THEMATIC SIMILARITIES

CHAPTER III
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While a comparative study of two writers is done on the thematic level, it involves the analysis of the similarities as well as contrastive approaches of the two, in respect of the treatment of themes, motifs of characters and the vision in general. A thematic study leads to the analysis of the subject against the background of social conditions and the motivation behind the selection and treatment of particular themes in a recurring manner. Such a study brings out the affinity between the two writers in presenting the social and cultural crisis of their surroundings and periods.

Anand and Thakazhi show their affinity in depicting the themes of poverty, exploitation and sufferings seen among the down-trodden sections of the society. The humiliation and isolation of the outcastes and the down-trodden are realistically portrayed with a sympathetic approach by both these writers.

The element of humanism is a common hallmark of these two writers and it is a significant factor in viewing these two writers together along with their social concerns.
Both show a deep concern for the tragic state of human beings in a class-ridden society and present technically the exploitation of the poor by the involvement of social forces and capitalist machinery. While the earlier writers were keen on highlighting the metaphysical aspects and philosophical riddles of life, Anand and Thakazhi dealt with the social realities and analysed the factors in a rational manner without neglecting the elements of compassion and fellow-feelings with a sociological approach.

The reputation of Anand as a prominent novelist lies in his selection and treatment of themes. He selected themes based on the miseries of the neglected class of the Indian society who were denied even the fundamental human rights. All over India a good number of people were being cruelly discriminated and socially alienated from the mainstream of society owing to the class-caste system. Beneath these disintegrating factors there functioned the social, economic and cultural elements which made the life so rigid and complex. The victims of this inhuman system and man-made barriers had no other way but to accept their tragic predicament and suffer silently for centuries. But surprisingly in India, literature which is supposed to reflect the human predicaments
vividly, never attended to the tragic sufferings imposed on a large section of the society. Writers were interested only in analysing the metaphysical pursuits and the body-soul drama or the colourful courtly life. The distinction of Anand lies in presenting the miseries of down-trodden section and the factors which paved way for the existence and continuity of their tragic predicament, perhaps for the first time in Indian literature, so strongly that it was heard and felt among the readers, reformers, politicians and intelligents. Anand deliberately dealt with these themes focusing on various sections representing the Indian society passionately and sympathetically. He openly and fiercely criticised the institutions and systems like religion, class and caste which created barriers among mankind, exploited them and prevented the social progress. He imprints his marks of protest against all sorts of exploitation and inequalities imposed by authorities and anti-human forces.

Anand's first novel Untouchable created a shocking sensibility in Indian literature as it raised a questioning voice at the hypocrisy of Indian cultural values and traditions. This novel strikingly portrays in Anand's characteristic manner, the social analysis and reaction against the evils and barriers
that are responsible for making the lives of down-trodden so pitiable and helpless. Anand's decision to depict a theme drawn from an out-caste community was indeed a bold one as no one hitherto dared to portray a scavenger as a hero in their works. Writers who belonged to the middle and upper class community seemed quite unaware of those persons belonging to scavenger community as they were forced to lead an isolated life outside the mainstream of the society. Here lies the peculiarity and historical importance of his thematic presentation. Anand appeared as a writer who decided to stay away from the beaten track of predecessors to set his own path with a sense of commitment and realistic approach to expose the social evils and the lives of the innocent, helpless millions who are silent sufferers of it.

In the novel *Untouchable*, Anand explains vividly the details of the horrible life-conditions of scavengers, and gives an awareness of the bitter realities existing in Indian society to which the ruling class, priests, preachers, the so-called social uplifters and intelligentsia have knowingly or unknowingly closed their eyes. The novel is both an outward and inward journey exposing the inequalities affecting both the social and individual consciousness. Bakha, the
protagonist, has to undergo a life through humiliations imposed by many social evils and they gave him a feeling of isolation and despair out of which he thinks he is unable to escape. He silently suffers, incapable of reacting against the cruelties and surrenders to his fate. He is a soft-natured, intelligent and kind-hearted boy. But what he receives from the social surroundings is always insult. He goes out to clean latrines and does his work systematically. There he meets various kinds of people who are keen on showering abuses or ridiculous remarks at him. Still he does not show any delicacy in his job and does it willingly and honestly. Anand is keen in showing the dignity of labour irrespective of its nature. He explains about it as thus. 'Apart from conversion to the idea of work as worship, I had already imbibed an integral outlook towards all labour, as a kind of creativity. From this point of view, I could see that the God like body of Bakha had been matured by the exercise of his muscles, as much as by his sensitiveness, to the epic poem of Waris Shah. I began to prognosticate that human beings can achieve perfection by giving importance to the growth of the body-soul through cultivation of the whole personality. But it seems to him that wherever he goes, he has to encounter only humiliations. When Bakha places an anna before the shop-
keeper to buy a packet of Red Lamp cigarettes, he splashes some water on the coin to purify it as it seemed polluted because it was carried by an out-caste boy. Then the packet of cigarettes was flung at him 'as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing round the corner of his shop'. At another shop too he has to face similar humiliating incident. The shop keeper of Bengali sweet-meat stall throws the jilebi contemptuously at him and there also the coin is purified. Anand here shows the ridiculous practices of caste-system and its follies. As the story progresses the reader is led to the sense of more serious and cruel incidents. In the crowdly street Bakha accidentally happens to touch a Lallaji and thereby 'pollutes' him. Then he is abused, and in the midst of a row Bakha is victimised for violating the rules. Bakha is slapped down by the Lallaji. The humiliated, wounded boy as he walks away realises his status in society. 'All of them abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused? ...... Because we touch dung. It is only the Hindus and the outcastes who are not sweepers. For them I am a sweeper - Untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That is the word! I am an Untouchable. As his movements proceed, the severity of incidents intensifies. When he reaches the temple courtyard where he hears a chant, out of curiosity he steps near the
temple-door and immediately hears the priest shouting 'polluted, polluted'. But soon we are shown the otherside of exploitation and the hollowness of the practice. Though the practice of untouchability exists, the priests often cleverly use the chances of seduction of out-caste girls, whenever and wherever they get it. Bakha's own sister, Sohini is abused for polluting the Brahmin priest and later he comes to know that the same priest had made an attempt to molest her. We are shown the irony that an accidental touch is considered as a sin but molesting is not treated as an un-holy act. Anand here boldly exposes the cruel, inhuman exploitation of caste Hindus and their hypocrisy. He also presents the helplessness of the victimised folk who silently suffers. After this incident, feeling tired and hungry, he reaches the Silver Smith's lane to get some food. There his wife showers abuses for polluting their house. From the fourth storey of the house she throws some chappathies at him. He has to pick them up from the dusty road as they fell scattered there.

In the evening, again he has to encounter a similar situation where we are shown Bakha receiving insults for no fault of his own. When he carries the son of a Babu who was badly hurt while watching a cricket match to his home, the
boy's mother shouts at him for touching her son. She thinks that it was Bakha who hurt him.

Bakha is presented here as a representative of the out-caste community and his miseries stand for the travails of the whole down-trodden out-castes and it appears before the readers that they are doomed to live on humiliations, exploitatations, and neglects. Anand indirectly appears in the end as a spokesmen with some solution through the voices of the missionary Colonel Hutchinson, Mahatma Gandhi and the poet Iqbal Nath. Bakha is told by the Colonel Hutchinson that embracing Christian faith would redeem him. But he is not explained clearly how and he goes away confused. Gandhiji's talk on untouchability as a sin evokes him only vaguely. The poet's idea of modern latrines which would erase the profession of latrine-cleaning would persuade the scavengers choose another profession so that they would be transformed into different kind of labourers, seem to win his attention. Though the presentation of statements as direct remedies to solve the existing problems seems to create a didactic tone which to a certain extent affected the artistic quality of the work adversely, we are shown of a prospect of a transformation that would lead towards a bright future. But the readers
have been given the shocking and painful cruelties and inhuman treatments with realistic details in a sympathetic manner.

There are various things which make the novel *Untouchable*, significant and unique. First of all, it appeared as the first daring attempt by an Indian-English writer to expose the tragic life-situations belonging to the lowest strata of society. In not only selecting the theme, but in presenting it with a humanistic approach and concern, Anand has been able to appear himself as a champion of social cause. He presents the miseries of a community along with the hypocrisy of the institutionalised religion and analyses deeply the various factors that are responsible for it, scientifically and rationally. He was not merely raising a voice of protest against the inhuman practices but dedicated himself to trace the socio-cultural and economic inducements and examined it so closely acquiring the role of a social scientist. Anand made a deviation from the conventional structure of the novel too. *Untouchable* is all about a single day's happenings in the protagonist's life without a clearcut beginning, middle and end. At the same time as C.D. Narasimhaiah remarked, 'In *Untouchable* the doctrines and dogmas are assimilated into a total sensibility which shapes
his (Anand's) imagination and gives life to an epoch and its hopes and aspirations and its curses.

Anand portrays a character who becomes the victim of the class-ridden society in his second novel, who has to undergo more serious sufferings than Bakha. Being alienated from his own background, he has to go through more physical and psychological torture. Here the canvas chosen to present the theme of misery is a wider one and the evils of class system is presented in a more vivid manner which exposes not only the social aspect but the economic aspects determined by capitalist forces and its rigidness on individuals. Anand depicts the pitiable conditions under which the labourers had to live and work with meagre salary in unhealthy surroundings. Anand analyses the class-system shaped under imperialist regime and the consciousness evolved by a capitalist economy.

Munoo, the protagonist, like Bakha, is innocent, sincere, hardworking and sensitive. He too is humiliated and tortured. But the experiences and bitter realities he had to undergo is of a different manner. They are sprung out of the newly formed class-system on the basis of monetary factors. It made him realise that his poverty is the reason for his tragic life. He analyses his status in the class-ridden
society. 'I am a Kshatriya and I am poor, and Varma, a Brahmin, is a servant boy, a menial because he is poor. No, caste doesn't matter. The Babus are like the Sahibs, and all servants look alike. There must only be two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor.'

Anand is equally careful in presenting the internal world and sorrows along with the social and economic factors. Munoo, is an orphan, a hill boy who has to undergo personal tragedies even when he was a small boy. He is forced to leave his village in the Gangra valley to earn his living. As a child he had to bear the cruel treatment of his aunt who 'beat him more than he beat her cattle'. His lonely life is shadowed by the painful death of his parents, Anand is equally keen in presenting the nostalgic innocent memories confronting bitter realities, in a compassionate manner. He reaches Sham Nagar works as a servant at the home of Babu Nathoo Ram's house at five rupees a month. There too he has to undergo a life of drudgery from dawn to dusk bearing insult at her kitchen door step. He was severally ridiculed for relieving at the door-step of the house one day and lowering the Babu's social prestige. We see Munoo then among the dirty, narrow gally of the old town, Daulatpur. He works there as coolie in
a pickle factory. Anand doesn't forget to present the humility and inferiority complex of the Indian bourgeois before the European Sahib in a humorous manner. Nathoo Ram, Daya Ram, Todar Mal etc., represent the Indian servants of the British regime who surrendered their individuality and became mere tools for the English officials to exploit. They are dehumanised in course of time and become a part of the corrupt machinery without fellow-feelings. Coolie portrays the complexities of a new social order where the class attains greater prominence than the old caste hierarchy. Munoo faces social alienation even though he belongs to an upper caste, Kshatriya. But his poverty makes him an alien and a silent sufferer in the complex system framed by the capitalist forces where an individual becomes quite invalid. Munoo along with other coolies are victims of the new industrial culture where everything is determined by capitalist forces. With accuracy, he gives the grim face of life, the ill-paid coolies or labourers who had to undergo in factories and their unhygienic surroundings in detail. 'They worked long hours, from dawn to past midnight, so mechanically that they never noticed the movements of their own or each other's hands. Only the sweat trickled down their bodies and irritated them into an awareness that they were engaged in a strenuous physical occupation.'
Anand arouses the pity and compassion of the readers exposing the horrible life the coolies underwent in their colonies. This is worse than the lives of animals. The coolies had to live in untidy square courtyard, flanked on all sides by low mud shops and flimsy huts with the smell of stagnant drains, rotten grains, fresh cow-dung and urine, the foul savour of human and animal breach and the pungent fumes of smouldering fuel cakes along with the sight of sprawling naked bodies, glistening with sweat, or sheeted like ghosts, in a vain attempt to escape the flies and mosquitoes, brought the bits sickness to Munoo's mouth.

Similarly Anand gives a picture of the strange, ruthless city life of Bombay - here too we are given the picture of the hazardous life of labourers on the background of Sir George While Cotton Mills. The exploitation of coolies by authorities is exposed, bringing out the evils of dehumanisation evolved by the capitalist culture and coolies like Munoo and Hari are cruelly victimised through usury. Jimmie Thomas, the financier is able to trap the labourer in many way is a true representative of the ruthless exploiter who tries to fish in the troubled water on the background of poverty, ignorance and misery. Thus Anand vividly exposes
the inhuman practices evolving out of various sources inherent in the capitalist society which stands solely for extracting profit out of any crooked mean. We find Anand picturing Munoo, a broken labourer who is unable to dream of a bright future losing himself in a state of wilderness. 'He (Munoo) rose early at dawn before he had his full sleep out, having gone to bed long before midnight. He descended to work in the factory, tired, heavy headed, hot and limp as if all the strength had gone out of his body and left him a spiritless ghost of his former self.

Munoo here symbolises the helpless, pathetic nature of the down-trodden everywhere. Anand's sympathetic concern of the depressed class is very best reflected in the portrayal of the tragic predicament of Munoo.

In Coolie Anand also condemns the monstrosity of communal riots and its havoc. He closely analyses the outbreak of revolts out of silly misconceptions or rumours and then leading to indescribable calamities making people preys of communal hatredness and cruelty.

Throughout his creative life Anand remarks his objection on the concept of fate as karma. In both Untouchable
and Coolie he tries to emphasise his argument that man and his actions alone determine the course of his life, with an irreligious mind. He writes in the Private Life of an Indian Prince that 'I don't believe that there is any power transcending man, who can decide things for him'. He is a writer who believes that one should form one's own philosophy out of one's experience.

But we find that Munoo does not seem to have any control in deciding his destiny and meets a pitiable, untimely death, falling a prey to tuberculosis. Anand here attributes the social circumstances and their evils for Munoo's tragic fall to the social circumstances and their evils.

Thus in this wider canvas he is able to present various aspects of evils and anarchy affecting the common lot and analyses them through various angles. We get a real picture of different factors like class, caste, capitalism, communalism etc., which function as stumbling blocks that curb the social progress of India vividly and artistically, evoking human feelings.

Anand presents an untouchable as a protagonist again in The Road to highlight the dignity of labour and action. He
beautifully carves out the decree of work as worship in *The Road* too. Unlike Bakha or Munoo, the Untouchables here are seen facing the challenges and activities of caste-Hindus boldly with a sense of determination and Anand portrays their success in fulfilling the aims.

The central theme of *The Road* is the construction of an approach road from the village Govardhan to Delhi and the road works out as a symbol of progress and transition. But the caste Hindus who are jealous of untouchables, who make an earning out of the construction work, feel that they are defying their superiority and conventions. So they organise and try to prevent the construction work. They ask the village priest Suraj Mani to excommunicate the labourer who indulge in the construction work. The main characters are portrayed as types - Bhikhu the central character who resembles Bakha in personality and Dhooli Singh who has a strong resistance power and determination as victim of casteism. Thakur Singh is a symbol of the orthodox stubborn egoist caste Hindu who is against transition and progress and Suraj Mani, the counter part of Pandit Kali Nath, the village priest in *Untouchable* represents the lecherous, cunning character who exploits religion for personal interests. The labourers
are raised to the level of heroes attaining dignity and
fulfilment with determining spirit. Thus The Road announces
Anand's optimism in manual labour and expresses his humanist
concern on the progress of the down-trodden community, —
neglecting the conventional beliefs, fatalism and the doctrine
of Karma.

Anand portrays a different landscape and aims to
portray a different social havoc that hampered the Indian
society and its progress in the Two Leaves and a Bud. Here he
shifts the area from Punjabi fields to the tea plantation in
Assam. Anand fiercely condemns and attacks the imperialist
regime, its cruelties and exploitations on the common masses.
Though he exposes the evils of capitalist instructions and
the ruthless manner in which the labourers in tea plantations
are exploited, he gives more importance to reveal the
unscrupulous imperialist forces and their brutality so
forcefully and furiously. He has been able to make an impact
on the British authority shocking their sensibility by
portraying a good number of English people as wicked and
cruel. As a result of this, Two Leaves and a Bud was
withdrawn from sale giving it an obscene label by the Director
General of Public Prosecution, in 1937 and it was banned in
India too.
Anand sympathetically portrays the tragic predicament of Gangu, the central character of this novel who is a victim of ruthless imperialist and capitalist forces. Through a series of sufferings in the life of Gangu, the Punjabi peasant who later becomes a labourer in Assam, Anand weaves the theme of exploitation, exposing the pitiable state of labourers and their helplessness under the force of British authority. Like Munoo and Bakha in Coolie and Untouchable respectively, a good number of the poor labourers are fatalists and are passive with their firm faith in the doctrine of Karma. Anand indirectly marks his rejection of this belief and points out that it is this irrational belief that prevents them to react against the dark forces. People like Gangu is exploited not only by the imperialist authorities but by the merciless Indian money lenders too. Buta represents the ruthless recruiter who tries to make profit out of it. Believing his words, Gangu loses his land and reaches Macpherson tea estate in Assam to lead only a dark, miserable life. There a chain of miseries wait for him. The labourers are paid meager wages and they had to work hard in unhealthy surroundings. Such a situation leads to the death of Gangu's wife due to Malaria. Gangu has no money even to conduct her last rites. Croft-Crooke fears about the spread of Malaria, dismisses
Gangu for wandering. Gangu who loses job meets Dr. John de la Havre, an exception among the white with humanitarian qualities to console him.

Gangu gets some dry land deserted by everyone, as someone committed suicide there. Gangu feels happy as he becomes an owner of some land. He tries to cultivate it and slowly tranquillity enters into his life.

But soon the estate atmosphere is transformed into a disturbed area. Reggie interferes in the dispute among some coolies and beats the labourers mercilessly and one coolie dies. The labourers then join together and go to meet Dr. Havre and then they go to meet Croft-crooke as per the doctor's advice. But Reggie and Croft-crooke refuse to hear their complaints. They threaten the coolies and thus disperse them. After this incident, the white men become conscious of their security. They closed themselves and got military assistance. The lives of labourers are disturbed by the army. Dr. Havre tries to help the labourers and as a result of it, he is dismissed for showing concern to the coolies.

Meanwhile, Reggie tries to molest Gangu's daughter, Laila and is shot down by Gangu. But the imperial court
sympathises with Reggie for being European, leaves him and finds Gangu guilty.

Thus through the portrayal of a chain of events Anand focuses on the ruthless manner in which the imperial forces torture the down-trodden natives. Croft-cooke and Reggie are characterised as typical representatives of the tyrannical European authorities and Buta represents the cunning agent who exploits poor illiterate peasants and thrives by cheating them. We also get a picture of the capitalist manner of exploitation and the impact of capitalist economy when the estate atmosphere is portrayed. Gangu like Bakha and Munoo believes in his Karma and silently suffers and meets death.

Anand is able to show the division of the society by capital and its gulf between the affluent society which indulge in all sorts of luxury and the struggling down-trodden who are denied even the basic human rights and emphasises the need of economic and political liberty and rejects the doctrine of karma and fate. He is also able to expose clearly and vividly the inhumanity of man shown to his own fellow-beings as Dr.Havre says, "There is nothing more horrible in this Universe than the cruelty of man to man."
Anand highlights the theme of humanism once again in the novel *The Big Heart*. Though the central theme is the impact of mechanisation on the traditional life of poor copper smiths and the transition due to the new economic pattern under the influence of industrialism and the emerging capital class, it focuses the transformation affecting the social, economic, and cultural atmosphere of the Billimaran village near Amritsar vividly.

The Kasera Community starts an industry which leads the Thathiars, the traditional copper smiths to poverty as they become jobless due to the mechanisation. The industry takes over their jobs and the life of Thathiars becomes miserable. It leads to conflicts with the Kasera and the Capitalists.

Ananta, the protagonist of the novel is a champion of human ideals. He sympathises and identifies with the down-trodden copper smiths and decides to save them. He had witnessed labour movements and their achievements in raising the standards of poor labourers. He tries to unite the jobless copper smiths. But he could not succeed as various factions arise with different methods of struggle. Leaders like Satyapal come out with violent practices for the
liberation of labourers and Hans Raj, an Arya Samajist refuses to join Ananta who lives with a widow Janaki. Satyapal is joined by Ralia who is volatile person and does destructive activities in the factory. Ananta tries to pacify him but in his attempt, Ralia kills him. Thus Ananta who stood for human feelings and compromises becomes a martyr in his struggle to help the poor.

Anand is able to vindicate his doctrines in this novel clearly. His questioning of religion and God, firm faith in action and man's ability in determining his causes and the dignity of man and labour etc. are depicted here. He also presents the dehumanisation due to capitalism and its impact on the society and individual. Through Ananta he highlights the ideals of human values. He stands for rewardless service to man-kind and decides to devote his life for the noble cause of liberating the poor. He says, "I really ought to do something good before I die, so that the others who come after can be a little happier ...." He tries to make a compromise everywhere, with his progressive views and humanitarian outlook. He is of the opinion that the labourers should join together, and gather awareness on the modern machines and use them to earn benefit out of it. He tries to
settle the conflict between the modes of tradition and insecurity with practical outlooks, but he is mistaken by many and falls a pitiable victim for the cause of humanity. He also represents Anand's agnostic belief in rationalism.

Also through the poet Purun Singh Bhagat, Anand presents his humanist views and dignity of labour. He says, 'Speaking for myself, a great deal of my belief in truth arises from my love and respect for man as such.'

Anand's conviction in the necessity of a social revolution and the rise of a new order based on the principles of brotherhood and compassion are also expressed through him. 'If man trust in themselves, and in the other men with who they live together and they are dedicated to building and creating something new by breaking down dead habits and evil customs and shame, I think there can emerge a new kind of brotherhood, a new sense of devotion like the BHAKTI which our saint, Kabir preached and practiced.'

Thus here also Anand is able to highlight the dignity of man and his firm faith in the value of labour along with projecting the theme of exploitation, conflict between modern systems and traditional ways and the struggle of capitalists and labourers. Here too, he shows his sympathy and concern
with the depressed classes and deeply analyses the socio-economic aspects regarding the problems.

Anand presents the theme of religious fanaticism and his firm belief in secularism and nationalism in the short novel *Death of a Hero*.

The protagonist of this novel, Maqbool Sherwani who is a young poet advocates Anand's rational views and the ideals of compassion and brotherhood. He is a man of thought and bears much similarity with Ananta of *The Big Heart*. Like Ananta, Maqbool who returns to his native town Baramula from Srinagar, feels that he has the mission to liberate the society from the grip of fanatics and terrorists who wants a union with Pakistan. Anand vividly describes the jealousy and violence of religious fanatics who indulge in cruel activities. They become devoid of human feelings. Ahmed Shah who represents the evil qualities of fanaticism says, 'In order to destroy anarchy, we will also resort to anarchy and violence'. They disregard the noble ideals preached by religion and turn ideology to rituals alone. Maqbool preaches the ideals of tolerance and secularism and accuses communal violence. But like Ananta he too becomes a tragic martyr when he is shot down in his attempt to uphold the values of
humanism. Anand once again highlights the dignity of man and universal brotherhood through him. As Raimanschneider observes, 'Anand succeeds in expressing what he means by his idea of man. There is no break between the life and death of the main character and the message he has to communicate. Through this short piece of work, Anand stresses the necessity of rejecting orthodox values and communal violence.

Anand treats a different theme in The Old Woman and the Cow. He depicts the destiny of a village woman who, realising her own potentials transforms into an enlightened character. Here also he upholds the virtue of humanism. He pleads through this novel the liberation of women-folk and their rights. He advocates that women should be granted an equal status with men. But apart from these, the central theme of this novel is the quest for self-realisation. Here also Anand rejects the doctrines of Karma and fate and describes how Gauri, the transformed woman is able to change her course of life and determine her own destiny. She was a silent, passive, rural lady who was confined to her household activities. She was forced to bear all the hardships of life. She was badly treated by her mother, husband and mother-in-law. She was sold to Seth Jai Ram Das but she was
able to escape and reach the hospital of Colonel Mahindra who stands for progressive ideas and humanist ideals. It is he who transforms her by his view and is changed to a modern woman with determination, courage and will-power. Though she returns to Panchi, her husband, she leaves him unable to hear his crude behaviour. She realises that 'I am not Sita that the earth will open up and swallow me, I shall just go out and be forgotten of him'\textsuperscript{16}.

She tries to change her husband from his orthodox view points but he refuses to pay attention to her and abuses her. But Gauri who had borne much hardships, realises her own potentiality as a woman, decides to liberate herself from the age old conventions. She convinces herself that she is no longer the old humble cow. She goes to Dr. Mahindra who encourages her with his modern views of life and society. He advocates, the ideas of socialism, nationalism and women's liberation. It is through Mahindra, Anand advocates his views on women's rights and it is the basic theme of the novel. As Dr. Balarama Gupta aptly remarks, 'The most important and obvious principle of Anand's humanism that finds amplification in The Old women and the Cow is his strong plea for the recognition and acceptance of woman's rights'\textsuperscript{17}. 
Like Bakha, Munoo or Gangu Gauri is not pictured as a silent sufferer at the hands of destiny but emerges as a brave woman with active resistance to social evils and succeeds in entering into a new life. Mahindra too succeeds in his mission in not only liberating Gauri but elevating her to a dignified position. Anand uses Mahindra to present his progressive ideas and human values. Though the novel is centred around the miseries of Indian women and its root causes, Anand is able to portray various socio-economic aspects affecting the rural life of India. By highlighting the forces that prevent social progress, Anand expresses his strong protest in a fierce manner.

Based on the tragic experiences of an Indian peasant belonging to a Punjabi village Anand epitomises the socio-economic conditions of Indian sub-continent in a turbulent period through the Lalu Trilogy which comprises The Village, Across the Black Waters and The Sword and the Sickle. In this saga novel, Anand vividly and colourfully portrays the social realities governing a typical Indian village in a period of transition and its impact on the various facets of life.

Lal Singh, the protagonist represents the depressed Indian peasant as Alastair Niven calls him 'an Indian
Everyman'. His life is disturbed by a set of factors governed by traditional and conventional orders. Lal Singh refused to accept and obey the worn-out beliefs and laws and does not want to live as a silent sufferer, unlike the other villagers with the conviction of fate or karma. He leaves the village and joins the British Army. His journey is in fact a quest for self-realisation. The trilogy presents the aggressive forces affecting the life of an individual and his bold resistance to those forces and his strong determination to face the challenges to champion the uplift of the society. This is the central theme of the society. It also displays Anand's faith in the dignity of human power and his firm belief in the emergence of a new society and the emancipation of peasant folk rejecting the age-old customs and social evils that would hamper the growth of mankind to progress. Thus Anand weaves the theme of tradition confronting modernity as the central theme.

Lal Singh represents the emerging class in a period of transition and his father Nihal Singh the conventional Indian peasant who firmly believes in superstitions practices and orthodox manners. The villagers of Nandpur are silent sufferers to the merciless landlords, unscrupulous financiers,
ruthless government machinery and orthodox religious institutions. The peasant folk are unable to escape from the grips of poverty, ignorance and exploitation.

Anand attacks the age-old conventions and practices and exposes the tyranny of religious leaders and land lords who make the lives of innocent villagers miserable. The village priest and elders cut Lal Singh's hair and force him to travel on a donkey with blackened face as they felt he has defied religion and the land lord tries to get him arrested on false charges. So Lal Singh has no other way but to leave the village to escape it. Here Anand clearly depicts two forces of social orders which function as blockades of progress. Lal Singh in his struggle to get liberation from this worn-out system is isolated but gathers strength to pursue his journey.

We get various pictures of the miserable village peasants who are always threatened with eviction, debt-charges and forced labour. Harnam Singh, Lal Singh's uncle represents the tragic state of the poor peasant folk 'I have had to mortgage the whole of my six acres to Chaman Lal, to pay the land rent and to have a little money on hand for the seed. I am done for - anything may happen. Most of what I grow will
go to the Sahukar as interest, and there will never be any paying back of the capital for the year\(^{19}\). But Lal Singh pities the old generation who believes in fate and he challenges all age-old values. But wherever he goes he has to bear cruel experiences. He sees only corruption and malpractices everywhere. Life often becomes unbearable for him and he laments, 'It seems as if I was born to suffer\(^{20}\). Even after joining the army he is not relieved from miseries. Still we see him emerging as a heroic personality.

Thus along with the growth of his personality, Anand portrays an old system, the pre-capitalist order about to transform into the modern capitalist society and the consequent conflict of old decayed values with the new ones in The Village. He also presents the silent sufferings of the villagers who silently suffers the harassment and exploitation from various social and religious institutions.

This protest acquires a new dimension in the second part of the trilogy Across the Black Waters. Lalu who joins the army is taken to France to indulge in trench warfare. He is accompanied by other soldiers like Dhanoo, uncle Kirpu and Hawildar Lachman Singh. There he undergoes different kinds of experiences and comes into contact with a totally different
world and these experiences transform his personality and outlook. He acquires more maturity and capability through this.

Though the scene of action in *Across the Black Waters* is a war field in Europe, it presents the tragic conditions of miserable peasant folk belonging to Indian villages.

But Anand is able to present in this novel, which has a wider canvas, the horrible life conditions of the trench warfare and it can be treated as a war novel too. The plight of the soldiers and their existence in a world of uncertainty is elaborately pictured here .......’ no one asked where the war was or why it was being fought and how it happened that they were going therefore, they had no answer to such queries in the past and now they took it for granted.  

Along with the description of war experiences Anand makes his strong protest against violence and bloodshed with a concern for the helpless Indian soldiers who are forced to lead a life of uncertainty. They are unable to do anything other than obey orders.

These miseries and horrible experiences in an alien land and the encounter with a different social and cultural
value system makes Lal Singh a developed, matured personality with a broad and refined outlook. He gathers strength to face miseries and challenges out of these experiences and tries to imbibe the values of European society. He admires certain social aspects, in his letter. 'This country is full of precious things, such as machine ploughs, steel implements, sheep, pigs, cows, chickens, beetroot, potatoes and apple wine. They plough five times as much land in a day with tractor machines as we do in ten days with a wooden land scratcher. And they use manures full of medicines such as the Sarkar ought to invent in Hind. What a country'

Thus the contact with the European culture enriches his awareness and it makes him reject the Indian values, systems, rituals and superstitions. This arouse in him an urge for reforming the Indian society on the basis of revolution, but in the mean time he is captured as a war prisoner, by the Germans.

Lal Singh emerges with leadership qualities, to champion a social revolution in the third book of the trilogy, *The sword and the sickle*. The major theme of this novel is the exposure of the evils of land lordism. When Lal Singh reaches India, after five years of imprisonment, he is shocked
to see the miserable state of villages. His family is broken and they have lost their ancestral property. The land of the peasant folk have been usurped by land lords. He could see only villainous characters like Harban Singh who had occupied his property. The exploitation of the land lords and their impacts are pictured vividly.

The Sword and Sickle also portrays the disastrous impact of war in the Indian villages and on the innocent peasant folk. The war had sown poverty, disease and famine in the villages and everyone there have become sufferers. Though they have no involvement at all in the war game, they have to bear the tortures of the imperial government which is actually responsible for the disaster. An innocent villager expresses his misery and the government harassment 'they took our grain, our timber, our tea, why even the skins of our buffaloes and the oil from the poor man's saucer lamp and there are some people in the villages around here today who hide their nakedness in the clothes discarded by those who have died of plagues, while their children go naked'.

Lal Singh is terribly disturbed by the deplorable state of socio-economic conditions of the village. He joins a revolutionary group headed by Rampal Singh, organises the
peasants and indulge in militant activities. In the mean time he marries Maya, his old lover but unable to lead a normal life as he is arrested for extremist activities. The methods of revolution organised by his group ended in a failure as it was not properly planned and organised. While he is in prison he contemplates and analyses the follies and sees a bright flame in the doctrines of Gandhiji. After his release he meets Gandhi and decides to devote his life to serve the poor and liberates them from poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and exploitation. We see at the end of the novel, Lal Singh dreaming the liberation of peasants.

Thus the novel vividly marks not only Anand's protests and attacks of land-lordism, imperial regime, war and exploitation but his careful analysis of the various factors behind them and advocates the remedies based on doctrines. Eventhough it reaches the level of didactism, his humanism and concern of the down trodden is very much reflected in this novel.

Ultimately, the trilogy presents a vivid portrayal of a turbulent period in the history of India, while the society was in a phase of transition. Based on the personal tragedy of an individual in an Indian village, Anand depicts
very vividly and colourfully, the historical, geographical, cultural, economic and religious features of a society and analyses their course and impacts in the social structure of an Indian village. We could see the biography of an entire society revealing all the dark aspects documented very clearly in the trilogy and hence it acquires a wide scope and epic proportion. We are also shown the transformation taking place in the society and its impact on the society in all walks of life and the gradual emergence of peasant folk into an organised sect. Here also highlighting the values of humanism, Anand presents the dignity of human labour with an optimistic vision.

At the same time, Anand beautifully shows through the journey of Lal Singh, the struggle of an individual to progress, the quest for self-realisation, dignity of labour and his attack on social evils.

Thus an analysis of Anand's major works reveals that his novels portray a cross-section of Indian society and the various, factors that govern its flow of life. Along with its portrayal, one could see his observation and analysis of the social, economic and cultural aspects in a rational and
scientific manner with a humanitarian outlook and this makes one consider him as a humanist writer.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai is one among the very few regional writers in India who has been able to imprint his fame in both national as well as in international literary world, with a single work Chemmeen, he has been able to win the admiration of readers belonging to various countries.

Thakazhi attains significance as a remarkable writer owing to various factors. The chief factor lies in the fact that he has been able to create a typical regional novel in a vernacular language that contains a universal theme that could overcome time and geographical limits. Doing this, he announced the world outside India that there exists such a language known as Malayalam and its literature as R.E. Asher rightly commented, 'If the literature of Malayalam is known at all in the west, it is as the language in which Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's Chemmeen was written'. Another distinguishing feature of Thakazhi is that he elevated Malayalam fiction giving it a new and higher dimension with a broad perspective. Before Thakazhi's appearance Malayalam fiction was confined in an ivory-tower, unable to reflect the social realities concerning the ordinary man and the
miseries of the down-trodden. It was a daring attempt in the field of Malayalam Literature, when Thakazhi began to deal with themes based on the lives of the down-trodden and exploited class. It is in the selection and treatment of themes that Thakazhi shares an affinity and similarity with Mulk Raj Anand. Thakazhi's earlier phase of literary career was noted for the sympathetic and realistic portrayal of the miseries of the neglected sections of the society. Like Anand, Thakazhi too with a keen sense of observation, depicted and analysed rationally and scientifically the social structure along with the factors and powers that governed and influenced it. Thakazhi too went deeply into the root causes that stood for the stagnation of the society and evil forces making the lives of the down-trodden community pitiable. And Thakazhi too marks his strong protest against the forces of exploitation and insists the need for reforming the society.

But it is in the earlier phase of the career Thakazhi is so close to Anand. Thakazhi became a writer of mature vision during his stay in Trivandrum. He reached Trivandrum to study pleader ship course at the Trivandrum Law College and had an association with the noted scholar-critic cum journalist Kesari Balakrishna Pillai and his friends. Kesari's
contact and influence played a remarkable role in the making of his career as a novelist. He opened to Thakazhi the doors leading to the Western knowledge and modern literature. Under his guidance and influence Thakazhi came into contact with the new western trends in literature. He not only read the works of Zola, Maupassant, Balzac, Dickens, Turganev etc., but learnt the theories of Sigmond Freud and the political doctrines of Karl Marx. Freud and Marx influenced him very much and his earlier novels dealt with themes concerned with the social realities and they were analysed on Marxian point of view and the characterisation was done under the impact of Freudian psychology. Marxian ideology helped him to analyse the society on the viewpoint of class-struggle. The national struggle and labour movements were making some progress here and there in Travancore and the educated masses were slowly gaining a political consciousness and the labourers and peasants were being organised here. Kesari used to conduct discussions and study classes and Thakazhi regularly attended these meetings and it had laid a strong impact on Thakazhi in choosing peculiar themes concerned with the miseries of down-trodden and the working class. Under these circumstances Thakazhi deliberately selected the theme of poverty, exploitation and the helplessness of the have-nots and proletarians. Thakazhi
was highly depressed at the disintegration of society in the wake of a transition and the impact of poverty and misery on the common masses as a result of economic depression and he remembers in his autobiography that 'I received a sort of strength from Marxian ideology. Let me openly confess that I felt getting a bright light from that doctrines'.

He also found that this doctrine was an effective measure scale to analyse the social realities on a dialectical perspective. Thus Thakazhi stepped into the field of Malayalam fiction as a promoter of Marxian ideology. In his earlier works he appeared as a social revolutionary and reformist. His first novel *Tyagathinte Pratiphalam* which appeared in 1934 treated the life of a woman who had to indulge in immoral activities in order to earn a livelihood. The theme he chose and the characters he portrayed were quite novel and daring. It created a new awareness, breaking the age-old conventions, beliefs and principles that governed the literature of Kerala which had hither to unknown. It created a new consciousness and terribly shocked the sensibility of the refined reading public of Kerala. The poorer section of the community was exposed for the first time and hence this novel rightly has a historical relevance in the history of Malayalam fiction.
Thakazhi once again portrays the theme of prostitution in his second novel *Patitapankajam* which came out in 1945. It had borne a foreword by E.V. Krishna Pillai. Here Thakazhi portrayed the social circumstances that forced a young girl named Gunavati to prostitution. He writes, 'This is the life of a prostitute. Her dirty life spreads foul smell everywhere'. Gunavathi compares her life with a beggar girl. Gunavathi feels that the beggar girl's life is far better than hers.

In this novel he also deals with the theme of the disintegration of a family sympathetically. He also writes that a woman who once became a prostitute is always treated as a prostitute. She is unable to escape from that profession as society does not forgive her even after she gave up that profession. Thus Thakazhi not only presents a theme but analyses the factors and problems very carefully with a deep concern, evoking the feelings of pity and compassion with sufferers. E.V. Krishna Pillai comments in the foreword, 'Human life ...... a poetic eye that watches with sympathy a situation that is not so unusual in itself ...... that is what we encounter in this book.

Thakazhi once again deals with the theme of prostitution, the factors and problems centred around it in
his third novel *Paramarthangal*. It narrates the tragic story of a girl turning to prostitution at a tender age. Janaki Amma, the chief character was pregnant at the time of marriage. Her husband used to harass her for the illegitimate affair she had, before marriage. Though she had decided to lead an ideal life for the welfare of her husband and children, she was severely harassed by him. At last she raises her voice against the ill-treatment and tries to assert her stand. But her life continued to be tragic.

Thakazhi then presents the story of a woman who becomes a beggar out of circumstances in *Thalayode*. She was a victim of a soldier who had come to suppress the peasant's revolt of Punnapra-Vayalar. The rape of the soldier had presented her a baby too. This is the first time, a beggar appears as the chief character in Malayalam Novel. Thakazhi realistically portrays the hidden world of beggars through this novel. In this novel, Thakazhi presents the decaying picture of political organisations. A particular political group (Thakazhi names it Praja Parishad) becomes a corrupt organisation seeking favours from the landlords and exploits the common masses. But a new revolutionary leftist group emerges under Sreekumar, an active politician who aims to attain victory. Thakazhi
is able to give a different picture of life by portraying the character of Mr. Rajasekharan, a captain who leads a luxurious life in order to contrast with the pitiable condition of the beggar. With this different kind of life.

_Tendivargam_ also presents the tale of beggar community and analyses the factors behind their pitiable state. Through the views of the character, Thakazhi imprints his protest against capitalist society and its values which cause poverty in society and insists the abolition of capitalism.

In the novel _Perillakkatha_ Thakazhi presents the growth of trade union organisation and the revolt of the emerging youth against the exploitation of feudal lords. Along with it he depicts the manner in which organisations often deviate from their right paths, indulging in atrocities.

Sasi belongs to a rich family of land lords. But he decides to serve the poor involved in revolutionary activities and is imprisoned. Though he is with the peasants, some among them like Sreedharan and Govindan hates Sasi as he belonged to a rich family and one day Govindan kills Sasi. But in order to save the face of the party to which Sasi was actively involved, Sreedharan conducts functions to mourn
Sasi's death. Thakazhi here presents the outbreak of the suppressed feelings of the exploited class. Sasi bears some resemblance with Ananta, the protagonist of Mulk Raj Anand's *Big Heart* who becomes an innocent martyr like him.

The above mentioned works along with some other less significant ones form the earliest phase in Thakazhi's literary career. But these works bear only historical relevance in Malayalam literature. Thakazhi's attempts in depicting the above mentioned themes paved the growth of the literature of the oppressed and exploited. It was unimaginable for the elite reading public to see beggars, prostitutes, and other poor folk appearing as protagonists in fiction. Their themes or life-conditions and problems were not at all a matter of concern for the sophisticated readers. Thakazhi's predecessors in Malayalam fiction depicted characters and life situations of those who belonged to aristocratic and princely background. Thakazhi in fact inaugurated the literature of the common man through his earlier works but they do not reflect a natural and developed vision as it is seen in his later works. But these novels paved the formation and growth of progressive literature movement. Thakazhi was accompanied by other writers like Basheer, Keshav Dev, Ponkunnam Varkey and Karoor, and
with their effort, works which dealt the themes of ordinary people and their life-conditions attained much popularity and admiration.

But the social realities and class struggle were analysed sharply and artistically on the basis of Marxian ideology in Tottiyude Makan and Rantitangazhi.

By this time, he had acquired some experiences in fiction writing, imbibed certain artistic skill and had come into contact with world literature too. He had seen various aspects and faces of life and had associations with political movements like Travancore State Congress and Communist Party of India. He had several occasions to involve in the problems of labourers and peasants, who were being exploited and harassed by feudal lords and the newly emerging industrialists of Kuttanad and Alleppey town respectively. He had witnessed the severe poverty and misery among the poor and illiterate peasants in his own neighbourhood. They were unorganised and were severely exploited. A large group of labourers had not acquired class-consciousness and a social awareness was quite absent among them owing to misery and illiteracy.
Thakazhi had by this time started practice as an advocate at Ambalappuzha court near his village. As an advocate he had to involve himself with several problems concerned with the labourers and peasants around his neighbourhood and Alappuzha town, including scavengers who lived in utter misery.

But in all walks of social life, the seeds of transition began to grow owing to the national awakening related to freedom movement. Gandhian movements had some impact in the social and religious spheres. The Kerala Unit of communist party was organised under the leadership of Krishna Pillai and it began to attract social activists and intelligentsia and they began to organise the labourers and peasants. A large number of writers were attracted to the communist movement. Thakazhi who had closely viewed and studied the social inequalities and injustices and the evil forces and factors that caused them, had found the Marxian doctrine as an effective remedy to reform the society eradicating the miseries of the down-trodden. He mentions about his social awareness acquiring a clearer focus by the impact of Marxian ideology and doctrines. He says 'At that time I and a few friends of mine had firmly upheld the essence of Marxism
In the economic sphere Marxism has been able to bring about a great change throughout the world ..... In brief, Marxism could give a clearer shape to my social consciousness. What are the things to be said: when these became clear, my writing came to have a form. And people started saying it was good\textsuperscript{28}.

Thakazhi’s observation of the decaying social values and his humanistic vision based on the Marxian ideology, and his close contact with the lives of the scavengers of Alleppey town made him choose a theme related to them in the novel, \textit{Thottiyude Makan}. It echoed the heartthrobs of a society alienated from the mainstream. It also portrayed the transition taking place among the scavengers and the emerging awareness and class-consciousness, as they were being organised under trade union. He expressed his faith in the working class and in their dignity of labour and in this sense Kesari called it an expressionist novel and appreciated it. This novel bears remarkable similarity with Anand’s \textit{Untouchable} which too treated the lives of scavengers.

Thakazhi portrays the story of three generations in it. Ishakimuttu represents the old generation of scavengers who silently suffers the exploitation and misery. He worked
as a scavenger in Alleppey Municipality for about thirty years and is ill now. He wanted to hand over his job to his son Chudalamuthu who does not like this job having seen the deplorable experiences of his father. But under certain circumstances he was forced to step into his father's job but decided to live as a rebel. He wanted to lead a refined life and did not like his son to grow like a scavenger boy. He yearned for a transition from the miserable life. At the same time he decided to be practical and began to apply the tricks of the trade. He tried to bribe and influence the overseer who was crooked. Though he initiated to form a union of the scavengers, at the last moment he made an agreement with the overseer and made attempts to break the union and got some favours for it. He married Valli, conducted a honey-moon and tried to lead a sophisticated life unlike other scavengers. He was able to earn something out of money-lending for a high rate of interest. Other scavengers had to depend on him.

The outbreak of small-pox created alarm among the scavengers and a good number of them fell a prey to it and died. But Chudalamuthu was concerned with his safety and earnings. He had by this time become very greedy and had given up all human values.
The president of the Municipality and overseer sought Chudalamuthu's help, when another union was formed. He was able to break it, victimising its leader Pichandi. Not only the union but Pichandi's family also was shattered.

Valli had given birth to a son and he was named Mohanan. With much difficulty Chudalamuthu managed to join him in a school. He was brought up well with good clothes and was kept away from other scavenger boys. Chudalamuthu by this time got a sort of promotion as a supervisor in the Crematorium and thus his dream was fulfilled as he need not carry now the dirty night soil. He stood at the entrance of the burial ground like a messenger of death holding a stick.

But soon Chudalamuthu fell a victim of Cholera and died and he was followed by Valli by the same disease and the deserted boy Mohan turned to be a beggar and later a scavenger.

But the Municipal labourers had gained class-consciousness under their organisation and gathered demanding power and declared a strike to gain their rights, against the authorities. Mohan by this time out of enthusiasm set fire to the president's house. When the novel ends we see the organised scavengers attaining triumphant.
Thakazhi in this novel has been able to portray realistically the miseries and agonies of scavengers and their alienation and exploitation from the higher class. He does it with much artistic skill, without showing sentimentalism or exaggeration. At the same time he has been able to picture the bitter realities more clearly than Anand in a compassionate manner.

He depicts the changing awareness of the scavengers through Chudalamuthu who, however, is not at all pictured an idealised character. Chudalamuthu had ambition, crookedness and his betrayal nature is effectively portrayed. Thakazhi beautifully presents the awakening of the labourers into an organised class aiming a social revolution and their triumph, in attaining rights. Thus it is a successful novel in the realistic tradition of Malayalam fiction as R.E. Asher says, 'Scavengers are shown as being on occasion not only loyal, and loving, but feckless, ignorant, superstitious, cunning, treacherous and quarrelsome. This is of course, not merely an attempt to imitate nineteenth century French realism, but also a way of stressing that no people, but the system, is essentially at fault. Scavenger's son insists on both the existence of and the need for class war fare'.
But Thakazhi is careful in not becoming didactic or propagandist while insisting the need for a reformation through social revolution. Unlike Anand who presents some problems and suggests two or three remedies in a rational and journalistic manner, Thakazhi is able to weave the fabric of imaginative element in an artistic manner highlighting the humanitarian values. Thakazhi was able to achieve it as he had a keen insight in analysing and portraying the fundamental aspects of human mind and life everywhere.

Treating the essential elements of human nature, Thakazhi wrote another work which has almost a similar theme, in Rantitangazhi. This work too portrayed the miseries of the down-trodden. It depicted the pitiable life conditions of the peasants of Kuttanad and their struggles in a colourful manner. Woven around a love-story, Thakazhi presents the transition period in the agricultural and political spheres of Kuttanad, the rice-bowl of Travancore. Thakazhi artistically pictures the growing social and class-consciousness of peasants and their class-struggle in a colourful manner. When the novel ends, we are shown the emerging peasant community into an organised class who are able to make demands and achieve their rights. Thus Rantitangazhi shares an affinity with
Thottiyude Makan. At the same time Thakazhi is careful in paying equal attention to the portrayal of human emotions and attachments through the love-plot, and the romantic in Thakazhi peeps to make an appearance through this work.

Thakazhi is not only presenting the changing social realistic in the wake of transition but carefully presents the change in the personal relationship and attachment between the master and servant that existed in the former days. He also presents the perspective of farmers regarding paddy cultivation. Cultivation was done for quenching man's hunger alone, and it was considered to be a divine and pure work, so close to a ritual. Both the master and the servants maintained a divine attachment with the soil. Elements of Pagan beliefs were so dominant that it had cast their life-style a radiance of purity and devotion.

But in the wake of transition the personal relationship between master and servant shattered breaking the threads of mutual affection and faith. Paddy cultivation was done to make money and this profit motive is a significant factor in the transition phase from feudalism to capitalism. Thakazhi presents all these through the words of peasants evoking romanticised feelings. He had dedicated this book to his own
family serf to whom his father had a deep attachment. He remembers 'A good part of my childhood memories are about that devoted servant of my father....... It was when that devoted servant was placed in the grave that I saw my father weep .... This book is dedicated to the memory of that Madiathara Kunjappan.

In this novel too Thakazhi highlights the dignity of labour and presents the human qualities and moral values upheld by the illiterate peasants. Most of the main characters belong to the peasant communities like Paraiah and Pulaya. They had to lead an isolated life from the higher communities like Nair and Syrian Christians. They were subjected to ill-treatment and exploitation and were often treated as bonded slaves. They were so poor, illiterate and superstitious and accepted their miseries as fates.

Thakazhi presents their life in a naturalistic manner on the background of a triangular affair among Koran, Chathan and Chirutha, all belonging to peasant folk. Chathan and Koran were eager to win the hand of Chirutha who was pretty and active as a farm labourer. Koran decided to become a bonded labourer of Ouseph to fulfil his ambition of marrying Chirutha and succeeded in his attempt. Chathan, though dejected
continued to be friendly with Koran and helped him whenever he was in need. Koran and Chirutha led a romantic life which appeared to be very strange and some among them criticised the couple for disregarding the traditional values of purity while staying near the paddy fields and they were anxious of its outcome. Oseph was so ruthless and he cruelly exploited Koran and his companions. They were not properly paid. They were shown false accounts regarding their wages. His unscrupulous son Chacko tried to molest Chirutha. Koran had by this time become a revolutionary union activist. When he, along with some other peasants realised that even after gaining independence nothing favourable occurred in the lives of labourers. It was the haves who benefited from the new politicians and rulers. Revolutionary activities and trade unionism gathered strength and prominence day by day and Koran fully involved in it with a missionary zeal to reform the system. But one day he saw Chacko who was trying to have a sexual assault on Chirutha and in the struggle Koran killed Chacko and was sentenced for fifteen years of imprisonment. Before going, he entrusted Chathan who was the former lover of Chirutha to look after her. Chathan showed loyalty to his friend and treated her brotherly. Chirutha who was pregnant had given birth to a child and Chathan brought him up. After
fifteen years Koran joined them and he optimistically views the progress of the society and felt that the labourers have advanced so far by this time.

Thakazhi here successfully portrays the day to day realities of peasant folk exposing their miseries and exploitations in an emotional way. Through his human insight he is able to highlight the moral doctrines upheld by the peasants in a colourful manner, and pictures carefully the personal and tragic events appearing in the lives of Koran, Chirutha and Chathan. At the same time he is able to insist on the need for social and political reformation discarding the worn-out systems and the forces of exploitation. He also presents the gradual transformation of the society and the peasants turning into an organised sect, gathering social awareness and class consciousness. Thus in this fiction of class-struggle Thakazhi is able to include various aspects of life in a balanced manner, showing artistic skill and matured vision.

Thakazhi's most appreciated work Chemmeen which had won him universal appeal is basically a novel which deals with the theme of tragic romantic love. In fact, the tinge of romanticism seen in Rantitangazhi developed into a bright
halo in *Chemmeen*. But behind the tragic love story there are certain social and economic factors which functioned as barriers to prevent the smooth flow of intense love and Thakazhi artistically presents this without depicting ideologies and doctrines directly. But what gave it a universal colouring is the treatment of the myth based on the chastity of fisher-woman influencing the destiny of the life of fisherman who is at sea. This myth gave the novel a universal appeal as it evoked an element of mystery of supernaturalism and Thakazhi successfully fused the love-plot into the myth.

But along with this, *Chemmeen* presents the social and economic factors determining the course of life governing the lives of fisher-folk, based on Chemban Kunju who lives at Nirkunnam coast with his wife Chakki and daughters Karuthamma and Panchami. Karuthamma loves Pareekutty who is a Muslim trader and they themselves know that social laws are against them. Chemban Kunju who is highly ambitious borrows some money from Pareekkutty and out of his affection for Karuthamma readily gives it on loan. Chemban Kunju owns a boat and thrives with it. But he faces alienation among his folk due to his arrogant and ambitious nature. He betrays Pareekkutty and refuses to sell the fish to him. But Pareekkutty and
Karuthamma who were close from childhood forgets all social and economic factors, continues to build up their love and this news gradually spreads among the fisher-folk and fearing harsh criticism, Chakki persuades her husband to get her married to Palani who belongs to their community. Karuthamma tearfully bids farewell to Pareekkutty. But she is unable to forget his fond memories and continues to nourish them. Palani who happens to hear the gossip develops suspicion on her but controls himself. A cold tension prevails in their relationship. Meanwhile her mother dies and before her death she pleads Pareekkutty to consider Karuthamma as a sister. He goes to meet her to inform her mother's death and knowing this Palani's rage grows. He is isolated by his boat-mates as they believe his unchaste wife would create disaster to him at sea and taking him in their boat would bring only peril to them. Palani goes alone in a small boat.

Chemban Kunju who becomes over-ambitious marries a widow who is wealthy. But he begins to face severe tension and it affects his mental health. He becomes an abnormal man and begins to wonder in the sea-coast and meets Pareekkutty who has become so desperate and his business by this time collapsed due to the betrayal of Chemban Kunju.
Karuthamma, by this time had given birth to a child and is joined by her sister Panchami who had been deserted by her father and step-mother. Palani happens to hear Karuthamma enquiring Pareekkutty's present state and is very much disturbed and with the tension he goes to sea in his small boat. But he is drowned there owing to severe tempest. Pareekkutty happens to reach there meets Karuthamma and they join together in the hands of death and their bodies are found in the sea-shore.

Thus with the effective use of the sea-mother myth Thakazhi presents the social realities of a community in a fascinating manner and no wonder that it won a universal appeal as he artistically added a mysterious element to a love story presenting basic instincts of man everywhere and always, without disregarding social and economic factors. It is the effective combination of the realistic as well as the supernatural elements that made this work a significant one. Also the imaginative skill and artistic craft with which he pictured the inner conflicts of characters, social factors and economic aspects determining the course of life, against the background of the sea which stands as a superhuman agency witnessing the life-drama of a folk which depends on it for...
livelhood. All these aspects gave it a uniqueness and thus it acquired the distinction of a classic work and its fame crossed the frontiers of the nation.

Here, one could see Thakazhi who entered the literary field as a realist bidding farewell to political doctrines and realist tendencies. Even in Perillakkatha he shows his disillusionment with political movements and ideologies which were deviating from its destination and becoming a part of establishment and institutionalised agencies. Thakazhi has been highly criticised for deviating from realist tendencies and the political commitment. But Thakazhi's fame and maturity as a writer developed and acquired higher dimensions with the writing of Chemmeen. He began to show a variety in the selection and treatment of themes and situations, in the analysis of life-situations, getting relieved from ideological obsessions. He did not want to confine himself in focusing a particular aspect of life alone but attempted to portray different aspects of society and life, and hence it marks his development as a genuine artist.

Thakazhi's Enippadikal is a novel which documents a turbulent period in the political history of Kerala. It invites our attention in presenting the transition phase
giving a comparative study of pre and post independent India. The notable thing is that he is able to maintain an artistic balance in portraying the personal events of the protagonist, Kesava Pillai and his family and the political affairs of the state. This novel marks Thakazhi's another phase of development as it tells his attempt to turn into a different world - a world of political power and its mysterious undercurrents and its unpredictable nature.

Here he presents a broader world of human activities and it is entirely different from the region of simple village folk. The actions depicted here are so complex with their intricacies and inter-twining interactions and repercussions. He shifts from the native village and its surroundings to Trivandrum, the State Capital dominated by the political leaders and bureaucrats. But Thakazhi successfully pictures the area controlled by bureaucrats and bourgeois community and clearly exposes their inner world and their dark corners, determined by political and economic factors associated with power and currency in his attempt to picture the contemporary history of Travancore.

Thakazhi has given a symbolic title that suggests the protagonist's course of life, Enipadikal meaning 'steps of
ladder'. Kesava Pillai, a graduate reaches Trivandrum and manages to get the job of a lower division clerk in the Secretariat. He cleverly sees his opportunities and uses them as steps to gain power and material benefits. He understands the whirlpools in the chaotic world of power. At the office he meets Thankamma, an attractive woman who has high influence in the bureaucratic society in the capital city. His colleagues treat them as ideal couple. But one day he receives a telegram from his village at Kuttanad, and going there knows that his marriage has been fixed by his parents. He is told by the parents that the girl's horoscope predicts prosperity for the husband. With this belief he marries her and goes to Trivandrum without taking her. He never tells anyone at Trivandrum about this and continues his affair with Thankamma. He tries to use her as an effective tool for his ascend in career. He ruthlessly bribes one Gopalan Nair with a promise to help him. He gets the news that Thankamma's uncle is going to be promoted as Chief Secretary. But when he knows that the present Chief Secretary's wife does not like Thankamma, he tries to avoid contacts with her temporarily. In the meantime she makes an affair with her colleague Ramachandran Nair.
Kesava Pillai continues to use the rungs of ladder cleverly. With the help of the Chief Secretary's wife he gathers the contacts and favours of high state officials. Applying his intelligence and crookedness he gained access to confidential papers and often he was deputed to make negotiations in government dealings with contractors and leaders of state congress and he moves into a new residence with police protection. He prepares confidential report against state congress and it pleases the Diwan and he promotes him at the Diwan's residence at Bhakthi Vilasam. But during this days of prosperity, one day he happens to see the hanged body of Gopalan Nair in front of his house and so he is forced to change his residence.

Meanwhile his wife at Kuttanad has given birth to a girl child. But Kesava Pillai is busy with his official responsibilities. Kesava Pillai succeeds with his plans in defeating the congress using some tricks. This pleases the Diwan and he is again promoted.

The political affairs of the state was gathering much momentum and Diwan is busy with his plan of forming independent Travancore State in the wake of India's liberation from British
regime. Kesava Pillai is given in charge of the political affairs. Meanwhile some political extremists kill his father and out of the shock his mother too dies. So Kesava Pillai takes his wife and daughter to Trivandrum. By this time he is promoted as Chief Secretary. He sees a file dealing with the resignation of Thankamma who has determined by this time to become a sanyasin, assuming the name Jyotirmayi Devi.

In the meantime the political sphere of the State was about to have a tremendous transformation. The Diwan was attacked and he leaves the State, and monarchical rule is about to end. The congress is about to attain power. Kesava Pillai is given the responsibility of making all the official procedures. He is advised by the congress leaders on all important matters including the selection of congress candidates in the coming elections. Kesava Pillai makes himself fit well in the new political set up. Making use of all the opportunities he becomes a part of the corrupt political and bureaucratic sphere.

Jyothirmayi Devi is thrown out from other Sanyasins and she goes to meet Kesava Pillai secretly and spends a night with him at Kanyakumari. They then start the old game again meeting often secretly.
At the formation of the Kerala State with the merging of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, Kesava Pillai is busy with the official responsibilities. But a shadow of crisis, perhaps for the first time in his life, falls as Thankamma who is in saffron dress becomes pregnant. Kesava Pillai's wife, a rural woman, is fed up with the sophisticated life in Trivandrum and compels her husband to return to Kuttanad.

When the elections are over Kesava Pillai begins to face another situation as it was the Communist instead of Congress that came into power and the new political atmosphere did not seem to be much favourable for pursuing his games. Still he tries to play a card when he knows that his daughter is in love with a communist poet. He goes for the marriage dealings as he felt it would do him good with the alliance that has a political connection. But here the trick did not work and he was asked by the new Chief minister to go on a long leave as they could not agree with him on policy matters. But Kesava Pillai requests premature retirement and it was sanctioned. Thus his eventful career comes to an end. Kesava Pillai had to descend down the steps of secretariat alone and he analyses his own deeds in the past and realises his follies and ruthlessness to gain material benefits.
On the day of his return to Kuttanad, a girl comes to his house to give Jyothismaya's son. The child is placed at his feet. His daughter takes her. The novel ends describing the preparations for his departure from Trivandrum.

*Enippadikal* attains significance in two ways. First it is a valuable document portraying an important epoch in the modern political history of Kerala analysing the period of transition from monarchical regime to democratic rule. Secondly, Thakazhi is not barely presenting this period of political history with details of incidents and records but he throws light into the inner world of sovereignty exposing the unscrupulousness, complexities and intrigues involved in the game of politics and bureaucracy. He presents the layers of corruption and betrayals in the world of bureaucracy and politics with a keen insight on human instincts and their unpredictable nature in its association with power-politics. Thus with its successful depiction of political under-currents and their impact in a transition period, *Enippadikal* deserves to be called a political novel too. But Thakazhi with his imaginative skill and vision presents this human drama not only with its realities but through a philosophical analysis, thus giving it a metaphysical dimension. Along with the
presentation of incidents related to the state affairs, Thakazhi pays equal attention to depict the tragic nature enveloping human life and he does it in an impassive manner.

He is able to present the personal life situations and tragedies with a sharp insight highlighting the values of humanism. Thus he is able to intervene personal and public spheres of a turbulent period and its mutual impacts determining the course of life. As Dr. Ayyappa Panickar says, 'the significance of the Thankamma-Kesava Pillai theme, which runs from the beginning to the end of the novel, co-extensive with and closely paralleling the political history of Kesava Pillai's rise and fall, is that it exposes the corrosion of moral sensibility in the protagonist which dries up the reader's pity, something that Shakespeare does not deny even to Macbeth. Taking a simple man from a rural background, Thakazhi has shown how much evil can exist in the constitution of the practical man, bent on being successful in life.

He also carefully presents the disintegration of politics and its doctrines and the leaders becoming ruthless, corrupt creatures and the equally corrupt, merciless bureaucrats, who with their opportunism and unscrupulous methods rise to heights. Thus presenting a decayed social and political
world he states that the transition takes place only in the external levels of political institution and basically no change takes place that helps the society to progress or development and the concept of an ideal society deep-rooted in moral, progressive set up still remains a mirage. Thus R.E. Asher's comment is absolutely right in terming it a modern political tragedy. He says, 'Steps of Ladder paints a picture of the realities of politics that is both frank and pessimistic. Nothing is hidden, be it corruption or lack of scruple. We see the brushing aside after independence of those who really suffered in the fight for freedom. We are shown the disillusionment of those who come to think that whether the government is in the hands of the British, the Congress, or the Communists, it is still not their government. They have no impression of real participation, no feeling that their grievances will be heard or their problems attended to.\textsuperscript{31}

Thakazhi portrayed this disintegration of political values and system in Anubhavangal Palichakal and Punnapra Vayalarinu Sesham too. They portray the lives of certain dedicated activists, who in their mission to reform society and mankind had forgotten to look after themselves. Chellappan
is a typical representative of a communist who could not attain anything but tragic pains in his life. He is imprisoned for taking part in labour union strike. By this time he had lost one of his children and his wife started living with a contractor. Thus feeling depressed he reaches Ernakulam. There he happens to kill a rich proprietor who harassed the poor labourers.

The disintegration of political organisations into a corrupt system is treated in *Punnapra-Vayalarinu Sesham* based on the portrayal of the tragic state of Chirutha who was an active comrade. Her son Stalin questions the leaders who indulge in corruption, ruthlessness and political exploitation. He raises his voice against the leaders who have become mere opportunists as he realises the hollowness of their slogans and deeds. He is removed from the party sector and he joins with Naxalites. Thakazhi selected this theme to portray the rotten political system.

Thakazhi presents different themes in *Ouseppinte Makkal* and *Chukku*. He presents certain social realities prevalent in Christian communities. *Ouseppinte Makkal* tells the tragic experiences of a Christian family and it tells the story of
three generations. It depicts the harsh laws and conventions imposed by religious institutions and their impacts leading to unrest in some families. Chukku also deals with the theme of disintegration of moral values and its impacts on a Christian family engaged in business and plantations, and it also pictures the disintegration of a rich family due to a moral crisis. Here Thakazhi sets the scene of action in High range area which has a totally different geographical outlook. However these two novels do not attain great depths as they do not reflect high aesthetic dimension and they are treated as average novels among his major ones.

We can see the development of Thakazhi's creative calibre reaching its lofty heights in his classic piece, Kayar. It is a classic piece which vividly portrays an epoch of Kuttanad area covering a period of about two hundred and fifty years, telling the stories of five generations and it is a saga novel unique in Indian language. With astonishing artistic skill and vision he has been able to portray the evolution of social life and its upheavals, on the background of his village and its neighbourhood. He has been able to weave colourful pictures of scores of families and hundreds of characters and numerous life situations to depict the many—
Sided complexities of the drama of human life. In short, Kayar attains an epic dimension as it is a rare piece of work which makes a deep sociological analysis of the life of a region depicting its history, geography, culture, religion, spiritual concepts, economy, philosophy, political and other aspects in a colourful and varied manner.

Kayar echoes the heartbeats of a milieu. It can be called a chronicle novel that tells the story of generations and the flow of social life. Set against the background of social history, Kayar is a symbolic title and quoting Thakazhi's own words, which he says to answer the critics, 'it is a piece of Yawn that can be lengthened in both sides by intertwining. I thought of a piece of Yawn that extends from one phase to another. He mentions about the social history of a region of which he traces its past and foresees some of its future aspects. In Kayar there is no hero or heroine. Society becomes the hero and heroine. One could see here some human-folk who lived and died in this region in a period spanning two hundred and fifty years. They had experienced pleasures and sorrows. I tried to depict their aspirations, achievements, follies, failures and drawbacks against the background of their period respectively.'
Thus Kayar is a detailed presentation of the evolution of social life and its transformation based on a particular locale and period. The dominant thematic aspects are the various phases, processes and channels involved in the transformation of the social life. With super craftsmanship he is able to portray man’s relationship with land and his surroundings, his desire to possess land, his relationship with fellow-beings and society, vision of life etc. He treats them at a metaphysical level and presents the tragic predicament of human life in an impassive manner.

The major actions are centred around the village temple that is not only a place of religious activity but it stands as a victim of all human actions and the upheavals of human life. Thakazhi has been able to present Kuttanad as a microcosm of Indian society and major national and even inter-national events such as the first and second world wars are depicted as events that lay impact in the socio-economic life of this remote village.

Kayar begins at the hey-day of feudalism. In the first part we get a colourful picture of the feudal social life of Kerala. Then we are shown the disintegration of feudal set-up and the processes involved in its break-down.
The impact of feudalism in all walks of life is described in a very detailed manner. The views and life-styles of various communities, the power exerted on by the religious institutions, authorities and dominant communities like Nambudiris and Nairs, the exploitation of the down-trodden and backward classes by the forward ones, the joint-family systems, matriarchal way of life, rituals, and beliefs etc. are portrayed so as opening a window to the unknown past. Then we are shown the slow process of the disintegration of the feudal system and the processes that are involved in it. He then describes the growth of capitalist economy slowly entering in the life-sphere of Kuttanad and its impact in all walks of life in a very deep manner and presents various factors and institutions attached to it. Along with it he presents the disintegration of joint families, the matriarchal system giving way to patriarchy and the rise of Christian community into dominance and clearly presents the reasons and factors that are responsible for it. Then he narrates the advent of modern education and various channels of social reformation. He also describes the unrest and the need for changes in various fields of life as a result of the inequalities, oppressions, exploitations and social impediments formed by worn-out conventions. We are also shown the social and political awareness, impact of
new ideologies and the emergence of a new consciousness as a result of modern education and wider association with the external world. Thus we see the caste-bound society slowly transforming into a class-bound one determined by monetary factors. Then we are shown the reactionary processes against capitalist elements and the evolution of class struggle and emergence of the Communist party. In a very detailed way Thakazhi presents the slow and gradual process of the disintegration of the old order and the rise of a new one due to various factors. We are shown the impact of freedom struggle, the life and viewpoints of freedom fighters, the rise and growth of Indian national congress, the social, political and religious reformative movements and struggles like Vaikkom Satyagraha, Moplah rebellion and the growth of social organisations like N.S.S., S.N.D.P. etc. Thakazhi very clearly points out how these political forces and labour movements played a vital role in the change of social sphere. The peasant uprisings and factory strikes, the Punnapra-Vayalar revolt against the dictatorial regime of Dewan Sir.C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar organised by the communist party and the influence and impact of communist ideology creating intense fervour among the masses etc. are presented in a very detailed manner. He presents various steps involved in the
attainment of independence and the various democratic processes leading to the formation of a new government machinery. He then clearly presents the disintegration of democracy, bureaucracy and government machinery by corruption, opportunism and other malpractices. Then he portrays the growth of Naxalism as a result of the disillusionment out of the decayed political and bureaucratic set up. Along with it he presents the impact of the Land-reformation Act through which he makes a final analysis of man's relationship and association with land and the changes underwent in it through ages.

Kayar which is divided into nine parts has a very wide canvas and has an episodic structure. Each episode has its own uniqueness and at the same time they are co-related by the thread of the underlying theme that is concerned with man's relationship and associations with land and his changing responses to it. We are shown the gradual evolution and changes in his association and involvement in the activities in the cultivating land around him and Thakazhi makes a philosophical analysis of this aspect which leads into certain unanswerable questions which point towards the uncertainties of the future. Thakazhi also analyses the evolution of social history centred upon a region,
At the very beginning of the novel itself Thakazhi captures an important historical incident in order to point out the association of man with cultivable land, and the oncoming changes on it are suggested. We are shown the arrival of a Classifier (Classippper) to survey and assess the land on a systematic basis for the improvement of tax collection and its procedures. It is presented as a novel attempt and through the comments of the characters who are the chieftains of the village we are suggested that some major changes are about to occur in society. The Novel ends with the depiction of land reforms act which again is related with man's involvement with land. In the former part, we are seen the involvement more strong whereas when the latter scene is depicted, we hear the then voice of prominent members of the village expressing their concern over the detachment of man from land and his disinterest in cultivating land.

In the midst of these, we are presented a number of historical land marks in the evolution of social life. The arrival of classifier (Classipper) Kochupilla to assess land is followed by the official visits of the surveyor Nagom Pillai to measure and allocate land. The villagers try to please these two officials, bribing them. Some like Paruthikkkat
Outha, a Christian member is able to win the favour of Nagom Pillai and through this incident Thakazhi pictures the growth of Christians to prosperity and at the close of the novel we see the Christian section dominating the social sphere replacing the Nairs who were once the chieftains of the village. We are shown how the Nairs declined in course of time due to the inner conflicts in joint families and as a result of the breakdown of matriarchal system and its out-dated ways etc. We are also presented the detailed description of the cultural activities and its impact on the lives of the villagers. The religious and spiritual atmosphere and the conventional educational system of society which later becomes subjected to reformation etc., are presented with accurate skill. Along with the miseries of the outcastes and down-trodden labourers, their personal lives are also portrayed vividly. Thakazhi presents characters belonging to all the sections of the society and age to present their life-conditions. With remarkable accuracy he presents their dialects based on their social identity and the metric context. And with astonishing skill he has been able to depict the time consciousness and its sequences. He weaves myth, folk-tales and legends into the plots very effectively in order to give a local colouring and mythifies certain situations and incidents. Along with
this he presents the market economy replacing the age-old farming practices and barter system respectively, with the arrival of Tamil Brahmins. With this a new phase in the evolution of social life is portrayed. Then he points out the incidents of mechanisation and men turning towards the cultivation of cash-crops in high ranges etc., to present further changes. While such changes are taking place, we are shown the major national events related to freedom struggle and the changes in political sphere. Kunjan Nair represents the social reformer and through his activities, we are shown the reforms that were common in the Indian national sphere. Through his son, Manikantan and his friend Viswanathan the impact of communist ideology and its party politics are presented. At the close of the novel we are shown the birth of extremist political group (Naxalite) with the portrayal of the impact of the land reformation act, the novel comes to an end.

Thus it is clear that Thakazhi presents the detailed depiction of social evolution tracing its historical process. The major theme is man's association with land and its changes that is set against major historical incidents, and through this Thakazhi here not only documents a series of incidents
and life-situations, but he is able to transcend the time-bound consciousness, analysing the metaphysical factors and concerns of universal manhood and this glorifies its epic dimension. From external realities, he is able to reach the level of metaphysical realities, and then analyse deeply in an impassive manner, the universal predicaments related with life and destiny.

In the first chapter itself we see this aspect. One of the characters contemplates 'Since memorable time, how many persons have passed away. Some have been cremated, some buried. Born, lived and died. With the death he is forgotten. Many births take place. The story of the land is exactly the story of man's existence'. In the last phase of the novel too we hear another character say. 'Why should one come to this land? Is it just to float here and then to step into pyre and to go to some where? If it is so where is to? Are we going to the same place from where once we have started? Come from some where, stayed here for some time and then going to somewhere, for what?'

But Thakazhi is not confined to philosophy or metaphysics disregarding realities. He puts some relevant
question which is concerned with the future to which a definite answer is not received and then sum up the legend epic of social life. That is a commentary on the history and its evolution and an enquiry into the future. According to him, 'the history of man is indeed the history of the greed and thirst of earth. Empires came into being because of the thirst for the earth—empires crumbled for no other reason.

The very basis of man's evolution is the thirst for the earth. If man perishes, nothing else will be the reason. Then how can social justice be achieved?

How will the Kingdom of God come? The earth has to find the answer ........

The earth cannot answer.35 and he ends the novel with an unanswerable question. 'Isn't it necessary to produce food for all the human beings'?36 He relates this question to the changes that have taken place in man's association with nature. He mentions the modern man's alienation and detachment from land and its cultivation. Thakazhi tracing the social evolution reaches to the contemporary period and he peeps into the future too with this question. He has already mentioned in a detailed manner
about the younger generation's disinterest and non-involvement in cultivation, especially food crops. He writes about a good number of people migrating from Kuttanad to High range areas in the north, for the plantation of cash crops like the rubber and the educated ones leaving Kuttanad due to various reason. The modern man's alienation from nature marks the last phase in his analysis of social evolution and his tracing of social evolution based on man's relationship with land touches the contemporary aspects and he tries to peep into the concerns of the future too with certain unanswerable question. Thakazhi is also able to depict the perennial and cyclic course of history and time and makes a deep philosophical enquiry in to the phenomenon of life and this aspect gives Kayar a unique and universal character of human life and its ups and downs.

Thakazhi, like Anand is not merely interested in portray the life situation but pays attention in analysing various factors that affect the course of life in a scientific manner with a rational outlook. Like Anand, he too wants to call himself a humanist and he, likewise too upholds the elements of humanism in all his work, and highlights the dignity of man in all his work. Novels like Rantitangazhi,
Thottiyude Makan, and Anubavangal Palichakal share thematic similarity with Coolie, Untouchable and Road as all these works, along with the portrayal of the miserable life-conditions of the downtrodden sections directly, point out the dignity of labour too and portrays characters belonging to the poorer sections in a sympathetic manner. Their strenuous physical labour is presented with heroic nobility and individuality. Along with Anand, Thakazhi too gave a noble colouring to physical labour and elevated the downtrodden characters to a sublime level by means of their vital power shown while facing challenges. Thakazhi equally attained the distinction of being the first Malayalam writer who took pains to classify the life-struggle of the innocent, illiterate poor people. Even in his novel Chemmeen which is heralded for having a romantic halo, he presents the dignity of hard, physical labour and the performances of the fisherman community. Along with the portrayal of a tragic love-story, Thakazhi is keen in presenting the social and economic factors that are responsible for shaping their course of love into a tragic one. As Asher wrote, 'Thakazhi here shows his supreme powers of observation - in his portrayal of characters, events, conditions of work and also in presenting on paper the dialect of the fisherfolk.'
Thus Thakazhi, on the terms of social analysis and in the presentation of dignity of labour, shares a similar thematic affinity with Anand. But from Chemmeen onwards, his social attack and exposure of miseries and exploitation is not direct. His art deviates from didacticism and he begins to show the inner conflicts, under-currents and mysteries of human drama and approaches them with a philosophical view, thereupon his art is elevated to a higher dimension and acquires a wider range. This is more present in Enippadical which colourfully and vividly portrays a significant epoch of contemporary history of Kerala revealing its political complexities and whirlpools. Here also Thakazhi establishes that he is free from the dry world of partisan ideologies and its obsessions and instead proves himself, that he has attained superb craftsmanship. In order to portray the complexities of human life in its deeper level, he analyses not only the socio-economic aspects but its metaphysical nature too. At the same time he exposes the corruption, opportunism, scrupulousness and the degradation of political sphere and the government machinery and their impact on the common man. Here also he is keen in pointing out the woes of common man and thus shares an affinity with Anand in upholding the values of compassion and
sympathy. Even though Thakazhi deviates from didactism or propagandism of ideologies and withdraws from the world of political commitment and acquires a varied and wider range in a later period, he never gives up the humanist ideals and it is this element which draws him close to Anand. Whatever themes are portrayed, Thakazhi like Anand is keen in highlighting humanitarian concepts and always maintains a sympathetic vision and approach in the treatment of themes and life-situations.

A comparative study on the affinity between Anand and Thakazhi on thematic study reveals that at certain levels there exists notable similarity among them. In the selection and treatment of certain themes, focusing attention on peculiar problems and highlighting them with a human concern exposing realities in a forceful manner, the two writers show remarkable similarities. Anand, from his first novel onwards concentrated on presenting the miseries of the down-trodden communities. He brought to light various socio-economic factors and religious elements responsible for their miseries in a sympathetic manner. He paid attention not only in the exposure of the social evils that prevented progress but analysed them in a rational manner with a sense of commitment. In doing it he
was greatly influenced by Marxian ideology. He saw Marxian dialect as a 'scientific and rational method for the study of society, a hypothesis which was leading to new discoveries'.\(^{38}\)

Anand's greatness as a writer is revealed through the ideal of humanism and its values which he upheld throughout his creative life and he always wanted to be called a humanist rather than a Marxist but his humanist vision is shaped by Marxian ideology. Another notable influence is Balzac's 'comedia humaine'. Apart from this he writes, 'I went to the collective unconscious of the peasants, who have formed the backbone of our civilization for centuries'.\(^{39}\)

Along with this, his direct and personal contacts and experiences with the peasant folk of his native village laid a tremendous impact on his creative world in the selection and treatment of themes. He remembers, 'fortunately my mother came from a peasant family of Central Punjab. I lived there, in the village, I knew the village life intimately. I was thus in a position to create that life in all its multifarious contradictions'.\(^{40}\)

Along with these influences his association with Bloomsbury circle in London dominated by literary giants of that period played a significant role in moulding his creative vision and life. With these experiences he began
his literary career in the wake of national movement and social awakenings. His involvement in these movements too helped him to choose peculiar themes and analyse them. Anand has tried to portray the cross-section of Indian society ranging from scavengers to princes. But he is at his best when he portrays the themes related to the pangs and agonies of down-trodden communities, exposing the bitter realities in a forceful manner. He shows keen insight in presenting the inter-connection and co-existence of various forces and institutions like caste, class, capitalism, religious conventions and rituals, imperialism, communalism etc., and they appear as recurring themes in all his works. It seems that he is determined in weaving plots by confining to such themes with a sense of commitment and a didactic approach. This has to a certain extent affected the artistic quality of his work. He often appeals to the readers as a propagandist, as it is revealed from Untouchable where he seems to present certain problems analysing it and then suggesting certain solutions in a formal manner. Still his determination in exposing the pitiable life condition of neglected communities, with a human concern evoking the values of pity and compassion and raising strong protest against the forces and evils of exploitation and anti-humanism is appreciable. It was a
daring and novel attempt in the field of Indian literature and hence its relevance cannot be neglected at all. Hence such slight drawbacks are pardonable to a certain extent as it is unavoidable as per the views of Eric Gill. He says, 'All art is propaganda for it is in fact impossible to do anything, to make anything, which is not expressive of values. The artist may say he does not care who likes his work or dislikes it, whether it affects anything or not, but directly he shows his work to any one and more so if he shows it in a public place he becomes a responsible propagandist for the 'Values' therefore, expressed in his work and therefore promoted by it.'

Anand's creative life forms a part of his dedicated struggle against social evils and it reflects his efforts to attain social progress. In presenting the very Indian reality he attains the distinction of becoming the chief Indian-English Novelist who presented the realistic details of the backward section in its exactness revealing the unexposed world of poverty and exploitation that was hitherto neglected and unexplored by the intellectual writers. He also made a compassionate plea with a missionary zeal for a social transformation that would free the down-trodden from the
various aspects and forces that are responsible for their sufferings and dreamed an era that would provide social progress and equality. He saw fiction as an effective medium to launch the values of humanism which he closely attached to the Indian social environment. As it is pointed out, 'Anand's humanism is rooted in the soil and demands faithfulness to the realities of the situation'. Thakazhi in his earlier phase of literary career shows much similarities and affinity with Anand in the selection and themes, life-situations and treatment of themes on the portrayal of characters. They associated with the lowest strata of society. The problems dealt by Thakazhi too was hither to untouched in the literary sphere of Malayalam as in the case of Anand in Indo-Anglian fiction. Thakazhi too can claim to be called the prominent writer who for the first time revealed the unknown realm of poverty and exploitation. Thakazhi shares affinity with Anand in the presentation and treatment of the various factors responsible for poverty and exploitation with a social perspective. Like Anand Thakazhi too was influenced by Marxian ideology and his social analysis was also based on Marxian ideology and its influence played a great role (on both these writers to stray away from the beaten track. Thakazhi's earlier novels like Tyagathinte Pratiphalam, Ptitapankajam,
Perillakatha, Thalayode, Thendivargam, Tottiyyude Makan, and Rantitangazhi presents the miserable life-conditions and closely analyses the socio-economic aspects behind them. Both Thakazhi and Anand share similarity in such treatment. The manner in which themes related to the down-trodden communities are presented and the realities that govern them are examined one by one very minutely by both these writers in a rational and scientific manner. Thakazhi's Thottiyyude Makan presents the same theme dealt by Anand. Here Thakazhi too presents the social alienation and misery of scavengers who are cruelly treated and exploited by the authorities and elite classes. Thakazhi pays equal attention in presenting the emotional feelings as well as material aspects governing the outcaste community. He too raises his voice against the facts that led to misery and exploitation and urges to change the existing inhuman and unscientific conventions and the social structure. Thakazhi also like Anand sees the emergence of a new class who have gained a new awareness and self-realisation.

In the novels of both these writers, the characters seem to realise their position in society and it is interesting to note that they express their suppressed feelings in a similar tone. In Untouchable one character remarks, 'They
think we are dirt because we clean their dirt'. In *Thottiyude Makan* we hear, 'when the foul smell from latrines reaches the upper storey of the building, they begin their search for scavengers. If we succeed, in reminding them of latrines, the scavenger will not be forgotten'. Thakazhi like Anand too paid attention in highlighting the ideas of class-struggle and proletarian consciousness when he depicted the lives of the working class communities. *Rantitangazhi* clearly presents the emergence of Kuttanad peasants into an organised class who gathers strength as a result of the labour movements and their organised struggles which pioneered them to gain their right. We are shown how the peasants are transformed into an organised sect by class-struggle. Thakazhi too is optimistic like Anand in his earlier novels and expects to see the emergence of a bright future.

Thakazhi along with Anand carefully presented the changing realities of Indian social environment on thematic level. *Rantitangazhi* presents very clearly the changing attitude in the agricultural sector. Traditionally the aim of cultivation was just to provide food for the society but later it was motivated by financial interests and farming attained the status of a commercial enterprise. The traditional
order of life took a change and such a transformation is shown by Anand in *Big Heart* in a different social set up. There it is the mechanisation that destroys the old values.

The emergence of the proletarians into an organised sector and their class-consciousness attaining significance are treated in thematic level in the earlier novels of Anand and Thakazhi. Both writers treated this theme observing the undercurrents and governing factors in an identical manner. Thus not only in deviating from the conventional literary norms followed by their predecessors who were concerned with the lives of the upper strata of the society, but also in the manner of presenting and treating themes and analysing them, both these writers show much resemblance especially in the early phases of their literary career.

As in the case of Mulk Raj Anand who was closely associated with the Bloomsbury group pioneered by stalwarts, Thakazhi too had close contact with a similar association named Kesari group whose literary discussions played a dominant role in moulding his viewpoints and visions. Surprisingly enough, both writers were influenced by western writers like Balzac, Maupassant, and Charles Dickens. But Thakazhi differs from Anand as he does not blindly reject old values and
systems like him. In Rantitangazhi Thakazhi points out the human relationship and moral values upheld by the old generation and laments over the loss of them. He mentions about the personal relationship which existed among the land-lords and labourers even when they were tied by conventions like Untouchable rites etc. Thakazhi in all his works respects certain traditional values as he finds them as something which helped to create a moral code in the society. Thakazhi does not discard spirituality too and he is not fully materialistic as Anand, and does not treat materialism as an entirely powerful ideology that would cure all the problems of humanity. Along with the attainment of matured vision Thakazhi deviates from the material viewpoint and turns towards metaphysical realms.

Thakazhi like Anand was inspired by Dickens, Maxim Gorky, Emile Zola etc. who practised realistic and naturalistic traditions. But both the writers were able to infuse themes related with Indian social realities very effectively into the western literary modes.

Both the writers colourfully dealt with the themes of changing socio-economic patterns and their repercussions on the lives during the wake of independence. Thakazhi too questioned the age-old conventions that hampered social progress
and heralded a new era that would be free from miseries and exploitations.

Both Thakazhi and Anand had close contact with their own surroundings. They closely observed the bitter realities around them and both these writers were able to portray them effectively due to their strong grip in their soil. Thakazhi as well as Anand are noted for upholding the elements of compassion and pity and both the writers are praised for showing a sympathetic concern towards the down-trodden sections. Both the writers had written that their family and village atmosphere exerted influence in developing a sympathetic attitude towards the suffering people. This has kindled in them the flames of humanitarianism. The element of humanism is dominantly present in all the work of both these writers and hence both the writers have the claim to be called humanist-realists. Both the writers who belong to rural backgrounds of two different regions equally upheld a humanism which was strongly rooted in the soil and it was associated closely with the realities of social surroundings. Anand's explanation on his art that 'it is the typically Indian creative attitude of staging the body-soul drama as in the folk-literature,' suits very well with Thakazhi's works too.
Note


3. Ibid., P.38.


6. Ibid., P.110.

7. Ibid., PP.137-8.

8. Ibid., P.88.


12. Ibid., P.142.

13. Ibid., P.149.


23. Ibid.,


27. E.V. Krishna Pillai, "Foreward", Patitapankajam (Kottayam: SPCS, 1935), P.12 (Tr).


33. Ibid., P.369.

34. Ibid., P.1013.

35. Ibid., P.1013.

36. Ibid., P.1013.


40. Ibid., P.116.


