CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

The research work tries to explore the possibilities of highlighting and comparing the caste and class conflict and resolving them in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga. Though many critics and writers have separately discussed about both writers, this research brought them into a common platform and attempt to compare at a level bringing forth their contribution towards providing a solution to the problems of caste and class systems prevailing in Indian society since centuries. Mulk Raj Anand's fiction is widely read wherever English is spoken and understood, whereas Chaduranga’s works are restricted to the particular region. This places the present comparative study of the two authors on an altar of broader understanding and provides a wider scope for discussion.

The idea of annihilation of the caste and the class system in India were enforced largely due to the Gandhian movement against the practice of untouchability Marxsist doctrine and Ambedkar’s thoughts made a strong impact on the Indian creative mind and awakened their consciousness. In the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century, the politically and socially conscious writers questioned the religious orthodoxies. The reformist climate influenced realist writers like Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga to question the oppressive rigidity of the system and exploitation of the working class. Hence, caste and class have been a recurring theme in Indian literature. The reformatory zeal and humanitarianism with which Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga wrote succeeded in highlighting suffering of the untouchables and the proletariats. This made the readers belonging to the `upper’ caste and the rich, aware of the inhumanity of the ancient social tradition and the cruel treatment of the poor labourers. Mulk Raj Anand’s choice of
unconventional subject and characters had been determined by his Dickensian humanistic philosophy. His fictional world is peopled by characters from various strata of society from lower to higher rungs in the hierarchy. Anand has written in a broader canvas which reached every nook and corner of the world. Chaduranga also followed Dickensian humanistic philosophy in his novels, he shows great perception in understanding the existence of the marginalized. True to his belief his writings reflect the spirit of humanitarianism.

The aim behind the portrayal of the caste and class conflict in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga is to eliminate such conflicts. The untouchable characters Lakka, Bakha and Bhikhu of the novels Vaishaka, Untouchable and The Road grow to become representative figures of their community. These characters in their novels illustrate by attacking the religious hypocrisy which could upset the established order. Bhikhu fought with untouchables to enter the temple, Bakha ascended the steps of the temple till he could see the idol and Lakka had an encounter of relationship with a brahmin woman. The novelists made attempts to give suitable reaction to the dominant religion and the practice of religious hypocrisy. The narrative in their novels questions the hypocrisy of the Hinduism. Whereas in Vaishaka Keshavayya uses the sexual services of Sivni, an untouchable, Gulabo, the washerwomen was a lover of a well known Hindu-gentleman in the novel Untouchable, Nagappa seduces Dyavi in the novel Hejjala. Pandit Kalinath molest Sohini in Untouchable and Pandit Suraj infatuates the ladies in The Road. The ‘upper’ caste’s casual or continuous use of a ‘lower’ caste woman is naturalized. But in Vaishaka the relation between Lakka and Rukmini is not naturalized and ends in banishing Lakka from the village. The ‘lower’ caste women’s sexual availability is a part of the material structure of domination by the
‘upper’ castes which both men and women of the ‘lower’ castes are forced to accept. The abuse of ‘lower’ castes woman’s sexuality is treated with not much resistance. However ‘lower’ caste man’s alleged or actual sexual relationship with ‘upper’ caste women causes hysteria and brings swift and violent retribution upon the ‘lower’ caste man and often on both persons as illustrated in the novel Vaishaka.

This truth of social existence of Indian society is well represented in these novels. The sexual exploitation of ‘lower’ caste women by the ‘upper’ caste is a powerful theme in Indian literature. This violence is something which the underprivileged have accepted and internalized in their social existence. The seduction of Sivni in Vaishaka, Dyavi in Hejjala, Sohini in Untouchable present the ‘lower’ caste women as victims of ‘upper’ caste male predators.

Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga were influenced by Gandhian movement of reforming the society. But their works on the themes of caste have moved away from the Gandhian ideology and rejected his position with regard to caste and its reform. Gandhi felt that ancient Hindus had already achieved the ideal social system with ‘Varna’ system. In contrast to this Ambedkar believes that an ideal society had yet to be achieved in India. There is a real difference on Gandhi’s accommodationist ‘upper’ caste approach and Ambedkar’s antagonistic ‘lower’ caste approach toward the Hindu caste society. The two novelists’ perspectives on the theme of the caste are closer to that of Ambedkar than Gandhi. The oppressive conditions of the protagonists is well represented in the novels through Lakka in Vaishaka, Kalura in Hejjala, Bakha in Untouchable, Bhikhu in The Road and Ananta in The Big Heart. Till the oppressive conditions of the ‘lower’ caste is not changed, novels Vaishaka, Hejjala, Untouchable, The Road and The Big Heart persuade the readers to be
aware of the ‘upper’ caste barbarism. The reality represented in these novels has emerged from the ‘inner consciousness’ to the actual reality. The ‘inner consciousness’ of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga have strived for the upliftment of the ‘lower’ caste people.

Though the caste conflict exists in rural areas, the portrayal of caste conflict declined and turned towards the class conflict due to the impact of industrialization in the urban areas. The dialogue of Munoo in the novel Coolie is the evidence to show this shift of conflict, “I am Kshatriya and I am poor and Varma a Brahmin, he is a servant boy, a menial, because he is poor. No caste does not matter. The Babus are like the Sahib-logs, and all servants look alike; there must only be two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor” (Coolie, p-55). Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga aspired to provide the dignity of labour through their consciousness and satisfy the characters with the physical work which control the tide of rage against the oppression of the working class in their novels with the influence of Marxian doctrines, Hegel’s philosophy and Vacanas of Basavanna which says ‘Work is worship’ (kaayakave kailaasa).

The protagonists of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga are hard workers, who get satisfaction out of their work which gives solace in the oppressed atmosphere. Bakha of Untouchable is “A dexterous workman” (Untouchable, p-18), Lakka in Vaishaka is being praised by Krishnashastri that, “Even burly big boned young men are not a patch on him” (Vaishaka, p-173), Munoo in Coolie wanted to be “A perfect model of a servant” (Coolie, p-36), Kalura in Hejjala truly follows the advise of Mayamma that “the despair runs away on its own after carrying out the job” (Hejjala, p-124), Bhikhu in The Road “wielded the hammer in strokes…..to get away from the scorpions of his mother’s words” (The Road, p-105), to meet the Landlord Thakur Singh, Gangu in Two Leaves.
and a Bud feels that “Men have to work for someone” (Two Leaves and a Bud, p-253). Anantha in The Big Heart requests his employer that “give me the wages and also some sheets of copper for all those thathiars who are unemployed” (The Big Heart, p-98). Nataraja in Sarvamangala works sincerely for the upliftment of workers in spite of his ill-health, Lal singh in The Village “Hurried Thiba and Rondu with a fierce push, inspired by the will to forget himself in his work” (The Village, p-103). The protagonists of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranaga Bakha, Lakka, Munoo, Kalura, Bhikhu, Gangura, Gangu and Anantha are committed workers but they have not been suitably rewarded by their masters. By raising the issue the novelists wanted to accord justice to such people in the society by creating awareness through their writings.

The protagonists of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga are happy, and get energy when they come in contact with nature. Because they love nature and nature cures their sorrow. Bakha in Untouchable sustains himself on the basic sources of energy such as fire, laughter, sleep, sun and sports. He smokes red lamp cigarettes, “He felt happy, carefree man as he sauntered along, drawing the smoke and breathing out through nostrils” (Untouchable, p-49) Lakka in Vaishaka is a naturalist, who enjoys every bit of nature, with the company of his dog Bodda, Munoo in Coolie remembers the nature of his village whenever he faces class conflict and inhuman treatment. Kalura in Hejjala shares his childhood experience with nature through stories which “relieved the weight on his chest” (Hejjala, p-27). Gangu in Two Leaves and a Bud also remembers the nature of his village whenever he faces conflict. As he saw the shoots of rice growing in his field, “For days he observed in its course watching its water loss itself across huge boulders and little rocks” (Two Leaves and a Bud, p-248). Bhikhu in the The Road has strayed away from the boys and did not want
to meet anyone due to the shame and degradation of defeat after the huts of untouchables were burnt. He watched a grey lizard preying the flies. “The buzzing flies were needless of their danger” (The Road, p-56). He has natural power to endure the sufferings. The bed ridden Nataraja in Sarvamangala due to consumption gets energy when exposed to sunlight like Munoo in Coolie. Nataraja’s mind has merged with the beauty of sunrise. By listening the song of a bird, “he felt, his soul has floated in the origin of immortal song” (Sarvamangala p-232). Lal Singh in The Village remembers the nature of his village to relieve from the conflict. When, he received the message of his father’s death "A long row of fields unfolded themselves before his eyes, fields which were being burrowed by tall, unkempt, sweating peasants, who cursed the bullocks” (The Village p-249). Krishne Gowda in Uyyale, a good singer enjoys the beauty of nature during conflict before leaving the house of his friend Sheshagiriraya. Anantha in The Big Heart plays with children to ease the class conflict. These narrations were targeted to give solace, endurance to live and survive in the society to the oppressed people by the authors. The humanity in the inner consciousness of the authors towards the oppressors made all effort in their writing to uplift mentally and materially by spreading awareness. The characters Bakha, Lakka, Munoo, Kalura, Gangu, Bhikhu, Nataraja, Lal Singh and Anantha represent the poor workers of the society who are oppressed and exploited by the masters and landlords. The issue had been raised by the novelists to eliminate exploitation.

The novelists had created the characters in their novels to express their opinion and ways to solve the caste and class conflict. Dhooli Singh in the novel The Road offered his house to untouchables after their huts had been burnt by the son of the landlord. Ajjamma in the novel Hejjala
gives her ancestral property to Kalura, when her sister-in-law Madevamma did not agree to share the land of her husband with the son of the low caste woman and servant Dyavi, even though her husband Nagappa was responsible for his birth. Prabha Dayal in Coolie is humble and kind towards workmen. Rukmini in Vaishaka is generous to the family of Lakka. Lakka feels that, “There were good souls even among the upper caste” (Vaishaka, p-6). Ratan in Coolie helps the coolies in need and protects them from beatings. The life of Nataraja in the novel Saravamangala was dedicated for the cause of the workers. Poet Purun Singh Bhagat in The Big Heart feels that human civilization can be achieved through Socialism. John De La Havre of the Two Leaves and a Bud is a British physician who treats Indians as human beings and aspires to destroy “the inequalities of caste and class and creed” (Two Leaves and a Bud, p-30). Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga thought beyond the Marxian ideology to give solutions to the caste and class conflict in the society, which illustrated through the characters De La Havre and Nataraja. De La Havre says that “people don’t need to read Marx to realize” (Two Leaves and a Bud p-123) and Nataraja “woke up to the truth of consciousness” (Sarvamangala, p-201) after the experience of strike in railways. Hence, the novelists were sensitive to the problems of class and caste conflict which persuade the downtrodden to experience in society in which they are living. They have written the reality of life from their womb filled with humanism and aspiring to give value to human life without caste and class.

The perceptions of Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga about their commitment as writers are similar. Anand speaks of what became a mission of his life in his passage Why I Write that, “The compulsion to pursue the truth of human relation has, I confess, become the mission of
my life. I could not have written all twenty or so novels, and hundreds of short stories, if I had not been possessed from the sources of love which Gandhi touched off in me....My searches have let me to roam round the world. And I have written in the rough ballad rhythms of an Indian English in which there are inevitable echoes of the mother tongue, about the agony of aloneness of people, in the depths of degradation, in wretchedness beyond wretchedness, forced upon human beings by other human beings through casualties often unknown to them both. I had to soak myself in the lives of men and women from within their tormented senses. I immersed myself in the subworld of the poor, the insulted and the injured, through continuous pilgrimages to the villages, the small town and big town bastis of our country. I had to journey away from the Bloomsbury literary consciousness to the neo-literary worlds, whose denizens have always been considered ‘vulgar’ and unfit for respectable worlds. I had to go through their sufferings and little joys as my own. I had to become weak with their weaknesses. I had to become strong with their strength of their resilience.

Chaduranga on being questioned “should literature necessarily convey some message or other to the public?” In an interview he answers thus: “Any writing should succeed in creating a level of social awareness amongst people. If every writer were to succeed in creating such awareness in society, his birth into his world will gain meaning and he will gain the satisfaction of having completed the task he has been sent for. Literature should be socially relevant.”

These passionate pronouncements reveal their commitment to the philosophy of humanism at the very centre of their creative enterprise. Mulk Raj Anand and Chaduranga’s perception of the responsibility of the writers is similar to that of Jean Paul Sartre, George Orwell and Chinua
Achebe. Both these authors bring out a controlled portrayal of revolution in their novels. They are socially conscious writers who fathomed and brought out timeless truth and evoked a sense of empathetic awakening. We find that anything socially poignant, culturally rejuvenating and artistically humanizing invariably drew their attention. In the backdrop of highlighting the sufferings and oppression of the socially weakened, marginalised and cornered unprivileged and under-privileged sections of the society and paving a way for their redemption and upliftment, one could witness in these two writers a conscious option to defend a heritage, the heritage of compassionate humanism and universal brotherhood.
End Notes:
