo comforts himself with the thought that he is not a beggar. He can at least work for himself and earn money and walk in the streets where beggars are not allowed. The class of ‘coolie’ is created by social system – in feudalism it is a system of master-servant and in the capitalism it is owner-worker or employer-employee. The class of coolie is the lowest in the cash-nexus capitalism.
Sometimes Munoo is conscious of his position as a coolie. In Simala he sees the handsome Shikh Sardarji speaking foreign language. He becomes envious but immediately overcomes it. He likes the loving nature of Mrs. Mainwaring. He misinterpreted her good treatment as an expression of physical love. He becomes conscious that he is a coolie, a servant.

Munoo has great curiosity and attraction for good and rich life style. He observes the clean, nice clothes of people, the big houses, neat and handsome Babus carefully. He has strong attraction for the shining black boots. Munoo learns that the needs of the poor and the needs of the rich are different. The basic needs of poor – food, shelter, water are difficult to fulfill. He likes to taste ice candy but he fears Uncle Daya Ram. He forced Munoo to walk in the hot sun barefooted. Daya Ram, Jay Singh’s landlord father, Babu Nathoo Ram, Todar Mal, and Ganpat are part of the cash-nexus world - all reel under the evil effects of money.

‘All people are equal’ is not the motto of capitalist society. The ‘poor’ class is denied trivial wants and the ‘rich’ class can get whatever they like. The poor have no likes and dislikes, they have no choices. C. J. George comments, “If caste system is cruel to create untouchables among human beings, class system is no less cruel to humanity as it makes the rich, richer and the poor, poorer. It turns the poorest one in society a mere ‘brother to an ox.’ It segregates and enslaves thousands of people into endless misery and eventual extirpation.”40 (George: 1994, 51)

The President of the All India Trade Union Congress was persuaded by the three Communists - Sauda, Muzaffar and Jackson to make representations to the Sir
George White Mills on behalf of Ratan who was illegally dismissed from work. They preached to the coolies, tried to appeal for the strike and perused for workers’ demands. The workers’ strike was started. The union leaders Sauda and Muzzaffar raise basic questions related to coolies, their hours of work, residential and medical facility, education for children, job security etc. They discuss the reasons of their poverty, wretched condition in the meeting. The class difference is pointed out in this way. The mill-owners are the robbers, the thieves, the brigands who live in palatial bungalows on the Malabar Hill on the money and hardships of the coolies. They eat five meals a day and issue forth to take the air in large Rolls Royces. On the other hand there are the roofless, riceless, spinners of cotton, weavers of thread, sweepers of dust and dirt, the workers, the labourers, the millions of unknown who crawl in and out of factories are the coolies. Sauda points out the difference between the owners of the mills and the coolies in the mills.

“There are only two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor and between the two there is no connection. The rich and the powerful, the magnificent and the glorious, whose opulence is built on robbery and theft….And the poor coolies who are humble, meek and gentle are broken in body and soul, the coolies are respected by no one.”

Sauda’s speech is the sum of the social discrimination. Balram Sorot writes, “Coolie deals with a class struggle and centers on the miserable and piteous condition of the poor and exploited labourers and coolies……. It presents the distresses and severe suffering of a coolie in a class-ridden society.” (Agrawal: 2007, 44)
The religious fanaticism immediately turns into violence. Hindu-Muslim riot is also a part of the capitalist exploitation. The rumour of children kidnapped is spread cunningly by the mill owners. The colonial mill owners have used the policy of ‘divide and exploit’ to break the unity of the workers. Munoo gets caught in the communal riot and was saved miraculously. The poor and homeless destitute suffer in the communal riot. Capitalization, colonialization, industrialization and communalization are the main forces that exploit Munoo and his like. A worker’s strike is easily broken by casual rumours of communal disturbances which divert the wrath of the labourers from the mill to the religious factions among themselves. The fires of communal hatred are further fanned by politicians, who have their own axe to grind. The exploited labourer loses his job, his livelihood and sometimes even his life at the slightest initiative by the labourer. Premila Paul writes, “By vividly picturing the coolies’ lot Anand brings out the inhumanity bred by avarice and cash-nexus.” 43 (Paul: 1983, 47)

Munoo’s third job in Shimla as a servant of Mrs. Mainwaring is different. She is a rich lady of a higher social class, an Anglo-Indian, yet she is not very harsh. She is not devoid of humanity but she does not give Munoo any concession in work. Unfortunately, Mrs. Mainswaring is too obsessed with her own engagements. She too has to struggle constantly and make considerable sacrifices, put on false airs and pretences and sometimes act against her will (like sending her children to a hostel) in order to maintain and retain her social position. Munoo sees that her personal life is not normal and happy and she has to please one or the other men who are selfish and who use her to their advantage. Through her character, Anand wants to point out
that at whatever stage of the social ladder, one has to struggle to maintain one’s position and lead a secure life, free from conflicts.

Mohan is an ideal hero to Munoo in Simla as Ratan was in Bombay. The coolies who pull the rickshaws suffer from ill health and hereditary diseases. Mohan advises one coolie to go back to his village to cultivate his land but his land was mortgaged. Mohan instigates workers,

“Then come with me, and we shall kill the landlord one day and get your land.”

He makes an impassioned appeal for a cooperation system. Mohan was born in a high class family, lived comfortably in his childhood, lived in Vilayat, yet he feels isolated, lonely in upper class. He lives with coolies in the slums,

“And he wants to learn to be a man among men.”

Mohan believes that class system of European people is more rigid than caste system of Indians. The sympathetic people like Prabha, Ratan, an Elephant man, Mohan are rare. Mohan’s tender love and sympathy are rarely seen among rich people. He presents the optimistic view of the author. Mohan detects Munoo’s severe illness. He nurses Munoo and feeds him with fruits to help him recover his health. Munoo is a patient of consumption. He receives a letter from Ratan asking him to come back to Bombay to organize the fight against the Pathan, the moneylenders, the foremen, the factory owners. It is a dawn of new era. But Munoo’s untimely and tragic demise
deprives the fruits of labour organization. His death by tuberculosis is an end of the life of want, hunger, degradation and exploitation. B. Balaji Reddy comments,

“Munoo is, in fact, a burning symbol of millions of unfortunate souls like himself – lost and bereft, abused and down-trodden. If Anand hints at the gradual break-down of the caste system, mainly through the British, in Untouchable and Road, he shows in Coolie how it is replaced by class system – an evil no less vicious than the former – an awful result of social revolution fermented by the twin forces of industrialism and the cash nexus. Central to Coolie is Anand’s humanistic faith that this class-consciousness born of money or social status can have crushing effects on those that are at the lower rungs. We can see in Coolie how the evils of poverty and cruelty crush a bud of youth before it could bloom to any extent.” 46 (Reddy: Retrieved on 20/9/2013)

II.II.4 Observations:

Munoo’s life presents the misery of poverty Munoo served others and in reaction he got only humiliation, maltreatment and malnutrition. He presents a class of poor and marginalized people in the society. His poverty is the main reason of his sufferings. Munoo and his fellow-coolies Prabha, Hari Har, Shambhu, Ratan in Daulatpur and Bombay are failure because of the mechanism that operated in favour of the rich and the powerful. They all were honest, hard working and happy in their lot but they never got a chance to change the class of poor. They were pushed into the bottomless pit of misery and poverty. All coolies were victims of machinery of economic, social and political oppression. The novel presents the evils of class system. It shows the
evils of class are more horrible than caste. A low caste man can enjoy if he has money. But a high caste man without money is driven into slavery like Munoo. Coolie’s life is unending suffering, pain and struggle for survival. Munoo’s life can be described in the expressions of Lakshami,

“We belong to suffering! We belong to suffering!”

Mulk Raj Anand has expressed two major social evils of Indian society – caste and class discrimination. The chief social concerns with which Anand has dealt is class based discrimination, injustice and poverty. The protagonist Munoo is the victim of class exploitation.

II.2 Conclusion:

In this chapter, the researcher has given a brief outline of the two selected novels by Mulk Raj Anand, Untouchable and Coolie. An introduction to the main characters is followed by an analysis of the issues of caste and class separately, with sufficient supporting passages from the novel and views of the critics where they are relevant.

A study of the novels reveals that while Bakha in Untouchable is a victim of caste conflict, Munoo in Coolie is a victim of class conflict. Caste and class are the two evils of Indian society that affect the lives of a majority of people. Anand has tried to bring out their misery and suffering through the two novels.
References:


6) Ibid. p. 75.

7) Ibid. p. 8.


10) Ibid. p. 43.

11) Ibid. p. 43.

12) Ibid. p. 42.

13) Ibid. p. 53.

14) Ibid. p. 56.

15) Ibid. p. 59.

16) Ibid. p. 74.


19) Ibid. p. 121.


27) Ibid. p. 18.


30) Ibid. p.32.

31) Ibid. p. 59.

32) Ibid. p. 34.

33) Ibid. p. 34.

34) Ibid. p. 36.
35) Ibid. p. 56.
36) Ibid. p. 45.
37) Ibid. p. 179.
45) Ibid. p. 276.