3.1. Introduction:

Mulk Raj Anand is the first Indo-Anglian novelist to depict the tragic plights of the children of the Indian society. Like Dickens, his children suffer at the hands of the society. He writes realistically in his fiction about the doomed lives of the downtrodden and oppressed such as a sweeper, Coolie, a peasant, a tea-plantation laborer, a village Chamar etc. who are all agonized victims of capitalistic exploitation, poverty, squalor, class hatred, race-hatred and inhuman cruelty. In novel after novel he has ripped openly the ugly sores of Indian society with a view to bring amelioration in their tragic lives. Thus his novels are deeply rooted in his real life observations which, in turn, make his novels autobiographical in essence. Moreover, his novels express, in a committed manner, his philosophy of life which is one of naturalism and humanism. They seem to convey the message that the poor is a matter of economic determinism but it can be reformed by humanism, love, sympathy and a humane consideration of man as man.

The children portrayed as sufferers by the novelist are not the victims of fate or God but of society which is man-made. Social system has been villainous in their lives. He subordinated plot to characterization and atmosphere in his novels. That is why his plots are loose and almost episodic. His purpose is to present the picture of social injustice and exploitation of the poor especially through child images. He is also a committed novelist, unlike R. K. Narayan, his novels carry a mission. That is how one can see the untouchables and low caste people featuring as heroes and heroines for the first time in Indo-Anglian fiction. His anxiety for naturalism has led him to take small children as central characters from the low-strata of life. This has not certainly limited the range of his subjects and themes. By using the child images he has touched many social problems like child labour, their exploitation, class system, casteism and so on which no other Indo-Anglian novelist had dared to touch.

For Anand, the novel begins with characters. He draws his characters from the real men and women whom he happens to know in actual life. He took a bold and fearless plunge by going to the lowest stratum of life to pick his heroes from
the soil and dirt. He was conscious enough to present his untouchable protagonist as any other human being with dignity of his own and at the same time not to idealize him (Bakha) unauthentically. Mostly he concentrates on child images while delineating his characters. His first novel Untouchable is centered upon a sweeper boy, Bakha whom he adored as a hero since his childhood. Throughout his literary career, Anand has written about children like Bakha, Munoo, Gangu, Lalsingh, Birpalsingh, Gouri and others whom he knew intimately in life. Of his fictional characters, they are modeled after the people with whom he chanced to live at one or the other stage of his life. It is clear that the novelist while creating child images has poured his own soul. That’s why they seem to be real and life like. Though he calls his children as heroes, they are the worst sufferers in all his novels.

It is seen in his novels and shorts stories the untouchables and coolies, poor peasants and uneducated Pathans, fighting the desperate battle for survival. Anand feels that the writer should have an inner desire to depict the beauty, tenderness, terror etc. in the lives of his characters i.e. children. He should become one with his people in order to make them living and interesting. Describing his own process of creating characters Anand says:

I had to go through their suffering and little joys as my own. I had to become weak with their weakness. I had to become strong with the strength of their resilience. I had to build up parallel worlds to reflect in my somewhat crooked mirror, since imitation of nature is not possible...(Anand 16).

His depiction of child images comes from his heart. No common writer can think or do like Anand. That’s why they appear true to life. He himself has striven to achieve this ideal of character creation in his fictions. The urge for writing a novel about an untouchable was the result of his deep attachment with a scavenger, Bakha during his childhood. Out of 13 novels, Untouchable and Coolie have been selected for the research through which child images delineated by the novelist will be explored.
3.2. The Novel- Untouchable

Untouchable encompasses a day in the life of the sweeper Bakha whose child image is introduced symbolically as a child of modern India. The novel centers on one character. “It was indeed a revolutionary gesture in Indian fiction to choose an untouchable as hero in 1935.” (Jahan 89). The novelist describes the real condition of the underdogs (especially of Bakha) with a remarkable objectivity. He is one of the sixty million Harijans, about one-eighth of the population of India; therefore, he is a true representative, as the novel’s title indicates, of that minority. He is the novelist’s most outstanding creation. He is modeled after one of Anand’s boyhood friends. Besides Bakha, the writer has sketched other child images like Rakha, Sohini, Ramcharan, Chota etc. The image of these minor characters is highlighted keeping Bakha at the center. The first few images of Bakha delineated by the novelist are that he is hard-worker, dutiful and imitative. He has been working in the barracks of a British regiment for some years on a sort of probation and has been caught by the glamour of the white man’s life; as children are more imitative than elders. Here Bakha has strong liking for imitation. He imitates British people-their dressing, speaking, living, eating, and he is devoted to all these things. The British has also treated him as a human being and he thinks himself as superior to his fellow outcastes. Bulashah, the native place of Bakha, where the nights have been cold but he doesn’t mind the cold very much. Since he is a follower of British methods; He suffers willingly because he could sacrifice a good many comforts for the sake what he calls ‘Fashun’ by which he understands the art of wearing trousers, breeches, coat, puttees, boots etc. as worn by the British soldiers in India. The clear-cut style of European dress has impressed his naïve mind. Whenever Bakha goes to the British regimental barracks; He stares at the Tommies with wonder and amazement. He has had glimpses of the life of the Tommies lived like sleeping on low canvas beds covered tightly with blankets, eating eggs, drinking tea and wine in tin mugs and then waking down to the bazaar with cigarettes in their mouths. And he has become possessed with an overwhelming desire to live their life.
His desire to imitate the Tommies is important because “he can preserve his identity only to the extent that he can be conscious of his superiority”, opines C. D. Narsimhaiah. (Narasimhaiah 112). For his imitative nature, “his friends Chota and Ram Charan cut jokes with him on account of his new rig-out calling him ‘Pilpali Sahib’ (imitation sahib)” (Anand, Untouchable 04). Syed Afroz Ashrafi observes about the imitative nature of Bakha that:

Anand in the portrayal of Bakha draws upon every minor detail to project the dreams and desires, the wishes and urges of a downtrodden, who everyday builds pictures that stands castled at the end of the day. (Ashrafi 137).

Thus in the very beginning of the novel he bears the true nature of child i.e. imitative nature. He is much impressed by the British living styles. The behavior of Bakha is indifferent to other children. In contrast the image of his brother Rakha is delineated:

Tattered flannel shirt, grimy with the blowings of his ever running nose, obstructed his walk slightly…the flies congregated in abundance to taste of the sweet delights of the saliva on the corners of his lips. (Anand, Untouchable 75).

Thus, the dirty image of Rakha enhances the image of Bakha. “Anand draws a character sketch of Rakha in all his filthiness”. (Chavre96). He has been given very small role in the novel. Unlike other children, Bakha has his own ideology of living. The novelist has presented him as an intelligent and dignified person compared to his brother and other children.

Bakha is mature enough to understand the nature of his father. To his child mind, his father’s nature is very short tempered. He understands the difference between the treatment given to him and his younger brother Rakha. His child mind feels that his father always keeps abusing him though he works very hard. He doesn’t take a moment’s rest and yet Lakha, father of Bakha, abuses him. Whenever he gets late in waking up he would say- “Get up, ohe you Bakhya, you son of a pig” (Anand, Untouchable5). In calling his son like ‘Bakhya’, the
novelist presents the image of Lakha as a traditional Indian father. In the words of Arjun Jadhav:

The phrase ‘son of a pig’ has been borrowed from the Hindi expression ‘suwer ka baccha’, which is synonymous with the above expression. Such abuses were/are very common amongst the working classes especially in India. The phrase son of a pig’ has a periocutionary effect on Bakha. (Jadhav 01-09).

He feels nervous at the abuse from his father. At this moment he remembers his mother who used to love him so much that every mother does to her child. Here he remember show his mother, who is dead used to wake him up from his slumber. Every child has compassion for mother or vice versa. She used to give him a brass tankard full of a boiling hot mixture of water, tea leaves and milk from the steaming earthen saucepan. He remembers the taste of that hot, sugary liquid that his mouth always watered for it. And after he had drunk it, he used to go to work at the latrines, happy and contented. The writer has exercised here the stream of consciousness technique to reveal the child mind and one can notice the nature contrast between Bakha’s father and mother through his internal thinking.

After his mother’s death, Bakha carries the whole responsibility of his family, like other children, he can’t enjoy child’s life. He often thinks of his mother. She was very loving, so good and generous. One day he is fast asleep. He doesn’t want to wake up, but he hears a harsh voice- “Oh, Bakhaya! Oh, Bakhya! Oh, you scoundrel of a sweeper’s son! Come and clear a latrine for me!” (Anand, *Untouchable7*). “It is a directive speech act involving an abuse.” (Jadhav 01-09). It is the voice of Havildar Charat Singh, the famous hockey player of the 38th Dogras regiment. He gets angry with Bakha for not cleaning the latrines in times. For the first time readers come to know the duty of Bakha who knows his duty is to attend him. “All right, Havildarji, I will get one ready for you at once.” (Anand, *Untouchable 7*). He says cautiously as he proceeds to pick up his brush and basket. The above statement made by him points out that he is eager to work hard.

Neena Arora observes that “Bakha is unconsciously a disciple of Gandhi insofar
as his devotion to work is concerned.” (Arora 46). Charat has always been kind to Bakha. Bakha gets overjoyed when he is assured by Charat Singh that he would be given him a hockey stick. When promises are made to children, they wait eagerly for the promise to get it fulfilled. The same happens with Bakha. He is astonished at Charat Singh’s offer: ‘A hockey stick! I wonder it will be a new one! (Anand, *Untouchable* 09). He thinks himself to be the luckiest child. Charat Singh’s generous promise has called forth that trait of servility in Bakha which he has inherited from his forefathers. The weakness of the down trodden and the helplessness of the poor. For him, Charat Singh is a benefactor and he salutes him for his generous nature. A soft smile lingers on his lips. With the above narration the readers can visualize Bakha’s picture. And he goes forward with eager step for job of cleaning. On account of this promise, he works on continuously, incessantly without stopping for breath. The novelist describes his activeness for doing a job:

And he went forward with eager step, from job to job, a marvel of movement dancing through his works. Only, the sway of his body was so violent that once the folds of his turban came undone, and the buttons of his overcoat slipped from their worn-out holes. But this did not hinder his work. He clumsily gathered together his loose garments and proceeded with his business. (Anand, *Untouchable* 09).

Besides his activeness, the narrator further mentions his external appearance which points out his state of wretchedness. Though he is a child but his physique is irrelevant to his age. His external image is described in the following words that help him in doing such hard labor:

His dark face, round and solid and exquisitely well defined, lit with a queer sort of beauty. The toil of the body had built up for him a very fine physique. It seemed to suit him, to give homogeneity, a wonderful wholeness to his body, so that you could turn round and say: ‘Here is a man.’ (Anand, *Untouchable* 12).
Externally he is depicted having a man-like body but internally he possesses child-like qualities. Thus, his appearance is irrespective to his age.

Bakha’s another trait of nature is that he is very affectionate towards his family particularly to his sister, Sohini. After finishing the work, when he reaches home, he sees his sister trying to light a fire between two bricks. Here the novelist presents the backwardness of Indian society. Bakha comes forward to help her. The novelist not only presents the women characters realistically but also offers an ironic comment on them. Sohini is one such woman who according to the novelist suffers many indignities in society becoming a victim to the sexual urges of the caste Hindus. Sohini, though not the chief character in the novel, is an important female figure. She is a rose growing in a soft, deep mud. Her beauty and innocence have been sufficiently underlined by the novelist. He describes her beauty:

She had a sylph-like form, not thin but full-bodied within the limits of her graceful frame, well-rounded on the hips, with an arched narrow waist from which descended the folds of her salwars and above which were her full, round, globular breasts, jerking slightly for lack of a bodice, under her transparent Muslin shirt. (Anand, Untouchable 14).

The above passage pictures the figure of Sohini very graphically, and readers are reminded of the sculptured image of a beautiful lady in an ancient temple. Saros Cowasjee in this connection says:

If Bakha is pictured as a male god, his sister Sohini is pictured as a goddess with “a sylph-like form”, “full-bodied”, “well-rounded on the hips, with an arched narrow waist” and “globular breasts.” Her figure could have vied with the sculptured images of Konarak and Khajuraho, but she has been condemned by birth to walk the path of the outcastes and top suffer their mortification’. (Saros 07).

The novelist’s critical eyes observe not only the exploitation of the untouchables by the caste Hindus but also the exploitation at the hands of another low-caste woman. Sohini’s growing beauty arouses jealousy in Gulabo who call her a bitch
and a prostitute. She cleans latrines of high-caste Hindus besides doing her domestic work. It is her beauty that awakens the lust of Pundit Kalinath. Her role in the novel is to expose the hypocrisy of the caste Hindus and to reveal the fact that even among the untouchables there are castes and classes and that they are jealous of one another and quarrel among themselves especially at the wells where they draw water. (Anjaneyulu 19-20).

Though Bakha is shown as humble and of mild nature; he gets angry when he comes to know that the priest has tried to molest his dear sister. He wants to kill that priest but after sometime he realizes the fact of his being lower caste. The sense of fear comes in his mind. Both Bakha and Sohini move to homewards; while walking he is conscious of the beauty of Sohini. Her slim, pale-brown figure, the rings in her ears, the bangles on her arms everything attracts Bakha. He can’t think of her brutalized by anyone, even by a husband married to her according to the rites of religion. He thinks of her future life, she has a husband who caresses her. He can’t bear all these facts. He hates the thought of that man touching her. Thus, the novelist has explored here child psyche. If there were Sohini’s father instead of Bakha, he would not have thought like Bakha. He would not have thought of his hatred for Sohini’s supposed husband. The thoughts that come into Bakha’s mind are natural since he is a child and outcaste. The people always want to have beauty but here the psychology of Bakha considers beauty as a curse. He can’t overstep the barriers which the conventions of his superiors has built up to protect their weakness against him. He is aware of the fact that he can’t invade the magic circles which protect a priest. Here we can understand his love for sister, his revolutionary nature which is suppressed by the conventions.

In the novel, Mulk Raj Anand has introduced some minor child images besides Bakha. All these children are friends of Bakha. Through the behavior of children the novelist throws light on the world of children. Bakha has a group of best friends but the novelist has maintained the superiority of his central character. His friends include Ram Charan, the washer man’s son, Chota, the leatherworker’s son and his own brother, Rakha. They always ridicule Bakha over
his weight of body, the shape of his clothes, and a way of walking which was like an elephant, on account of his heavy buttocks and his devotion for fashion. Bakha also always retaliates by pointing at the washer boy’s lash less, brow less eyes saying: ‘That comes of using too much soap to whiten your skin’. (Anand, Untouchable 26). There are other peculiarities about Ram Charan. He is very bony, thin little figure and drives an ass. The main thing is that he is blind of one eye. The above feature of Ram Charan provides material to his friends to make butt of him. The other fellow is Chota. He is the smartest fellow among Bakha’s friend circle. He is a model almost to all. Most of the jokes are exchanged between Bakha and Ram Charan. Bakha is in love with Ram Charan’s sister. He wants to be Ram Charan’s brother-in-law and Ram Charan also has the same feeling. They never quarreled over this subject. A few other outcastes are busy killing lice from the pleats of their shirts and trousers. Among his friends, Bakha thinks himself to be superior to his friends since he has come back with sharpened wits from the British Barracks; he still recognizes them as his neighbors as he is very familiar with their thoughts, feelings and lives. As it is known that among friends everyone is equal. They share their joys making fun of each other naturally and spontaneously.

Here the narrator has universalized this truth through Bakha and his friends. The image of Bakha among his friends stands high; when his friends ask him to play; he modestly denies saying that his father is ill and he is going to sweep the roads in the town. His friend Chota wants him play Khuti (name of a game) but he denies the offer thinking that his father might get angry. Bakha’s friends also expect the call of their parents but they are not careful about being rebuked at home by their parents. Here the novelist has introduced other children like Clayton, a black-skinned bandsman and Godu, the carpenter’s son who are playing marbles round a hole in the ground. Bakha has principles. For him duty comes first. He is devoted to his work. Usually Anand’s child characters are hard workers. “Work is an important value in Anand. Capacity for sustained work is treated as a mark of quality in Untouchable.” (Rao 154). This is clear through the image of Bakha.
His good characteristic is that he is desirous to learn. Unlike other children, he is ardent and enthusiastic to go to school. He thinks how nice it is to be able to read and write. He has a burning desire to speak the *tish-mish, tish-mish* which the Tommies speak. Once his uncle at the British barracks had told him that if he wanted to be Sahib, he would have to go to school; since he is an outcaste, he will not be allowed in school. Later he realizes that there is no school which would admit him. During Anand’s period, Education was rejected to the untouchables; because parents of other children would think that their children might get polluted by the touch of the low caste man’s sons. He doesn’t like such kind of thinking. He remembers that how all children at hockey play collectively. For Bakha this is absurdity. One can notice that in the world of children; there is no discrimination on the basis of caste or religion. They think themselves to be equal at playground. Though he is a sweeper, he dreams of becoming a Sahib. His imagination is fired at the Tommies’ barracks. He always thinks how it feels reading. For that he has bought a first primer of English. But his self-education has not proceeded beyond the alphabet. In those days education was not allowed to the outcastes but here in the novel an outcaste hero wants to learn. This shows that Bakha is somewhere satisfied with his position in the society as says Bamezai:

> Bakha has no inclination to rise in the caste hierarchy. His wish is to lead a normal life, which is not restricted by social taboos of denial of right to temple entry, inter dining and walking freely and drawing water from the common wells. He is not able to articulate these wishes except the desire to go to school, but his defiance is against these restrictions. (Bamezai 60).

One day it happens that he comes across the Babu’s sons and he implores them to help him in learning the alphabet. Moreover, he gets ready to pay them. The Bubu’s sons don’t get much pocket money. They get ready to teach Bakha for the sake of money. Here one thing is clear that children have much love for money. But the eldest son of the Babu’s doesn’t like the idea of his younger brother becoming rich. He is jealous of the money he is earning. It is known that children...
are jealous of each other. This kind of thinking is also highlighted by the writer. Here Bakha’s desire to learn seems to be irrelevant because most of the children don’t like attending schools. But the hero of the novel is exception to it or it might be his fantasy. P. Negi and S. Kukreti observes: “Undoubtedly education generates awareness and awakening in man and strengthens him to struggle against oppressive world.” (Negi 160). In this way through the image of Bakha the novelist wants to spread this thought among the outcastes. He is very eager to learn. Mulk Raj Anand is very positive towards giving education to the downtrodden people. P. Negi and S. Kukreti make comment about Anand’s philanthropic approach:

His works present him more a social reformer who has a mission to give them an equal place, equal respect and equal rights in the society through his emotion and pity evoking works. (Negi 161).

Then the novelist, in the middle of the novel, takes his child hero at the market where his child image is delineated. Bakha’s inquisitiveness in the market has clearly been delineated by the writer. Usually children are very curious to know about what is going on around them. The same curious image is applied to Bakha when he is in the market. There are so many shops of different materials. In one of the shops, he looks at a number of packets of ‘Red-Lamp Cigarettes’. He looks at the shopkeeper begging for one. Shopkeeper throws it to him as a butcher might throw at a dog. If there were an adult man, he might not have behaved like this and would not have picked up a thrown cigarette. Passing through the huge brick-built gate of the town into the main street, he is engulfed in the things that are displayed for sale. He looks curiously at different kinds of fruits; a scarlet velvet waistcoat embroidered with gold, long trousers, mutton hanging beside the butcher, fresh and decaying vegetables and sensed a pleasant aroma oozing from so many unpleasant things. He feels confused and loses for a while. Then he looks steadily from the multi-colored crowd to the beautifully arranged shops. There is the inquisitiveness of the child in his stare. He comes across so many familiar things and seems to say ‘Wonderful! Wonderful!’ In response to the sights. He catches the sight of Ganesh Nath, the bania, mean little man. In front of him there
are heaps of flour, native sugar, dried chilies, peas and wheat. But Bakha doesn’t stare at him for a long time. Because soon he remembers that there has recently been quarrel between the bania and his father. This thought of Bakha points out how sensible child he is!

Then, he moves from there and later attracted by the woolen cloths that flanks the corners of the shop. He understands that those cloths might be expensive and not able to buy those glossy and nice garments. He then arrives at the Bengali sweetmeat seller’s shop. His mouth begins to water for the burfi, the sugar candy that lay covered with silver paper on a tray near the fat confectioner. He realizes that he has eight annas and has no dare to spend all money on sweets because of father’s fear. Finally he dares thinking that life comes once, tomorrow he may be no more. Again his sensible image comes forward. He is attracted spontaneously to sweet things like-rasgulas, gulabjamans, ladus and jalebis. These are the items which naturally attracts the children. He goes towards the shopkeeper and takes jalebis for four annas but he is ashamed and self-conscious at being seen buying sweets. It means that he is conscious of being untouchable. The shopkeeper balances the scales and throws the sweets into a piece torn off an old Daily Mail. He catches the jalebies which the confectioner throws at him like a cricket ball, placing four nickel coins he walks away embarrassed, yet happy.

His mouth starts watering. Here again child image reflects in the nature of Bakha. Even the adult’s mouth would start watering by reading the writer’s narration. Then he unfolds the paper in which jalebis are wrapped and put a piece hastily into his mouth. The taste of the warm and sweet syrup is satisfying and delightful. Here one can imagine Bakha’s joy. Any child would feel delighted looking at Bakha’s presence in the market. The writer has provided minute details of Bakha’s activities like-looking curiously at shops, fruit stalls and sweet items. Every child can have the same feeling as Bakha has. Even men’s mouth would also start watering looking at the sweet items. It is a magic of Mulk Raj Anand who has delineated the image of Bakha in the market which is purely applicable to all children belonging to different culture or living styles.
Bakha’s happiness does not last long when he comes out of the market; he faces a very nasty experience in his early life. It so happens that he touches unknowingly the upper caste man. “Keep to the side of the road, you, low-caste vermin.” (Anand, Untouchable 38). He suddenly hears someone shouting at him:

> Why don’t you call you swine and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, you cockeyed son of a bow-legged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself! (Anand, Untouchable 38).

Bakha is embarrassed. He becomes senseless only fear grips his soul. He has no courage to look at the man. His mouth is open but he couldn’t utter a single word. He joins his hands instinctively. He is confused in that tense atmosphere but the man is not satisfied with his dumb humility. He abuses again and again calling him: “Dirty dog!” ‘Son of a Bitch! The offspring of a pig!” (Anand, Untouchable 38). Many pedestrians gather there to see what is going on. The pedestrians form a circle round Bakha. Instead of solving the matter everyone encourages the aggrieved man in his denunciation. His first impulse is to run away from there. But then he realizes that he is surrounded by a barrier, not a physical barrier but a moral one. Among the crowd, a mischievous child comes; he accuses Bakha of beating him one day. Everyone standing there abuses him. To Bakha, every second seems an endless age of woe and suffering. His legs tremble. He wants to say something in his defense but he fails to do so. Here Bakha’s action of being humble can be compared to the character Billy Budd (A character from the novel Billy Budd by Herman Melville) who is so innocent. When Billy is emotionally under pressure, he could not utter a single word. When Billy unintentionally kills Claggart, he is unable to defend himself. The result is that he is hanged at the end of the novel. The same is the case with Bakha who remain dumb in the crowd. The novelist has not shown him courageous enough to say something to defend himself it might be because of his lower position or being a child.

Finally, there comes a tanga-wallah who relieves him from the clutch of the crowd. With his arrival crowd is dispersed. His eyes are filled with tears and
falls down from his cheeks. The tanga -wallah consoles him. He wraps the folds of his turban anyhow. Then wiping the tears off his face with his hands; he picks up his broom and basket and starts walking. Such kind of humiliation is unbearable and shocking to any child like Bakha. The elder one would have exchanged hot words among the public but for a child it is impossible. There is a hidden anger in his soul. Through soliloquies the novelist presents thinking of child like Bakha. Bakha thinks over what has really happened with him.

Why was all this fuss? He asks himself. Why was I so humble? I could have struck him! I should have seen the high-caste people in the street that man! That he should have hit me! My poor jalebies! Why are we always abused? Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung…for them I am a sweeper, sweeper, untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That’s the word! I am untouchable! I am an untouchable! (Anand, Untouchable 43).

With these questions, he realizes his position. The above questions that come in his mind point out the mental agony of his mind. The above lines show a graphic account of the mental set up of Bakha. In the words of Pinki and Sumitra, “these incidents reflect the mental sufferings of downtrodden man, Bakha.” (Negi 160). Aware of his position, he begins to shout aloud the warning word with which he used to announce his approach; ‘Posh, Posh, sweeper coming.’ (Anand, Untouchable 44). The realization is so complete that it permeates all his senses and leaves nothing vague or unclear. There is a confirmation of felling that he is a polluting agent. Lucky Gupta says in his article:

Anand tries to invite the attention of the readers towards the mental state of Bakha and tries to underline the irony and pity of the situation that a loveable boy, honest, noble and efficient had to suffer all kinds of insults and humiliations only because he is a subaltern. (Gupta 173).

He cannot forget the word ‘Untouchable’ which agitates him much. He is conscious to know that all people are looking at him. Mixed feelings like
modesty, humiliation and embarrassment come into his mind. Syed A. Ashrafi comments that:

Bakha is a painful portrait of an individual in distress, representative of the social indignation whose world of fancy survives for a brief period, whose dream is crushed under the ruthless weight of social contradictions and is born to serve. (Ashrafi 139).

After this humiliating incident, Bakha comes in a courtyard. He throws the basket and the broom on the ground and stands under a banyan tree that spread its dense foliage over the temple courtyard. He sees the image of the snake but his naive mind could not understand what the snake image is about. P. B. Sinha says in this regard:

The novel fictionalizes the fact that the untouchables are debarred from entering into the Hindu temple and they are denied to use the well. Bakha is unable to recognize the snake image and its religious significance. (Sinha, Baby 56).

Then he sees many persons touching the foot of the miniature temple under the banyan tree; Bakha watches everything curiously. He wants to know why these people come here to worship. There comes a devotee chanting the words: ‘Ram, Ram, Sri, Sri, Hari, Narayan, Sri Krishna, Hey Hanuman, Kali Mai’ (Anand, Untouchable 49). He gets his answer. The word ‘Ram’ he has heard very often and he has seen a red shrine with monkey carved on a wall. There is also a black woman with a flaming-red tongue, ten armed and with a garland of skulls round her neck. He knows it is Kalimata and Krishna who play the flute. But his innocent mind could not understand who Hari Narayan is and who is shanti Deva? He wants to go inside the temple but at the same time he is conscious about his caste. But his curiosity becomes more and more acute as he stands there. Child’s curiosity has been shown by the novelist in the form of Bakha. It is a known fact that children are more curious than adult. From same distance, Bakha sees a seated priest holding a bell in his hand. As soon as the bell starts ringing; worshippers gather in the inner corridors of the temple. He hears singing “Arti,
Arti…” (Anand, *Untouchable* 51). in a chorus. It is a clear, soft and melodious voice. At the end of it, it becomes more and more enchanting: “Sri Ram Chader ji Ki Jai (long live the great gods Ram)”. (Anand, *Untouchable* 52). He is profoundly moved. He is impressed with the rhythm of the song. And unconsciously he joins hands to God though he couldn’t understand its meaning. When he reaches the temple to see the Gods in the temple he is shocked to hear the words “polluted, polluted”. Later he comes to know the reality that the priest himself has tried to molest his sister. “The place of worship has been converted into a place of seduction by the so called priest”. (Rajappan 37). Since Bakha and Sohini are children and moreover they are untouchable, they fail to justify on their side. Sohini’s social lower position encourages Pandit Kalinath to do such kind of heinous act. In this way through the image of these two children Anand brings to notice that “sexual exploitation is a part of social exploitation.” (Rajappan 37). He wants to teach the lesson to the priest but he is restricted by his caste. Dr. K. N. Sinha observes:

The novel has a tragic beauty of its own. The will to revolt and the sheer impossibility of successfully doing so under the circumstances constitute the basic tension in the novel. The hero is simultaneously a rebel and a victim. His anguish becomes our anguish, his sorrow our sorrow. (Sinha 25).

Then the novelist delineates his tired image. Now he needs food. As a sweeper he collects food from villagers i.e. from the people belonging to upper caste. In India, lower classes are supposed to run their livelihood on the bounty of upper caste people. Bakha is aware of this fact. So he goes door to door asking for food. Being an outcaste he doesn’t climb steps of the door but he would announce his arrival from below. He shouts at the door of the first house. But no one gives response to his call. He knows that at the afternoon the housewives are always downstairs sitting in the halls of their houses. Then the novelist presents the tired image of Bakha. His legs start aching. There is lethargy in his bones. He looks very tired and disgusted and has almost forgotten the cause of his disgust. Due to tiredness, he sleeps at the door of a stranger. He has many dreams during his
sleep. During Bakha’s sleeps; he dreams of many enjoyable objects that give the writer an opportunity to enhance the image of childhood. He dreams a bullock-cart which encounters a wedding procession. Then he is on the platform of a railway station. There stands a train of forty closed wagons with an engine at each end. Somewhere in a long row he could catch sight of open trucks, two laden with boulders of stone and bulks of timbers. Almost simultaneously he can hear creaks, execrations, lamentation as if someone has been murdered; he can see cows wandering about. A number of sparrows alighted on the heaps of train in the open shops. Then he sees himself in the compound of a school where boys in yellow turbans are reading aloud and their master is controlling them holding a cane in his hand. The monitor of the class passes verse to each of his fellows. Then he looks at a palace which roof is supported by stone trusses. He enters in the palace and sees a numbers of soldiers coming out of it. Thus only a child can dream such objects or incidents in dreams. But his temporary happy moments are no longer enjoyed by him in the sleep itself. His dream is disturbed by a call ‘Alakh’, alakh’. He rubs his eyes and feels that he will get food soon. His dream world is artistically painted by the novelist. One may compare one’s dream with Bakha’s.

As soon as the lady sees a sadhu, she gets up to offer him food, but when she notices Bakha sitting on a wooden platform outside her house. She gets angry and says:

May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence?
May you perish and die! You have defiled my house! Go, get up.
Your eater of your monsters! Why didn’t you shout if you wanted food? Is this your father’s house that you come and rest here?
(Anand, Untouchable 63).

This points out clearly how the untouchable were treated. Syed says that “Bakha is a representation not of bare facts associated with Dalit existence, but a sordid projection of an evil, of a stigma and of the ferocity the bias is fraught with.” (Ashrafi 138). They had no right to step inside their house. Through the image of Bakha we notice all this evils. He realizes his mistake and becomes humble. When she notices that the Sadhu is waiting, she goes to bring food for him.
Meanwhile the other woman comes down the stairs with a handful of rice in one hand and a Chapatti in the other. She gives rice to the Sadhu and Chapati to Bakha. This lady is very kind to him. Again the owner of the defiled house comes down, once again she starts abusing him. He looks at the lady for a while and sets to work to sweep the gutter with a small broom. Then another comes there to offer food to Bakha. She throws paper like pancake from the second flower which falls on the ground. He picks it up quietly and wraps it in a duster with the other bread. He leaves the place. Thus, Bakha is humiliated at each and every place.

If the same treatment is given to an adult man; He may soothe himself anyhow saying that he is a sweeper but for a child mind; he may feel tormented. Syed praises the writer in his article that:

It is to the credit of Anand that he creates splendid images of squalor, dirt and filth with splendid indifference. The understanding of such a social squalor reflects Anand’s proximity towards those discarded disdainfully by the hypocritical nature of the human conduct. (Ashrafi 138).

This social squalor is brought into light through the image of Bakha. At the same time Anand also registers his anger through the image of his hero. Syed comments that:

In Bakha, Anand has exposed the blatant and macabre designs of those self-appointed conscience keepers of the Hindu society who wallow in mud and slush and create divisions on the social level that further compound the agony of the marginalized. (Ashrafi 137).

All kinds of humiliations lead him to be negative towards society.

With all the accumulated anger in his soul, he moves to homewards. While going to home, so many thoughts are lingering in his mind. This child psychology is explored in detail by the novelist. He thinks how to face his father since he has got only two chapattis, how could he tell him about the priest? If he believes it or not? He might think that he (Bakha) himself might have picked up a quarrel.
Finally, he decides to face his father and closes his mind to the conflict. When he reaches home; the old man is sitting on his bedstead. His father asks him about food but his son informs him that he has brought only two chapattis saying reason for this, Bakha informs him that he didn’t call at all the houses for food and don’t know the people in the town. This remark disturbs Lakha’s gastronomic fantasy. He advises his son to be familiar with them because after his death, his son has to carry that work on. After his remark, Bakha anticipates before his eyes the horrible prospect of all the future days of service in the town and the insults that would come with them. He can see himself being shouted at by a crowd; he can see a little priest fling his arms in the air and cry: ‘defiled, defiled’. He can visualize the lady throwing bread down at him. All these incidents lead him to say- ‘No, No’. He would like to spend his future in the British barracks. There is a mixture of reality and imagination in his hearts. Everybody likes to remain in an imaginative world and wants to keep away from the real world. Most of the children love the world of fantasy. Here he has hatred for his own town and love for the world to which he looks out. Men get used to a place, become familiar with it and then come at such a stage when the fascination of the unknown dominates them. We always long for a new world which is always away from us. When we realize that the world that we long for is out of our reach, then we get disappointed. The vagaries of Bakha’s naïve tastes can be both explained and excused. He doesn’t like his home, his street, his town because he has obtained glimpses of another world which is strange and beautiful; that world is Tommie’s barracks. This world represents a world of enjoyment; free from all barriers. He has grown out of his native shoes into the ammunition boots; he has got new dress, new life styles which all are commendable. All these represent a change from the old order to which he is known since his birth. Syed A. Ashrafi says “his wild fantasies; lingoes and adventures did not act as impediments to the realization that he has a right to be a dream merchant.”(Ashrafi 137).

Thus, the narrator has depicted him as a pioneer in his own way though he is completely unconscious of the existing system. When Bakha meets his father; he is in dilemma whether to tell his father all incidents that took place with him,
father asks him with sympathetic manner. First of all he hesitates for a moment but he could not control his feeling and starts weeping before his father and starts narrating how the woman of the big house in the silversmith’s gully threw the bread at him, how the pundit tried to molest Sohini, how he was insulted by the priest. Instead of consoling him, his father asks him that he should have been more careful while walking and advises him to be aware of being an outcaste. Further he tells him that they are our superiors, they are our masters. Lakha (Bakha’s father) tells him some of them are very kind and how he was saved by a Hakim when he was a child. After narrating this, Bakha feels relieved. For the first time we witness here filial attachment shown by his father and difference between two generations. Bakha is shown aggressive, he wants to rebel against the established system while his father is a true follower of the traditions passed to him by his forefathers.

Bakha decides to attend the wedding ceremony of Ram Charan’s sister. Actually he has not been invited by Gulabo or by Ram Charan. And he could not have been asked by Ram Charan’s sister because he has never talked to her since she was ten. He doesn’t understand why he is going there. His real desire is to get away from house, his father, his brother, his sister and everyone. On way to Ram Charan’s home, his mind goes in the past. The novelist here narrates what is going on in Bakha’s mind. He remembers his childhood days in connection with his love for Ram Charan’s sister. She appears him as a tiny girl with shaven head, wearing a mini skirt. She looks like a juggler’s little monkey. He remembers how Chota, Ram Charan and his sister used to play a marriage-game. Ram Charan’s little sister was made to act the wife while Bakha was chosen as the husband. The rest of the boys took part of members of the marriage party. Bakha was ragged by Chota for acting as the husband of a shaven-headed girl, such kind of enjoyment is possible only at childhood stage. Now at the age of fourteen she is being married off to a young washer man. Those days of enjoyment have gone away from Bakha’s life. As he walks towards his home, he recalls occasions when he met her once going to the shops to buy some kerosene oil, how he visualized her naked picture and desired to rape her. With these thoughts, he shudders in horror.
and comes to his senses. As he recalls these things, he feels ashamed. Thus by becoming the child, the novelist narrates the days enjoyed by Bakha. With these thoughts in mind he reaches Ram Charan’s house. But he wants go away from there. Being a child, he feels shy. He doesn’t understand how he can approach the house where festivities are going on. To his surprise, he sees Chota leaning by a wooden pillar. They both feel happy looking at each other. But he doesn’t feel comfortable there. He feels everyone is staring at him and he is sweating. Few minutes later, Ram Charan greets them and invites both of his friends. He fills the pockets of shorts with sugar plums given to him by his mother Gulabo. The trio doesn’t stay there and leave the place. Three of them go away from home. Though it is a marriage ceremony of Ram Charan’s sister; He doesn’t stay or enjoy it, for him, friends come first. Bakha also feels quite detached from the human world.

The novelist then delineates his image in the lap of nature. They three come in the vicinity of nature. The hand of nature is stretching itself out towards Bakha. He opens his heart to it. He feels to be lifted by the cool breeze away from the crowds, the ugliness and the noise of the outcastes’ street. He listens to the whistling of the shrubs. He doesn’t want to listen to human voice. He falls back to a memory of the adventures that he had in his childhood. He remembers the time in his early days when he used to come with all other boys to fight battles for the imaginary fort they had built by fixing a flag on the top of the hill, the bamboo bows with which they flung arrows at each other or game of toy pistols with their sparks. All these recollections give him heavenly bliss. But his regret for the loss of those days comes out with these words:

They were the games played in childhood. I wouldn’t play those games now. I can hardly spare time to play hockey, with my father shouting at me all the time. (Anand, Untouchable 84).

These lines show his state of mind is in turmoil. He regrets for the loss of childhood and aware of his duties. Alka Saxena says that “childhood is usually associated with fond and happy memories of the days gone by.” (Saxena 49).
He is such a child who respects his father. The novelist has created his ideal image in the novel. There are the yellow buttercups which look like the mustered-seed flower, there are the long staked, single-headed dais is. There are so many flowers but his novel mind doesn’t know their names. His nostrils are full with fresh air and his heart as light as the spirits of the sparrow. It seems that he has got the receptivity of the man who is willing to lend his senses to experience. Necessity has forced him to the contemplation of the charms of nature. He rushes down to the slope; the soft breeze comes whispering up to him. He descends through the meadows. He rests for a while on the bank of the pool. The whole valley seems to him aglow with life. In that atmosphere he starts dozing. He has hardly dozed off before Chota comes and begins to tickle his nose with a straw. And again Bakha’s senses enter the human world. Chota can understand his friend’s nervousness. He asks Bakha if anything wrong happened to him but he doesn’t reveal to him. Sugar-plums brought by Ram Charan are offered to Bakha but he hesitates to have it. Never before have they seen Bakha behave like that. Ram Charan is admitted to be of the higher caste among them, because he is a washerman, Chota, the leather-worker’s son, comes last in the hierarchy, and Bakha belongs to the lowest category. But among the trio they have banished all the thoughts of discrimination. They share everything that they have. This is possible only in the world of children.

Chota implores him to explain what has happened with him. After much thinking Bakha narrates how he unknowingly touched the man and summoned a large crowd; how the priest tried to molest his sister and then come shouting at them both; polluted, polluted’ and Lastly how the woman in the silversmith’s alley flung the bread at him from the top of her house. Listening to his tragic story both Chota and Ram Charan feel sorry for what happened with him. His soul seems to lie before his friends. He wants to revenge those people with the invisible strength that the presence of his two friends gives him. At the next moment he shivers with these thoughts. He hangs his head and walks along with his friends with a drooping chest. Then three of them take different roads to take. The above narration appears to be Wordsworthian. It appears that Bakha is not the
creation of Mulk Raj Anand but of Wordsworth. Mulk Raj Anand has given a
detail description of nature as if he is a nature poet. While reading this description
one may surely remember Wordsworth’s characters like Lucy, a solitary reaper
girl or a shepherd etc. Somewhere in him he feels he can never get away from his
surroundings. The writer shows that Bakha is deeply hurt. He needs emotional
support. The writer offers him this support from nature as well as from his friends.
Naturally the novelist points out the contrast between Nature and human world.
Human world is chained by many traditions which suppress human’s spirit while
the world created by God i.e. nature is free from all shackles. Here no
discrimination is made on the basis of caste or religion.

Then Bakha decides to go to Havildar Charat Singh’s house who has promised him of giving a hockey stick. The novelist has minutely narrated the
Bakha’s feelings at Charat’s house and his generous nature. The main reason
behind not going to home is that he doesn’t want to see his father, his brother, his
sister. Somewhere in him, he feels he can never get away from his surroundings.
The writer shows that Bakha is deeply hurt. He needs emotional support. On
reaching Charat Singh’s house, he is embarrassed because he is always ashamed
of being seen. He feels like a thief. Any other person may have gone there but he
being a sweeper doesn’t go within defiling distance of the veranda. He walks to
and fro outside the veranda. Again the writer has employed the stream of
consciousness technique. He is sitting under a tree and so many thoughts related
to hockey players that pass through his mind. There was Lekh Ram, who played
centre forward; there was Shiv Singh, who played right full back and Charat
Singh, who kept goal. Then he sees Charat Singh who comes out of his house.
When he notices Bakha standing there; enthusiastically he calls Bakha near to
him. He always feels comfortable in the company of Charat Singh as he says to
himself: “For this man I wouldn’t mind being a sweeper all my life, I would do
anything for him” (Anand, Untouchable 96). Charat Singh is presented in the
novel as a broad-minded person who treats the child as a human being. He stands
in sharp contrast to the Pundit Kalinath. This is the only person whom Bakha
admires. He doesn’t follow any rules of untouchability when he asks Bakha to
bring two pieces of coal from the kitchen. The boy stands wonder struck. He can’t believe that Charat Singh has entrusted him with this job. Going to a cook, Bakha asks for the coal and the cook also without any hesitation give him the coal, then he walks back where Charat Singh is sitting and hands him the firepot. Bakha feels impatient because now he is eager for the hockey stick. Few moments later Charat Singh shares tea also with Bakha. For Bakha, this is a surprise as well as greatness of the man. Charat goes into the room and comes out with a new hockey stick. Bakha is overcome by the man’s kindness. His whole body and mind is tense with admiration and gratitude to this benefactor. In the novel Charat Singh is such a character who treats Bakha as a child without discriminating him on the basis of caste. After getting it he hurriedly rubes off the dust and holds it fast in his hands. As if he is afraid that someone might come and snatch it from him. He considers himself to be the happiest child having got this stick. He begins to walk. He doesn’t want to be seen by anyone. He is happy in loneliness but at the same time he wants to share his happiness with his playmates. The writer narrates what happens to a child when he/she gets something desired. This case is true in case of children.

He desires to meet Chota and Ram Charan to show them what he has got. He wishes someone will come to fill his mind. He walks back aimlessly then he comes across the Babu’s son, the little boy who is coming out of the house with a stick in hand and food in his mouth which is a typical quality of children. The little boy comes up to him with enthusiasm. He has also been given a stick by Charat Singh as Bakha. The little one goes to call his elder brother. Soon there arrives Chota and Ram Charan followed by various boys of the 31st Punjabis. He advances towards them. He shows the new stick to Chota. Chota also get elated looking at the stick. The expectations of children are very small. That’s why the adult ought to fulfill their desires for their pleasure.

The novelist then introduces the game of hockey-match which brings so many things on the surface: how children play games with no feeling of discrimination, quarrels taking place among the boys while playing, desire to
overcome the opposite team but above all Anand shows the greatness of his hero in saving the child. Match is going to start between 31st Punjabis and the 38th Dogra boys. The little one has been excluded from the team since he is a child for whom Bakha consoles him for his non-inclusion in the team. Game starts but there is no organization in the game they play. Bakha has rolled the ball, dodging to the goal of the 31st Punjabi boys. The goalkeeper spitefully strikes Bakha a blow on the legs. Thereupon starts free fight between the two teams. The captain of the 31st Punjabis advances angrily and grips Chota’s collar. Boys start fighting, scratching, hitting, kicking, relling. Chota also grips his antagonist by the shoulder tearing each other’s clothes. Chota appeals his playmates to throw stones at them. They start pelting stones at each other. Both the team members do not notice that there is standing the little boy. The little one gets injured and falls unconscious. Bakha picks him up in his arms and takes him to the hall of his house. Unfortunately for him, the Child’s mother comes out and notices her son’s injury. She gets angry with Bakha cursing him: “eater of master; ‘dirty sweeper’” (Anand, Untouchable 106). He tries to justify himself but the lady abuses him for having injured his son and defiling the house. Then Bakha blames himself and his misfortune. Why he made the goal, why they picked the quarrel with the opposite team. He feels dejected, utterly miserable. He becomes conscious that he has been walking alone. When he comes near his house, he wants to hide his stick so that his father may not get angry with him. Thus, the novelist has clearly shown Bakha’s love for a new object (hockey stick), children’s game and expected quarrel that always takes place among children over cheating in the game. Once again Bakha is humiliated by the woman after enjoying one hour’s enjoyment offered to him by Charat Singh.

Another humiliation is waiting for him. When he comes back to home; his father starts abusing him: for being negligent to work, for his imitative nature, for going out in the morning and coming back at night. The old man asks him to leave the house permanently and not to show his face again. He has never thought that his father would get angry in such a way. He calls the day as unlucky. Now he feels desolate and has become homeless. He curses his destiny. One after another
he faces only problems. He utters in despair: “What a day I have had! Unlucky, unsuspicuous day! I wish I could die!” (Anand, Untouchable 111). And he sits nursing his head in his hands. Thus the writer has succeeded in revealing Bakha’s psyche. Writer’s technique of narration makes readers understand the child mind. The writer has portrayed Bakha’s and his friends’ psyche internally as well as externally. M. S. Babu says in his article about the humiliation of Bakha in the ground:

This exemplifies the plight of the children of lower castes who are deprived of the joys of childhood that that the children of higher castes enjoy. (Babu 33).

Thus, Anand’s child protagonists are rejected even by their family. Here he needs parental love. His child image is tormented both by family and society.

At the close of the novel, the novelist points out the dejected image of his hero. He says that he is alone, has no house of his own. If a child is poorly treated; they roam here and there. The same is the case with Bakha who goes away from his colony and sits at a long distance where nobody could see him. There comes Colonel Hutchinson who has been in India to spread Christian religion. Anand holds the character of Hutchinson as a caricature of a missionary. He happens to meet Bakha. Colonel’s kindness impresses Bakha who has never expected such generosity from such Sahibs. He understands that Bakha is in trouble that surprises him. He invites him to come to Jesus in the girja ghar. Being a child he is confused over the girja ghar, Yessuh Messih. The Sahib says he is a God. Many questions come in his mind if he is God like Rama whom his mother used to mention, whom his father worshipped. These thoughts gush into Bakha’s mind. Colonel answers that he is the son of God. Then his child curiosity increases. He recalls that his mother used to tell him that God lives in the sky. He questions himself, how would he have a son? And why did his son die that we should be forgiven? And who is this son of God? Who is Yessuh Massih? Is he the God of the Sahibs? ” (Anand, Untouchable 117-118). The innocent image of the hero comes to the readers’ notice. He gets baffled and bored as it is natural to all
children because the concept of God is beyond to their understanding. This is clearly pointed out by the novelist through the image of his dejected hero. He doesn’t understand of these. The Sahib again stretches his curiosity by saying that Yessuah Messih is the son of God, he died for us, and he sacrificed himself for us. But his idea of sacrifice is something very certain and definite. He remembers that his mother used to make offerings to the goddess Kali by sacrificing a goat or some other animal during calamity like an epidemic of sickness or starvation. It was performed to appease the goddess wrath. He doesn’t understand the meaning of sacrifice in terms of Yessuah Messih. Both Bakha and Colonel reach colonel’s house. He is clever enough to understand that the Sahib’s wife is angry and he is the cause of her anger. So he leaves the place immediately. Walking aimlessly he arrives on the Grand Trunk Road near the railway station of Bulshah.

Standing at the railway station, He hears a sound- ‘Mahatma Gandhi ki jai! People gathered there; start moving towards the Golbagh. The word ‘Mahatma’ seems to be magical for him. He unconsciously rushes to that place. He forgets the fact that he is untouchable and people also don’t notice that a sweeper boy has brushed past them. Everyone is trying to reach Mahatma. They are just going, the act of going, of walking, running. Their present motive is to get there. Here he imagines like a child. He thinks there is sloping bridge on which he can roll down. Among the crowd, a man named Babu comes and showers all praise on Mahatma Gandhi to which Bakha attracts and listens carefully. One of the persons makes it clear that Gandhi is going to speak on ‘Harijans’ (men of god). The phrase used by the volunteer goes through his soul and body. He realizes that it applies to him. He imagines himself that he would tell Mahatma how he accidently touched the man early in the morning and how he abused him. Then the Mahatma Gandhi would chastise that man. Then he hears a chorus of ‘Mahatam Gandhi ki jai’. He looks at Mahatama Gandhi with a mixed feeling of wonder and fear when his image becomes visible to him. When Mahatma raises his right arm, the whole atmosphere becomes still. Someone then stands up to chant a hymn. The Mahatma closes his eyes. In that still atmosphere, Bakha forgets all the details of his experience during the day, the touched man, the priest, the woman in the alley, his
father, Chota, Ram Charan, the missionary and his wife. Luckily for him, Mahatma begins his speech. Mahatma touches the topic of untouchability and narrates the incidents of his childhood, his parents’ view towards untouchability. For Mahatma, untouchability is a sin. That makes Bakha curious to listen to his speech. Mahatma wants to be born as an outcaste. This thought of Mahatma thrills him. He wants to hand over all his life to Mahatma.

Then, Mahatma appeals to the untouchables that they should not drink liquor, eat carrion, should cease to accept leavings from the plates of high-caste Hindus, should receive grain only good, not rotten grain and only if it is courteously offered. Finally, he appeals to all that everyone must participate to eradicate this untouchability and therein lays his soul’s deliverance. Bakha feels that the Mahatma has touched the most intimate corner of his soul. The impact of Gandhi on the author is clearly shown through the innocent victim, Bakha, who listen to every word in rapt attention, with the hope that his misery and humiliation would come to an end. (Kumar). After the end of Mahatma’s speech, crowd starts dispersing but there arrives a poet and his friend. For them Mahatma’s philosophy is ridiculous. The poet gives a harangue which impresses all who were present there, but Bakha doesn’t come under the spell of the poet’s speech. The poet continues to say that people must destroy caste, the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. This is possible only when the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain untouchable. For that they must accept machines which clear dung without anyone having to handle it. Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability. Both the poet and his friend Bashir depart from there. Bakha is in dilemma. He has understood few things. He feels that the poet has touched upon his soul. But he could not understand about the machine which can remove dung without anyone having to handle it. The questions about the machine remain unanswered to Bakha. On his way back home, he recollects what the Mahatma and the poet spoke on. He is thinking of everything he has heard though he could not understand it all. He finally decides that:
I shall go and tell father all that Gandhi said about us and all that the poet said, perhaps I can find the poet same day and ask him about his machine. (Anand, *Untouchable* 148).

And he walks homewards. To understand the meaning of the last section of the novel; Jaya Srivastava wants “to deconstruct the construction of Bakha, the protagonist.” (Srivastava 164). The novelist presents his image in dilemma at the end of the novel:

> His virtues lay in his close-knit-sinews and in his long breath sense. He was thinking of everything that he had heard though he could not understand it all. He was calm as he walked along, though the conflict in his soul was not over, though he was torn between his enthusiasm for Gandhi and the difficulties in his own awkward, naive self. (Anand, *Untouchable* 147).

Jaya Srivastava remarks that the novelist closes the novel “by appropriating the inner conflict of Bakha and juxtaposing ‘enthusiam’ with ‘Naivete’. (Srivastava 164).

Since he is a child he could not decide what to do in the near future. But one thing is clear that he has always been curious. The narrator has forced Bakha’s self in dilemma. He isn’t able think whom to follow. To solve this confusion, he decides to meet his father. For him, his father is a mentor though he is a traditional-minded. According to Lucky Gupta:

> In the end there is a glamour of new hope in the three solution proposed. Like Ulysses the novel dealing with the events of just one day begins with the note of despair and ends with the hope of echoes of Shelley’s West Wind. (Gupta 175).

Thus all genuine literature is concerned with the self. True to this belief the image of Bakha undergoes harrowing experiences. His consciousness grows from an unfailing inner impulse to a purposeful act of defiance against the oppressive forces. Bakha is, in the beginning, only a helpless sacrificial animal but towards the end he emerges as thinking individual.
Mulk Raj Anand’s second novel *Coolie* (1936) depicts the sad and pathetic life of Munoo, a young, orphan boy of village Bilaspur from the Kangara Hills of Himachal Pradesh. It is a human tragedy caused by poverty, exploitation, cruelty, greed and selfishness. It is not fate or Almighty who is responsible for the tragedy of Munoo, the hero of the novel, but the society in which he is brought up. He is a victim of social forces in his life like the tragic heroes of the great novelist Galsworthy. Munoo is a universal figure who represents the miseries of the poor and the downtrodden. It has all been depicted by the novelist through the image of the central character Munoo.

In the beginning a realistic description of his boyhood is given. He is grazing the cattle on the banks of the Beas and has begun to play while the Buffaloes and cows in his charge entered the low waters. His childhood is passed in the idyllic surroundings of this village. He is a sensitive and intelligent boy with full of high spirits and zest for life. It is delineated in the following words:

> He was a genius at climbing tree. He would hop on the trunk like a monkey, climb the bigger branches on all fours, swing himself to the thinner offshoots as if he were dancing on a trapeze, and then, diving dangerously into space, he would jump from one tree to another. (Anand, *Coolie* 04).

The above passage shows the animal spirits of Munoo. In villages such experiences are common. Children enjoy doing such kind of activities. In the company of his friends he grazes his cows all day. He finds time to sit under the shade of a large Bunyan tree to enjoy there the fruits of the season. The image of Munoo created by the author looks like Wordsworthian whose characters are always in the vicinity of nature. His happy life comes to an end when his uncle Daya Ram wants to take him to Shyam Nagar, a town ten miles away from their village. His uncle and aunts Gujari believe that he is quite grown up, and therefore, he must earn his own living. It means readers can visualize the upcoming dangers that would enter in his life.
Munoo is an orphan boy. His father died of shock because he could not pay the debt to his landlord. His mother worked hard to earn enough to support him. He could not forget the way in which his father suffered and his mother worked hard every day. He remembers how his mother used to grind grain between the scarred surfaces of mill-stones which she gyrated round and round by the wooden handle has become indelibly imprinted on his child mind. He does not want to go to the town but he has dreamt of all the wonderful things which the village folk speak about when they come back from the towns, the lallas, the Babus and the Sahibs, the silk clothes they wear and the delicacies they eat. He is especially interested in machines. But he is desirous to go to town after completing his education in village and is ready to learn to make machines himself in the town. But his child mind could not visualize the upcoming dangers in his life.

The novelist then narrates the tragic journey of an innocent boy. The bare footed, troublesome and tiring journey of Munoo to the town Shyam Nagar is very pathetic that readers can naturally feel pity for his mental and physical torture. He is walking bare feet. His olive face is flushed; his dark brown eyes are strained. He feels as if all the blood in his supple young body has evaporated as sweat and left his dry. There are tears in his eyes as he gazes at his blistered feet. But his cruel Uncle has nothing to do with it. When he enters the town he forgets his hard journey and feels excited about his new surrounding and everything that crowded round him. When he comes in the town of Shyam Nagar he forgets his physical suffering and starts enjoying the pictorial images of the town. He stares wide eyed and open mouthed at the marvels of different carriages, two-wheeled carriages, four wheeled phaetons and black bodied phat-phaties which seems to him strange as they run without horses on the road. The novelists points out his curious image. He sees many shops of clothes, sweet shops, rubber balloons, pink dolls and rabbit like toys in the general stores. As he is enjoying all these sights, he along with his uncle reaches his destination where he is supposed to work in Babu Nathoo Ram’s office, a sub- accountant in the Imperial Bank in Shyam Nagar. When he arrives in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram, he feels uneasy. He doesn’t know where to begin work and how to set about doing things in the house. He is ignorant of
urban ways of life. One day he relieves himself in the drain outside the kitchen. Bibiji, Babu’s wife, sees Munoo relieving himself and she raises a hue and cry against him by saying:

Vay, you shameless, shameless, vulgar, stupid hill boy! May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you die! What have you done! (Anand, Coolie 17).

The above passage clearly shows the cruelty of Bibiji to Munoo. Here the image of Munoo delineated by the writer is rustic. He is unfamiliar with the urban life. The first thing he had always done when he got up every morning in his village home used to run out into the fields and relieve himself, then bathe at the well, come back and eat his food before going to school or taking his flock to graze at the riverside. Instead he replies with a complete lack of self consciousness: “I went to wash my buttocks at the pump”. (Anand, Coolie 19). This remark points out his innocent nature. His duty in the house is only to rub the utensils and sweep the floor. He is not allowed in the sitting room or to play with Shaila or listen to music. His field is restricted only to the kitchen. Whenever he is asked to clean the sitting room, he gets overjoyed as he lose himself in the fairy land of the sitting room, as squatting on his heels. His eyes caress the mahogany varnish of the throne-like chairs. He would watch the pictures hung on the wall. He scrutinizes everything with wonder and love. One day Shaila comes back from school with the tall girl Kausalya and two other little girls. They all begin dancing in the sitting room. He also likes to join them. So he rushes in and begins to perform monkey dance. This amuses them and they let him play with them. He dances like a monkey showing his teeth, rolling his eyes which amuse Sheila and her friends. He has to get back to his work with the shouting of Bibiji and he would miss his enjoyment. Hence, in the world of children there is no master and no servant. They are ravenous only for enjoyment. The novelist creates Munoo’s image as a monkey. Readers know that since his childhood; he possesses monkey like qualities.
The novelist gives an opportunity to the readers to peep into Munoo’s mind. Due to continuous humiliation in the house he wants to know his identity: “What am I Munoo’s?” he asks himself as he lays wrapped in his blanket early one morning. It means he is not living the life as he had expected. On reaching at Sham Nagar, he realizes his true identity that he himself communicates to the readers: ‘I am Munoo, Babu Nathoo Ram’s servant,’ the answer comes to his mind. ‘Why am I here in this house and a further question occurs to him- “Because my uncle brought me here to earn my living.’ His mind reflects vaguely. (Anand, Coolie 34). Actually he is not happy with his present job given by his uncle. He is dissatisfied with Babu Nathoo Ram and his wife Bibiji. His words touch our heart. One feels sympathy for him. S. A. Khan observes:

With almost a Dickensian nerve and gusto, Anand projets, once again the plight of the les miserable’s pitted against the backdrop of social malice. (Khan 30).

Like Bakha, Munoo also suffers at the hands of society represented by Babu Nathoo Ram’s house. This house has become a jail for Munoo. The only person who loves Munoo is Chota Babu. He also loves Chota Babu because he had given him Jamuns and rasgullas; he hopes that he will put on Babus clothes after becoming an adult person. He is fascinated towards Chota Babu’s profession. He would not even mind being like Burra Babu, an official in the bank, whom all the townsmen salute. His desires and ambitions are conditioned by the laws and customs of the society. He has to suppress his potentialities. The stories of his ancestors, the stories of his village, his country which he had read at school had all been records of the desire for power, the desire for property and the desire for honor. And like every child in the world, he has been blinded by the glamour of greatness. The system has taught him to remain small, abject and drab. But his naive mind can’t understand it. Later he promises himself that he will be a good servant, a perfect model of servants.

One day Babu Nathoo Ram, for personal interest decides to invite Mr. England, the chief cashier of the Imperial Bank of India in whose office Nathoo
Ram is a sub-accountant. Everyone in the family is eager to welcome Mr. England including Munoo also. He is drawn by the instinctive desire for contact, which knows no barriers between high and low, to come and stand almost at the Sahib’s elbow. He is in high spirits, too exalted by the pleasure of the Sahib’s company in his master’s house. He forgets that he is a domestic servant. It is not his fault as he is a child to realize this difference. He is asked to serve tea in a China tea set when he hears his master’s call; he scurrs. The tea tray falls from his hands. All the tea set lay scattered on the kitchen floor. Thus the tea party to Mr. England has been a fiasco and the result is he receives showering of abuses from Bibiji. He doesn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. A shock of apprehension passes through him when he drops the China tea set and seizes his soul in knot of fear. This incident brings disgrace to him. He sobs and cries. He complains of his ill-treatment to his uncle but his uncle instead of giving the words of consolation, warns him not to continue his mischievous tricks and says; ‘I have neither sympathy nor food for you!’ (Anand, Coolie 48). His only affectionate support is his uncle. Instead of showing sympathy; he picks up the boy and throws him out. Munoo then walks his way aimlessly through the gullies, hiding his tear-washed face. He reaches home. Thoughts race through his head, wild thoughts, and thoughts of revenge comes in his mind for the cruelty shown by his uncle. He wants to punish his uncle but his anger is temporary because his image delineated by the novelist is mild and humble. Thus he expresses his hidden anger towards his uncle and then sleeps. Thus the novelist has successfully entered into his inner psyche and exposes the child mind. If there were a younger youth than Munoo he would have beaten Daya Ram. When he sleeps; he is like a corpse, incapable of anything even though his soul bubbles inside him.

Again the novelist points out the over-excitement of Munoo which brings upon an adverse effect on him. One afternoon he hears Sheila and her girl-friends come into the sitting room from school. Here is his opportunity he thinks. He goes to perform his monkey dance and amuses the children allowing him to play with them. He frightens the girls with his odd monkey activities. He snarls and gnashes his teeth as if he is a real monkey. Before he knows what he has done; he has
bitten Sheila on the cheek and she cries due to pains. He also doesn’t understand what has happened. Neena Arora says that “the innocent action of Munoo is associated with all the perverted ambitions and urges of man; it is regarded as an assault on the honor of the girl”. (Arora 53). The result of this action is very terrifying from the child’s points of view. Bibiji enters and curses him saying:

May you never rest in peace, neither you, nor your antecedents! That you should attack the honor of my child! Only a little child, too! You lustful young bull from the hills! (Anand, Coolie 57).

Actually he never intends to such wild action to Sheila. Since he is a child he is willing to play with them. Here Bibiji curses him calling ‘a rustic bull’ but in reality he is not so. When Babuji comes to know about this incident he slaps him on the cheek with his thin, bony hand and kicks him with the black boots, the boots which had been the dream of Munoo’s life. He grovels on the ground for forgiveness. But there is no one to help him. Krishna Nandan Sinha writes aptly in this connection:

He has to face the music—a tornado of abuse and beatings from the master. He quits the place in disgust and takes a train to the unknown. (Sinha 32).

From Shyam Nager episode, he realizes the power of money as told to him by his uncle that money is everything. Thus Munoo’s childhood image is completely shattered because he cannot enjoy the fruits of this stage. He himself has no shelter to live in. Bibiji’s house is a mad house and because of this he suffers a lot there. Mr. K. R. Shrinivasa Iyenger and Prema Nanda Kumar say:

It actually proves to be a sort of a mad house and people are cruel because they can’t be happy. Only the Chota Babu is kind, for his own disposition is to be happy and gives happiness. A crisis soon comes and Munoo escapes from this prison and seeks temporary refuge in a train. (Iyengar 341).

Finding alone in the world, he decides to run away. Running away remains the only solace to the children when they don’t find the comfortable shelter. He wants
to drown in some pit of oblivion where he could forget the humiliating memory of beating he has suffered. This is a remarkable picture of the deeply disturbed mental state of Munoo. The novelist aptly remarks: “A whipped dog hides in a corner, a whipped human seeks escape.” (Anand, Coolie 59).

Munoo is the “whipped human” who seeks escape. He wants to get away from this riot of human beings. So he runs away from Babu Nathoo Ram’s house and boards a train with no definite place to go. In the train he happens to meet a man named Prabha who himself was a Coolie and an orphan like Munoo but now he is a Seth, the owner of a pickle factory at Daulatpur in partnership with Ganpat Seth. Prabha asks Munoo his name, the place where he is from, his parents. Then he gives detail information about his parents, Uncle Daya Ram and the place where he worked earlier and how he was beaten and ran away. At this he is possessed by a mixture of fear and self pity and begins to cry. Then he is ashamed of his tears and he hides his eyes behind his fist. Prabha offers him to come along with him. Munoo moves his head up and down to signify assent but does not speak because he is occupied by the fear of being caught and taken back. As every child will behave like him. In the speeding train, he stares out of the window. His eyes surveys golden domes of a temple, his rudimentary stare travels with Motor Cars and Lorries leaving clouds of dust behind them. His eyes survey miles and miles of the houses of Daulatpur city. There is a curious flutter of excitement in his heart, the fear of the unknown in his bowels and hope for a better life in the new world he is entering. When he reaches Prabha’s house, he is welcomed by Parbati, Prabha’s wife. He is served rice, both plain and sweet, dal and vegetables, tamarind pickle, all hill dishes which he has missed in the Babu’s house. He is given a sumptuous meal. The novelist remarks ironically:

It was the most sumptuous meal he had eaten since the feast on the death anniversary of his father and mother, which his aunt had given three months before he left the hills. (Anand, Coolie 67).

The above is the most satirical statement in the novel that points out the suffering of the child. He even doesn’t get the food to fulfill his hunger. That’s why he is
satisfied with the hospitality offered by Parvati and Prabha. The novelist has introduced such loveable characters to give parental support to the child like Munoo.

Munoo goes in the market with his new master Prabha. He is happy in the new atmosphere as he emerges from cat killer’s lane into the misery bazaar behind Prabha. Since he is a child, he does not know which turning he has taken, the right or the left. It is all a maze for him. He certainly knows he can neither go forward nor find his way back alone, so he keeps close connection with his master as other children do when they go in the market with their parents so that they might not lose the way. He keeps his eyes moving from one shop to another. He reads the signboards of the various shops like Dr. Hiralal Soni, MBBS (Punjab) a shop where small, many colored bulbs burned along a magic wire without being fed by oil. This fact astonishes him, a row of antique buildings remind him of the Diwan-I-Khas, the emperor Shah Jehan’s council chamber, in his Urdu history book. Then he looks at a group of tailors sit stitching away at garments, a shop where jewelers sit studding little bright stones into brown ware, and a fruit shop where oranges, melons, bananas and mangoes are arranged. On way home, Prabha takes a garland to offer to god in the temple, he sees many people joining their hands at the ritual of tinkling bells and chanting of hymns and loud hysterical shouts of ‘Long live the Gods’.(Anand, Coolie 72). He could not understand what is going on. He only stands by his master. He looks many old places, mosques and temples. He remembers all these places that he studied in geography books. He considers himself lucky having got the company of Prabha. He thinks himself that his uncle must be angry with him but he decides not to go back there as he is happy in the new friends like Tulsi, Maharaj and Bonga. Only Ganpat, Prabha’s parter in business is cruel towards the boys. He would always threat children in the factory of beating them for being late. When Ganpat is away, they all enjoy singing a hill tune. Munoo then regains the wild freedom of his childhood and cutting jocks with all and teasing the old women in the caverns by hiding their fruit and especially making of Maharaj and Bonga butts for good-humored raillery. His imitative nature is seen when he starts to dress his hair as he had seen
the Chota Babu dress it in Shayam Nagar, parting it on the side, he then set about washing his hair with the pear soap which Tulsi had bought to whiten his skin and steals his colleague’s perfumed hair oil. Children are aware of that all it will have to be done before Ganpat’s arrival. Munoo wishes to shave his beard with a sharp, long razor of his masters but there are no hair on his cheeks or his chin. He wishes he could grow up soon and have true dignity of manhood like the Chota Babu at Shayam Nagar. He regrets to see that there has not been any appreciable change in his height and girth since he has left the village. In the above passage mischievousness of children especially of Munoo is clearly delineated by the writer. The writer has graphically presented the enjoyment of children that is natural to every child. In such atmosphere he is happy to carry heavy copper flasks of essence from the factory to the various retail shops on his head. For him it is an escape from the gloom of the factory into the world of fine clothed men and women and of wonder shops. According to the writer carrying flasks of essence is a labor which needs to be stopped but for Munoo it is an opportunity to see various shops. Thus the state of childhood is always different from that of adulthood.

The writer then employs stream of consciousness technique to explore the child thinking. When he falls ill; he remembers his mother’s words: “May I be your sacrifice! May I die for you! May I suffer instead of you?” (Anand, *Coolie* 94). These words of his mother go direct into his heart. He never forgets these words, cherishes them throughout his life, cherishing them among all the irrecoverable memories of his childhood as perhaps the most beautiful, the most painful and the most delightful. Children remember their parents when they either fall ill or in fear. In Daulatpur, the beginning is well for Munoo but happiness does not last long in his life. In course of time Prabha’s business partner cheats him and gives wide publicity that the factory is in insolvency. Creditors attack Prabha and a police report is given and the police beat him most ruthlessly. Munoo, Tulsi, Bonga and Maharaj stand looking at their master. There is a pain in their hearts. He is thus ruined and the pickle factory is auctioned and the sum is distributed among creditors. In this context Saros Cowasjee observes: “Broken
completely, not so much by his bankruptcy as by the discovery that human nature should be so depraved Prabha and his wife leave for the hills.” (Saros 71-72).

As a consequence of the insolvency of the pickle factory, Munoo loses his job. Munoo once more experiences the Darvinian struggle for survival. He discovers a cut-throat competition in the grain market for work. Both Munoo and Tulsi come in the grain market. Munoo is unable to lift the sack. He tries his level best but he falls on the ground with sack. The result is that he receives abuses from the merchant. Later he wishes to be strong enough to bear the sack of grain like Tulsi. With the desire to earn money he comes in the vegetable market. He stares at the piles of fruit. He noses towards the baskets where fruits are arranged. A contingent of ripe, luscious small mangoes attracts him and his mouth waters. Here child manners are penned down by the author. He returns to the vegetable market dawn after dawn knowing that there is a great deal of competition in the vegetable market, he would roam into the side streets putting on an innocent expression. At night he starts sleeping on the boards of a closed shop in a street near Cat killers’ lane. He has no daring to go to Prabha’s home for fear of meeting ghost or of being taken by a thief. Children always fear these two things. One day while wandering here and there a policeman asks him about license. He stands dumb before the constable, his heart beats violently. The constable beats him. After this he leaves the railway station. Thus he becomes the very “archetype of suffering humanity.” (Khan 32).

His suffering has no end but Munoo though a child bears it meekly. As Riemenschneider points out:

Munoo is not the common type of hero or protagonist we expect to find in…a novel in his opposition to society is active. Munoo does not build his own life which, on the contrary, is built for him. (D. Riemenschneider 32).

He could not decide where to go and how to find a job. As he walks along head bent and absorbed; he hears the sudden beat of a drum: dhum, dhum, dhum. Such
sounds attract children. So he is no exception to it. Then he realizes that it is the beating of circus of Miss. Tara Bai. He wants to make entry in the circus tent without paying a price for ticket. He has only one rupee given by Prabha. He watches the entry of the elephant and joins the throng of boys. There is a little quarrel between circus boy and Munoo. Later he makes friendship with the elephant driver. He looks curiously both at the elephant and the horse and its rider. For Munoo, the horse rider seems to be a rubber doll, the way he leaps from the ground on to the back of the fast moving horse, stands balanced on its back or on his head with his legs stretched in the air. He watches enraptured keeping his eyes wide open. His child imagination increases and wants to do it.

With this desire, he wants to join the circus with the help of the elephant driver. But the elephant driver assures him that instead of allowing him join the circus, he would like to take him to Bombay. It is the desire of each child to be a part of the circus and the writer has successfully shown it in the form of Munoo. Now he is going to start a new life by going to Bombay. Munoo then boards the train going to Bombay along with the circus company. He recalls the grim moments of the night when he has escaped from Shyam Nagar. In the train, he doesn’t want to remember either Shyam Nagar or Daulatpur. He expresses his hate towards these places in the following words: “I would kill myself rather than go back. I would prefer to die to work there.” (Anand, Coolie 146). He is going away to a new world, to the new, the wonderful world of a big city where there are ships and motors, big buildings, marvelous gardens. His curious image is shown to the readers. He is very happy to go to a new place thinking that he would see something new there. This is what he is thinking about Bombay. He fancies that rich people who just throw money about to the coolies in the street. With these thoughts, he reaches Bombay and bids good bye to the circus company. In the heart of heart he is very thankful both to the elephant driver and the railway because of these two he could escape from Daulatpur and able to see Bombay.
Before coming to Bombay, as every child imagines, he had tried to picture the streets of Bombay, tall buildings appeared before his mind’s eyes like those clean cut, white stone buildings in the civil lines of Daulatpur. Beyond the conception of broad streets his mind failed to imagine anything. In Bombay, he is excited for having discovered new joy. Besides, there is fear in his heart for being alone in this big city. Ambivalence feeling which is true to each child like Munoo is presented by the author. Then he emerges from the Victoria station. Before him is Bombay: strange, hybrid, complex, cosmopolitan Bombay. He looks enthusiastically towards the big shops, their different colored sign boards and big roads, different types of vehicles running fast and purple-faced Europeans in immaculate suits, boots and basket hats. He takes enjoy of all these things since he has made his entry first time in this big city. When he looks the picture of coolies sleeping in the streets; his fancy vanishes. He had imagined that coolies in Bombay might be in good position and the people of the city throw money on the street. As the night falls he fears for being alone and friendless in the large streets of Bombay. Munoo’s journey from Daulatpur to Bombay is full with the images of childhood like: curiosity, fear, search for shelter and innocenceness.

Munoo appears rootless and is incapable of finding a place for himself in society. He drifts from place to place, job to job. Only suppressed image of Munoo is given. He doesn’t know where to go and why? While walking on the streets, unexpectedly he stands dumb and still in the fear of having got into the way of the traffic. Since he is a child, he could not understand the rules of the road. The novelist has brought him from rural surroundings into the urban world. Few minutes later he finds himself safe. At the same time he saves a girl-child shrieked in the middle of the road with the sudden impulse, he rushes into the road where the terror-stricken child is standing and saves her. This incident results in forming the friendship between Munoo and Hari, father of the saved girl. Munoo then gets a family in the form of Hari, his wife and his two children. Munoo then bears the girl child on one shoulder, the boy on the other and looks like Hanuman, the monkey god, who is supposed to have carried Rama and Sita. The image of
Hanuman is given to Munoo. It is Anand’s skill in portraying him like Hanuman that the readers can visualize him like Hanuman. They all walk towards Sir. George White’s cotton factory where Hari had been working six months ago; now he is going along with his family to resume his duty there. They all keep walking, takes so much time to reach their destination. Munoo, Hari and his family decide to take rest on the pavement with other coolies due to tiredness. The writer here continues delineating the tired image of Munoo. His eyes are tired and bones weary, they are too weary to sleep. His body quivers. He turns on his side and sees Hari fast asleep. He feels he must get up and rush away, away beyond the confines of the street but he is afraid that he will stumble on the bodies which lay along the pavement. Then he plunges his head on to his hands and lay face downwards. He can’t go away presently as he has got Hari who is very affectionate towards him. The writer has perfectly pointed out dilemma of his mind.

Finally, they reach the factory after walking a long distance. Munoo looks at the factory roofs curiously. There he happens to see a small pond and wishes to have bathed there. He recalls the days when he himself had bathed in the low water of the Beas in his village. He feels an irresistible impulse to strip naked and jump into the water. The feeling is applicable to children but Hari doesn’t permit him to do it. For him meeting with Jimmi Thomas, owner of the factory, is very necessary. After meeting with Jimmi Thomas; Hari gets successes in getting the job for Munoo. The story of his exploitation does not end here. Every day he gets up early in the morning for his factory work. He sets to work. At first his hand seems to move slowly as if it were tired. Hari tells him how to revolve the handle and he learns it soon and is thrilled to realize that he has learnt his job. By noon time he feels the perspiration running down from the top of his hand to his face. Being intent on his job, he couldn’t wipe it. Besides the streams are trickling into his eyes and falling across the lines of his body. The writer suggests the readers how his hero is busy in his work paying attention only to his work. One day
Hari’s son gets injured by ignorantly touching the belt of a machine. Munoo feels very hard and couldn’t sympathize. He remains dumb cursing himself:

Am I really ominous? My father died when I was born and then my mother and I brought misfortune to Hari now. If I am ominous, why don’t I die? (Anand, *Coolie* 189).

The mental agony of his mind is described by the novelist. Though he is a child, he understands his misfortune to him as well as to others.

In course of time Munoo develops friendship in the factory with Ratan, a wrestler. He thinks he has got a hero like Ratan and wants to be like him. As friendship can only grow between two naïve, warm-hearted people. One day both go to visit brothel house, where Piari Jan lives and Ratan used to visit that place. When Ratan asks him which woman he would like to have. He only smiles to cover his embarrassment. He feels warm and happy and stares at his friend with an innocent light in his eyes as if he is wrapped in a sensual dream. The boy does not know how miserable, how wretched this humanity is that crowds the street of pleasure. When Piari sits on Ratan’s lap, Munoo’s innocent mind gets disturbed because he had never seen a man and woman so near to each other. His uncle had always slept in a separate bed, never seen Prabha touching Parbati or as for Hari and Laxmi, they seemed to belong to two different worlds. Thus, Munoo is not a mature enough to understand sexual feelings between man and woman. He feels that he will die with the misery of not knowing what he wants. He wants something but what he doesn’t know. He is in confused state and runs away from that place till he feels he is safe. When he reaches home; Hari’s wife, Laxmi kisses him with all tenderness. She takes him in her arms, pressing him to her bosom with silent warmth which makes him ache with the hurt of her physical nearness which tortures him, harasses him, making him writhe with all the pent up fury of his adolescent passion. This is how the lustful, lecherous, colossal city of Bombay degrades the innocent hillboy from Kangara hills. The novelist indicates that the countryside is immune to the evil of flesh trade rampant in the city of
Bombay. The puzzled mental state of Munoo caught in the maelstrom of carnal pleasure is vividly and powerfully portrayed by the novelist.

The hill boy Munoo finds an escape into the free world of nature from the stranglehold of Bombay. The sight of stray houses on the slopes of the mountains takes him back the home. He feels that he has just left his village. The novelist has created the occasion of escape into natural landscape to mitigate his mental turmoil. From now begins the last phase of ill-fated hill boy Munoo. One may say that it is by a strange fate that Munoo has either accidental meeting with Mrs. Mainwaring on her way to Shimla or it is the novelist’s deliberate literary device to bring him to the hills to soothe his soul. She takes him to Shimla. For a short while he finds some care and consolation at Mrs. Mainwaring’s hand. There he works as a rickshaw puller. This skill is taught to him by Mohan, a coolie. He pulls the rickshaw whenever Mrs. Mainwaring wants to go out for shopping or for a social visit. Earlier he enjoys his life because he would get the opportunity of watching how the English people behave among themselves, how they sit in the chairs, he looked into the wonderful restaurants. But the task of pulling the rickshaw puts a severe strain on his lungs. Once again he faces physical weakness. One day he has fever. He feels his legs breaking with fatigue, his limbs sagged. He stretches them but there is no relief. He feels that his throat is parched. His hands crippled. He is not in position to move anywhere. He coughs and spits out blood. When Major Merchant examines him, he found case to be severe one. Munoo is removed to a hospital on the slopes of Chotta Simla. Mrs. Mainwaring is kind to him and frequently visits him, bringing him gifts of fruits and flowers. She regrets that she had overworked the poor boy. Major Merchants forbids her to have any intercourse with Munoo, otherwise she will also have to be segregated. Only Mohan, a rickshaw puller and his friend remains true to him up to the last. He visits him daily. Final phase of Munoo’s life is described in the words of H. U. Khan:

In spite of all possible efforts of medical treatment, his condition deteriorated. One day in the early hours of the night Munoo breathed his last in the lap of his friend Mohan. Munoo dies of
consumption at the age of sixteen and thereby ends his struggle for existence. (Khan 69).

Thus he is a helpless victim of oppressive forces. As Premila Paul rightly observes: “He symbolizes the disinherited and the dispossessed of the earth whose tragic life indicates man’s inhumanity to man.” (Paul 43).

After his death there is no one to mourn over death. It itself is a big tragedy for Munoo who is unaware of this fact owing to a child. He dies unnoticed to his relatives. Munoo is the most important character and round him are grouped a number of characters. He is the chief character and the action is viewed through his eyes. He is the center of consciousness in the novel. On Munoo’s characterization writes Krishna Nandan Sinha thus:

The characterization of Munoo is vivid, dramatic, and powerful. Munoo is cast in the mode of the archetypal, ironic, and perfect victim or scapegoat under the sentence of death. But the ironic focus is not sharp enough to be convincing. This is so because Anand attempts a naturalistic reproduction of the vast human landscape and develops an epic mood and scale. (Krishan 33).

Munoo is the chief protagonist in the novel. He, in the novel, is most realistically presented in that one comes across such characters in everyday life. He may be a coolie at one place but he is such a child that representing the psychology of children throughout the novel. For this the entire credit goes to the writer. His character is modeled on the novelist’s boyhood friend. He is indeed a universal figure. As Edward Burra has very fittingly observed:

Munoo is a universal kind of figure. He is the passion not only of India but of mankind. It is hard to bring oneself back from him to books where the special individual is of all importance. (Edward 83).
3.4. Conclusion

In this way *Untouchable* and *Coolie* portray the images of childhood. These two novels are so alike so far as the treatment to the children is concerned. The novel *Untouchable* portrays Bakha in his true colors and *Coolie* points out how the child is a victim of capitalistic economy. S.A. Khan observes:

Almost with a Dickensian realism and wry humor, Anand brings out the evils of an antiquated social order, which has obfuscated and blighted all avenues of individual betterment. (Khan 26).

Both the children have lost their true image of childhood. The question can be raised who is responsible for their suffering? S. A. Khan observes in this regard:

Anand finds no fault with the individual but faults the complicity of the society which assumes almost the Machiavellian proportions in denying humanity a sense of accommodation, solidarity and oneness. (Khan 26).

The first novel attacks the social set up; the latter concentrates on social evils which issue from an inequitable economic system. Both the novels present the suffocated world of children. It is because, Neena Arora says, “the protagonists in both the novels are passive, intimidated, victims though Munoo is an iota ahead of Bakha as he, at least, takes the initiate to escape from the causes of his suffering”. (Arora 49).
Works Cited


Anjaneyulu, T. A. *Critical Study of the Selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand,*


