



# ANALYSIS OF MULK RAJ ANAND'S NOVEL UNTOUCHABLE

Dr. Anil Kumar Sirohi

Associate Professor  
(MAHGU)

Ankita Pandey

Research Scholar  
(MAHGU)

## ABSTRACT

Mulk Raj explores all the hypocrisy and double-minded ideology of the upper-class people. The way the upper class treated lower or untouchable people is distinctly and unambiguously. The novel Untouchability centred toward the deprived section of Indian society who were treated as "Achhut" untouchable which are not to be touched by "Swarna Varga" upper-class people. The novel demonstrates society's accurate picture through his character Bakha a sweeper, Lakha head of sweepers in the area, Solini a Dalit girl, Charat Singh a generous man and many others. These characters exemplify the rotten and ruining orthodox tradition of Indian society. However, the novel demonstrates the inhumane, evil conduct prevailed in society over the Dalit Vagra but also shoe the generosity and humanity by his characters and the positive vibes and vision the ray of hope in despair through the message of the Mahatma Gandhi. The novel also highlights the innovation and technology which functionalized to uplift society through inhumane conduct like manual scavenging.

Keywords - **untouchable, Inhumane, manual scavenging, Orthodox.**

## INTRODUCTION

Mulk Raj Anand was a prominent English writer of the pre-Independent phase of India who wrote Indo-Anglian fiction. He was one of the first Indian writers to accomplish International editorialisation. Through his writing skills, he illustrates the vulnerable status of the society, the impoverishment, and exploitation they face in transforming India enunciated as Modern India. His perception toward oppression and deprived section is manifest through his novels and short stories.

The Untouchability of Mulk Raj Anand is the first novel in 1935 through which he attained enormous popularity and reputation. The novel is inspired by the actual incident that happened with her aunt. The novel

Untouchability centred toward the deprived section of Indian society who were treated as "Achhut" untouchable which are not to be touched by "Swarna Varga" upper-class people. The novel demonstrates society's accurate picture through his character Bakha a sweeper, Lakha head of sweepers in the area, Charat Singh and many others. These characters exemplify the rotten and ruining orthodox tradition of Indian society.

The motive behind writing the Untouchability to evince the realness of modern India's diverse culture and the impoverishment and the humiliating consideration further the acceptance of the society which treated and whom the exploitation happened. Mulk Raj explores all the hypocrisy and double-minded ideology of the upper-class people. The way the upper class treated lower or untouchable people is distinctly and unambiguously. The injustice, humiliation, oppression felt by the whole community of the low or outcastes in India since chronicle were portrayed through his characters like Bakha who was born with the fate of the unfortunate and pathetic as he was untouchable.

The deterioration conducted by patriarchal society toward the inferior or outcaste in the postcolonial society; however, through his work, he communicates worldwide deprivation where caste, creed, racism and economic description prevail. The exploitation and oppression were so comprehensively portrayed by him in order to aware the mass against the inhumane conduct and want to change the chauvinist, and subaltern mentality and behaviour triumphed in the society. Thus, he opted a friction method to convey his message toward the community's higher literate section for curiously and deliberately wanting a change in the inhumane, evil, brutal, and rotten custom prevailed in Hindu society.

## DISCUSSION

Mulk Raj Anand was one of the eminent progressive writers who resolutely believed that literature ought to have sound social intent and purpose for writing. Which only be attained by the nature of the literature, the maturity for portrayed characters, authenticity in character which resembles realistic figurines. Through inventiveness skills, fictitious and seemingly indulged in the denuded enunciation of society's social and ethnic fabric. He was one of the Dalit voice who wrote about the vulnerability and humiliation faced by the Dalit people through his power of the sword.

His novel Untouchable typifies and presents the story of a Dalit boy named Bakha who worked as a scavenger attain eighteen years of age living with his family. He has a father, Lakha, a young brother Rakha and a sister Sohini. Although they lived persecuted and in unfortunate circumstances with a sterile environment. As the novelist connotation is an exhibit from a line "A brook ran across the lane, with the manifest water which smeared by dirt and nastiness sewage consisting fecal matter of humans, the unpleasant stink of dead animals, slaughtered skins, left in the bank of the water body. The muck of animals like cow, donkey, horses, and others consolidated to convert it into fuel cake, choking and pungent exhaust fumes came from the sides. The

drainage system's lacuna submerged all the dirt into massive quaggy malodor inhumane to take a single breath. This is the situation where the centric character of the novel lived in the muddy constructed houses colony.

In this section, the paper keenly analysis the novel based on untouchability and rotten conservative, inhumane and evil conduct prevailed in every nook and corner of the modern society of pre-independent and struggling phase of India, which is demarcated into the particular segment in the following section-

### **Lower Caste Humiliation**

The story initiated with morning scavenging; father Lakha forced his son Bakha to work as a scavenger. He met with an athlete Havildar Charat Singh, an autocratic or high-class person, and conversed with him. Charat Singh promised to give him a hockey stick, a "brand new stick." When Bakha retired home, he felt thirsty; the house did not have water to drink; thus, his sister Sohini going to get water for his brother from the well and wait in the queue in the corner as she was achoot and did not have a right to drain water from the well. He met Priest Kalinath and said to her he helped her get water against a favor that she had to come next morning for the temple's clearance.

Bakha went again for his swapping work; the Bakha felt hungry, so he went to a shop and bought something to eat where unintentionally he touched the upper caste boy. Subsequently, he bangs with Upper Caste Boy. At that time, a Musmil business came and saved him from thrashing because they did not follow any demarcated caste system in Islamic tradition. While wandering all over in the town, he went to the house where he lay in front of the home, and then the lady came and humiliated him why he slept in front of her door. Simultaneously a wandering saint came, and the lady offered him food unconditionally; at the same time, a lady offered him food to clean the baranda of her house. An inhumane incident took place there too with Lakha, and he left.

Bakha went to Charat Singh, a man who gifted brand new hockey, a generous man who did not follow the evil practice of casteism with Lakha. After taking hockey, he went to play a hockey match where again he faced humility when he goaled against upper-class boy fights during a hockey match. During a game, a boy is injured, and Bakha shows her generous concern with that injured boy and helps him. Bakha Carries him to his home, where humiliation is waiting for him in the character of an injured boy who scolds him for the sake of help.

### **Double Standard of Upper Caste**

Mulk Raj explores all the hypocrisy and double-minded ideology of the upper-class people. The way the upper class treated lower or untouchable people is distinctly and unambiguously. The injustice, humiliation, oppression felt by the whole community of the low or outcastes. Double peaking characters like the lady who cleaned the baranda, the Priest Kali Nath, and many more double-faced people are prevalent in society who pretend hypocritically in front of the community. One incident is portrayed by the Anand in which the Sohini, a younger sister of Bakha, went to well to drain water; unfortunately, because she is Dalit or achuut, she is not permitted to drain water herself. Priest Kali Nath came and offered her water against work. She agreed as she needs drinking water frequently because her brother Bakha waited for her thirst.

Very next morning, Sohini went to the temple to clean the temple where the priest tried to molest her dignity when she became loud and noisy, and the pilgrimage gathered. The priest's insincerity turned wretched and blamed Sohini that she tried to misbehave with him and wanted to make him "Dooshit."

### **Upper Caste with no Ego**

The novel Untouchability centered toward the deprived section of Indian society who were treated as "Achhut" untouchable, which are not to be touched by "Swarna Varga" upper-class people. The novel demonstrates society's accurate picture through his character. The Mulk Raj Anand effectively portrayed the pretense of the community. Every coin has two faces in the same manner. Society is endowed with the devil and evil figures, generous and meager people, people who live for the sake of goodwill—in the same way as Anand, too, portrayed in his novel characters like Havildar Charat Singh, a Hockey player, and a Muslim man.

Both demonstrate the generous and humane conduct with Bakha like they treated every other upper-class person living in the society. The novel illustrates the story of saving Bakha from the Upper Caste when he unintentionally touched the upper caste boy. Subsequently, he bangs a high-class boy. At that time, a Musmil business came and saved him from thrashing because they did not follow any demarcated caste system in Islamic tradition and treated him kindly. He met with an athlete Havildar Charat Singh, an autocratic or high-class person, and conversed with him. Charat Singh promised to give him a hockey stick, a "brand new stick." Charat Singh, a man who gifted brand new hockey, a generous man who did not follow the evil practice of casteism with Lakha and did not do inhumane conduct with him either the characters which did not demonstrate the upper caste ego for lower-class people.

### **Laziness**

Bakha's father's character, Lakha, who is the laziest person who did not want to work but ordered his son to work and follow the inhumane norm and worked as a scavenger, lived a miserable life. At the beginning of

the novel, the novelist evinces the incident where Lakha pretended to be sick only because he did not want to go for manual scavenging work. Moreover, the Lakha forced Bakha to work and start the day with horror, humiliation, and an inhumane evil cursing day.

### Acceptance of Casteism & Fear

The casteism which prevailed from the chronicle and the rotten, evil practice of the Indian society people used to see them from generation to generation. It steadily became a civic norm and custom to be followed by every upper class and lower class who are living in a society. This acceptance of the devastating casteism is adopted and accepted by everyone who are doing this discrimination proudly, caustically or those who miserably, vulnerable suffering from this.

The Mulk Raj Anand illustrates this acceptance through his work and incidence where the Sohini, his sister after getting molested and criticized by the society as blamed because of hypocritical or treachery by the Kali Nath she accepted the humiliation. She said to his brother Bakha that it is ok to go to a home as we are Dalit, no one listens to our voice.

Lakha, when Bakha came home and told all the incident to his father he ignored as he knew the ritual and evil humiliating custom which shows his fear and acceptance of this draconian system prevailed in Indian society.

Another incidence which demonstrates the acceptance and fear is when the long humiliating and ugly events happen in Bakha life like being bitten by the upper cast, humiliated by a lady and many more. He went to his friend where he shared his day events a friend Chota in angered tone reply that we have to do against such inhumane and evil conduct done by the upper class. Still, his another friend Ramcharan interrupted him and said we are Dalit or Achhut and it is a part of our life it happens with our caste, and if we go against this evil practice the Upper Caste people will slaughter us so leave it and let's go home.

### Caste Conversion

After living such a devastating and inhumane life, the Bakha was frustrated and disappointed and wandering here and there and sitting across the road lane under the tree. He found Colonel Hutchinson, who motivates him to accept Christianity because Christianity is free from discrimination and casteism. We treat human as equal and left together without demarcated as Brahman, Kshatriya and Dalit or Sudhra and so on. He went with him to the Church where he met Colonel Hutchinson's wife, who scold his husband that every day you bring some Indian as she did not like Indian at all, which Bakha heard. Subsequently, Bakha left the Church and eventually, reached to a railway station, where he hearsay that Mahatma Gandhi is about to come who promulgated his perspective toward Dalit and pave the measure to protect their rights encourage people not to follow inhumane and evil custom.

### End of Untouchable Speech by Mahatma Gandhi

Bakha waited in the Railway station for the Mahatma Gandhi who came and enunciated his vision toward the decorin custom and vulnerability widely spread in the community through his speech. He found some relief after hearing the Mahatma Gandhi vision toward egalitarian grounds for all India where belonging from any caste, creed, gender will highly emphasize untouchability. As Gandhiji, in the pre Independence phase wandering the nation to aware the mass regarding his ideology to attain Independence which was highly based on Non-violence, satyagraha. Along with this Gandhiji started a movement for "Harijan Seva" where he enthusiastically encourage the mass to denounce the evil practice against Dalit and treat them equally as he pronounces Dalit and Harijan" Hair (god's) Jan (man).

These encouraging visions calm the soul of the Bakha, and he got some positive vibes that the time will, fortunately, transform his and his community deterioration conditions. In the railway station only he also listens that Britain Government near to bring a scavenger machine which eventually renounces manual scavenging and the Bakha thought after that machine we Dalit will become curse free forever. As he believed because of this inhumane sewage or scavenging work, we are not acceptable and became achhut in society.

## CONCLUSION

As the Mulk Raj Anand, one of the eminent and prominent novel and story writers wrote on such an intense topic which prevailed in the then society only because he wanted to transform the oppressive, devastating custom prevailed in every nook and corner of our country. Through inventiveness skills, fictitious and seemingly indulged in the denuded enunciation of society's social and ethnic fabric. He was one of the Dalit voice who wrote about the vulnerability and humiliation faced by the Dalit people through his power of the sword.

The motive behind writing the Untouchability to evince the realness of modern India's diverse culture and the impoverishment and the humiliating consideration further the acceptance of the society which treated and whom the exploitation happened. Mulk Raj explores all the hypocrisy and double-minded ideology of the upper-class people. The way the upper class treated lower or untouchable people is distinctly and unambiguously. The injustice, humiliation, oppression felt by the whole community of the low or outcastes in India since chronicle were portrayed through his characters like Bakha who was born with the fate of the unfortunate and pathetic as he was untouchable.

Along with the motive to support the upliftment program which led by Mahatma Gandhi to aware the masses. The novelist choose the fiction method to spread his perception to the world and also want to encourage the literate youth of India who can understand the rotten, inhumane conduct prevailed in the country and to serve their nation from this unethical, evil practice and make an Independent India in every sense not only from the exploitation did by Britishers since long but also from the exploitation of the casteism and untouchability.

## REFERENCES

- Anand, M. R. (2014). *Untouchable*. Penguin UK.
- Bhatnagar, M. K., & Rajeshwar, M. (Eds.). (2000). *The novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A critical study*. Atlantic Publishers & Dist.
- Anand, M. R. (2011). On the Genesis of Untouchable: A Note by Mulk Raj Anand. *South Asian Review*, 32(1), 133-136.
- Christopher, K. W. (2015). Cast (e) Ing Narrative: Caste, Class and Religion in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable. *Interventions*, 17(1), 64-81.
- Dar, N. A. Mulk Raj Anand“ s „Untouchable“: A Voice of Subaltern. *Bodhi International Journal of Research and Humanities, Arts and Science*, 2.
- Mukherjee, A. P. (1991). The Exclusions of Postcolonial Theory and Mulk Raj Anand's "Untouchable": A Case Study. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 22(3).
- Tiwari, K. International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL) Untouchable by Mulkraj Anand is a novel of Social Protest.
- Sunmugam, S., Muhammad, S. H., & Lin, A. L. W. (2015). Identity Dilemma in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss: A Strategic Essentialist Reading. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 208, 203-222.
- Saraswat, N. (2013). The Plight of Less privileged in Mulk Raj Anand“ s Untouchable and Premchand“ s Godan. *International Journal of English: Literature, Language & Skills*.

