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Identity Crisis in Anand's *Untouchable*

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Abstract

Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand depicts the identity crisis of lower class/caste people of India. It shows the effect of social discrimination through the protagonist of the novel. It reflects the bitter reality of lower class people. They are suppressed, oppressed and depressed by upper class. They do not get good opportunities in their lives. They are ill-treated by higher class. It portrays the difference between master and worker, rich and poor vividly. They have voice for humanity, equality, liberty and human right. They raise their voice but their voice is not heard by upper class people. The main character is exploited economically, culturally, politically and religiously by upper class people. It is the expression of deepest personal feeling of protagonist which is isolated and fragmented. Everywhere, they get exploited, dominated, suffered and tortured by upper class people. This exploitation certainly shatters the idea of harmony among people. Obviously, this bitter experience is the identity crisis of lower class/caste people. There is identity crisis of human status, justice and equality.

This research has been divided into four chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Modality of Marxism, Textual Analysis and Conclusion. Some main features of Marxism such as hegemony, subaltern, class struggle, exploitation, false consciousness etc will be the instrument for this research.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Untouchable and Identity Crisis

This research study attempts to deal with the causes of social injustice, corruption of humanity, and the loss of self identity of lower class people in the novel, *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand. The protagonist, Bakha, who is from the so-called lower caste, is tortured by different upper caste people from the very beginning of the novel. There is no school which could admit him because the parents of the other children did not allow their sons to be touched by the sweeper's son. Bakha's suffering, torture, and domination by the so-called upper caste people represent social evils that lead to the crisis of his self identity. He wishes to create the identity as an equal human being to the upper caste people but cannot. Hence there is identity crisis.

The novel *Untouchable* depicts the identity crisis of an individual as a free human being. Identity simply refers to the characteristics, feelings or a belief that distinguishes one from others. It gives recognition and makes one able to say who or what one is. The term identity has several facets of meanings. As a term of wide debate, identity doesn't come as a uniform relation to personal self. There are various platforms for its formation and exposure. The sense of politics, education, economic status, color completion, bodily stature, geographical location etc. creates different facets of identities. So, identity is a complex term as it has multiplicities of types and meanings. It is essential first of all that an individual exists in order to have any identity.

The author of the novel *Untouchable*, Mulk Raj Anand, as a social realist presents the reality of society. He sets his literary career as a founding father of Indian novel. In the nineteen thirties, a number of Indian novelists used to write for exposing the social

reality and among them he became a social realist. Anand has realistically depicted Indian Social problems in Literature. His novels act as a bridge between different castes and classes. The most striking aspect of Anand as a novelist is his concern with the reality of organized social problems.

Mulk Raj Anand tries to make his novel as vehicle for a good Indian literature that quests for the identity of the poor. He is trying to show how poor are living with scarcities. Their attitude and identity is very much affected by the desire of upper class. Most of the characters like Bakha, Lakha, and Sohini are trying to search their identities of equal human being among upper class. Bakha is the main character in this novel. He does not show his individual ways of behaviors and actions with an intention of being unique and identical person in the community. Living in community it is not possible to create distinct identity. Bakha negates the social values in search of his own individual self. But he still follows the same tradition by accepting the ways of his father unknowingly.

The changing values of the society as well as individual have a vital influence upon the characters. Though there is not a single character that represents old generation in this true sense, we categorize some characters as representative of old generation by their age. The characters depicted in *Untouchable* are very different from the general image of India. So, in this novel Bakha's father is put under the conventional type and Bakha, though representative of new generation, is still with old generation in its values and conventional. He still belongs to the one who is considered as conventional since he does whatever his father does. Bakha is quite unable to manage the time because of his dilemma whether to assimilate past or to be in the present.

The characters constantly move from past to present or from one point to another in search of their static identity. But, the more they move the more their identity fragments. So, it has been challenge to find consistent identity to which they always can attach themselves. In the novel most of the upper class try to dominate the poor. Infact lower class is not constant in their life. They are not successful to create their identity by rejecting the upper class. Similarly, they can't create their distinct identity by rejecting their cultures.

The task of writing for Anand is very much exciting and challenging as he believes awareness a possible way to make people conscious for their right to live and searching their identity. Language, culture, rituals and music are materials of his novels. In all his novels, Anand has enjoyed critical acclaim and sustained scholarly attention, projecting the obscure relation between past and present, the silence and undetermined the assumptions, hierarchies, pre-suppositions and crisis upon which western, hegemonic women and the poor. In most of his writings Anand tries to create such characters who are traditional and in search of their own identity. He presents such characters that make continuous effort to create a distinct identity.

This novel describes a single day in the life of the protagonist Bakha, a scavenger boy. The entire action takes place within a period of less than twenty four hours. Though the scene of the novel belongs to a small, interior town of Punjab. Bulandshehar, a small town with an outcaste colony represents a normal Indian town found anywhere in India. Most of the action of the novel takes place at an outcaste colony and in the streets of the small village. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel *Untouchable*, represents the lower class people. Everywhere, he gets dominated, exploited, tortured, and suffered by upper class

people. Everywhere, he is ill treated. Professionally, Bakha is a sweeper, a latrine cleaner. He struggles hard to exist in the society. He has no food to eat and cloth to wear because he is a poor fellow. Poverty as well as caste system is great social problem for Bakha.

Bakha is passive but not revolutionary. He cannot revolt against upper class people. When he gets exploited, tortured, suffered etc. by upper class people, he becomes angry. He tries to take action against oppressors but he can not do that. He only bears what he gets by oppressors.

Bakha as a representative of poor represents the reality of poor people. Like Bakha, lower class people have wretched condition in their lives. They have voice for humanity, liberty, equality and human right. They raise their voice but their voice is not heard by upper class people. Their voice is only limited in words but not in action. They are suppressed and oppressed by upper class. They are not allowed to read and write. They have to live separately. Low caste people are not allowed to touch the high caste people and also not allowed to touch the wells of water. They have not got opportunities what other people have got. They are treated as if they are not human. They are compelled to spend the disastrous life. It is the reality of lower class people.

Reviews on *Untouchable*

Among many Indian Writers Mulk Raj Anand is regarded as the most distinguished social realist. He was born at Peshawar in 1905 in North-West Frontier Province of undivided India. His father was traditional coppersmith who became a soldier later on. He was educated at the universities of Lahore, London and Cambridge and lived in England for many years, finally settling in a village in western India after the war. He completed his BA from Punjab University in 1925 and PhD research in 1928. His main

concern has always been for ‘the creatures in the lower depths of Indian society who once were men and women: the rejected, who had no way to articulate their anguish against the oppressors’. His novels on humanism have been translated into several world languages.

Anand has written many Novels. Some of the novels are *untouchable* (1935), *coolie* (1936), *Two leaves and Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940), *The sword and the sickle* (1942) etc.

Anand's writing goes into the very depth of the social system and issues. As a contribution to Indian English novels, he has brought social questions rather than romance and pleasure. He is concerned with the suffering, misery and exploitation of common people.

The text *Untouchable* itself depicts the contradictory representation of haves and have not in the society. Different critics have interpreted the text *Untouchable* differently. Some of them argue that the novel is the reflection of British colonialism and some critics take it as social protest. Some critics criticize the different types of exploitation in the name of caste system in Indian society.

Amuj Kumar Sharma finds the presentation of social exploitation in the novel. He writes: “Such segregation accompanied by miserable living conditions and physically injurious to the sweepers become mentally and emotionally hurtful as well when they come into social contact with the people of higher castes” (29).

Untouchable reveals caste system which creates social discrimination in society. Physical touch is physical harm to lower class people. If they touch the upper caste people they are physically beaten. In the novel, Bakha is beaten by Lalaji. Goyal writes

about this as: “If their bodies even accidentally touch those of the high caste people they suffer thrashing and abuses of the offense, Bakha, whose body somehow touches that of Lalaji abused and slapped by the latter” (30).

It is believed mostly by the upper caste people that the untouchables are condemned by their fate and are not equal to high caste people. Saros Cowasjee also has a similar view as:

Again I was clogged up. And the whole of life seemed like a well, which I could not break down, in order to understand the truth, why the outcastes were condemned to live as untouchable whether there was such a thing as kismet or fate, and why 'bad' deeds became 'good' deeds because the higher orders did these things, and wicked if the poor did bad deeds. (51)

R.S. Singh finds Bakha's resisting mind in the novel. He says : "Bakha could not come into action due to social circumstances. He writes that Bakha was aware of the limitation of the given social structure and he was ready to acknowledge the rebellion within him, but in the absence of any perceptible alternative, he was unable to translate into action" (41).

In the preface of the novel E.M. Forster writes about the realistic representation of the Indian society by the novelist. He writes: “*Untouchable* could only have been written by an Indian, and by an Indian who observed from an outside. No European however sympathetic, could have created the character of ‘Bakha’, because he would not have known enough about his troubles” (vii). Similarly, Martin Seymour-Smith elaborates *Untouchable* as “One of the most eloquent and imaginative works to deal with this difficult and emotive subject” (Blurb Page).

Untouchable is the reflection of social evil of contemporary Indian society. This book has received many critical outlooks from different perspectives. Some of the major critics have focused on the picture of society which is smeared in the evil practice of oppressors. *Untouchable* has become the classic of Indian English fiction and is instrumental for respectability and serious critical attention. Bakha, protagonist of the novel represents the problems of all untouchables.

This brings us to the concept of modes of power. The development of history seems to be a dialectical relationship of two modes of power contending with each other. In society there is an invariant notion of resistance to elite domination. This is due to the common condition of exploitation.

While staying in different places with his father, Anand experienced different types of social and political injustice. Basically untouchability is one of the great problems he saw in Indian society. Some of the poor peasants, untouchables and laborers with whom he had played in his childhood, draw attention of and he became more acutely conscious of the exploitation of untouchables and labors in India. Anand's interest in the plight of the untouchables dates back to a childhood experience. He puts it in his own words as:

I had known the untouchable in the squalid flowers' lanes of the contaminants where my father's regiment was stationed. Being much despaired for two dirty work they did for the caste Hindu spays, one of the sweeper boys, a handsome young man Bakha, had saved my life when I was accidentally hit by a stone on the head during a boy's quarrel. My mother had abused him for pulling me by carrying me home. This episode

had left an intangible mark on my naive child's mind. And Bakha had rendered himself to me by the fact that he was a shining hero, a good hockey player . . . who sang Punjabi songs in a melodious voice. One day, he was insulted by an upper caste Hindu as he was walking in the bazaar to go and clean latrines. He had accidentally touched to a caste Hindu, who slapped him on the face. He told us boy's story that day and I had wept to see him sad and crying and I wrote this story of the insult to Bakha. (17)

Untouchable is a story about social problem. It is the story of the identity crisis of lower class. Bakha represents that class. He represents suffering and torture of all the untouchable people of Indian society.

The text itself is taken as the primary source in the course of the thesis work. The other main sources in developing the research are internet, library consultation, related commentaries and immense helps from honorable professors and lecturers, indeed. The research only centers within the problems of lower class people that is differences between haves and have not. The major concern of the research is to concentrate on the suffering of poor people with the aim of showing the cruel behavior of upper class. In that sense the topic itself is vivid enough to delimit the criteria of the study. For illustration, however, the research won't concentrate on other aspects of the novel.

Alternate model has been applied to this thesis. So, this thesis has been divided into four chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Modality, Marxist Representation in *Untouchable* and Conclusion. For this purpose the thesis makes use of historicity held together with history of class conflict as theoretical modality in the second chapter.

Regarding historicity the thesis dwells on circularity of the nature of history as advocated by some of the prominent critics such as Karl Marx. Furthermore, as supportive materials to theoretical orientation symbolic values of class distinction is also mentioned. The theoretical modality chapter in the second part is followed by comprehensive textual interpretation in the third chapter. The fourth or the last chapter is the conclusion which briefly summarizes the thesis as a whole.

Chapter II: Identity Crisis and Marxism

Marxism and Some Key Concepts

Marxism is a set of theories, or a system of thought and analysis, developed by Karl Marx in the nineteenth century in response to the Western industrial revolution and the rise of industrial capitalism as the predominant economic mode. This theory is directed at social change; Marxist wants to analyze social order in order to change them; in order to alter what they see the gross injustices and inequalities created by capitalist economic relation. Towards the middle of nineteenth century, Karl Marx (1818-1883) in association with Frederich Engels (1820-1895) invented radical economic, social and political theories which spread with amazing effect throughout the world heralding the dawn of new era. Nowadays, the same theory is called Marxism which has got success to influence the modern world, by furnishing strong ideological basis, especially for political movements. Marx is radical economist, sociologist and supreme ideologist. He was extraordinary influential political thinker of the whole history.

Marx propagated a theory of society discussing how capitalism leads to exploitation in the society, and why and how it is protested. Marx theory is of great value for the task of describing what is going on in the world and for understanding the problems and directions of our society today. Marx regarded capitalism as extremely unsatisfactory and he was very concerned with getting rid of it, via violent, revolution and the establishment of a communist society. Marxism is therefore also about political goals and actions.

Marx argues that the economic situation, the form of the productive system is the most important determinant of all other aspects of the society, such as its social

institutions and ideas, such as the system of law, of morality and education. These are elements with the super structure of society. Hence Marx is said to be a 'materialist', who argued that dominant ideas are the result of material or economic conditions and he was therefore strongly opposed to reformers who thought that mere change in ideas can change society.

The main types of society Marx distinguished were primitive, slave, feudal and capitalist. In a capitalist society capitalist own and control the productive resources that is capital. Especially there are two groups in capitalist society; proletariat and bourgeoisie. Proletariat is those individuals who sell their labor power and the bourgeoisie own the means of production.

Marx's development as a political theorist and organizer passed from observation of French Revolution or participation in 1848, the International Workingmen's Association existing radical movements to formulation of new theories and strategies, and then to application of these strategies in subsequent movements. In applying his general theory to formulating strategies and historical explanations, Marx utilized a framework of mainly political auxiliary statements to define the specific international and national historical setting. Far from reducing the unique aspects of his historical setting to universal economic forces which would ultimately determine events, he sought to learn how far and with what peculiarities the capitalist mode of production had taken hold, and to define specific potentials for revolution within each actual society. Far from reducing politics to a simple reflection of economic structure, he carefully observed the new political movements of his time, and devised political strategies that could realize the general potential for working-class liberation in a definite historical setting.

In this section of theoretical tool, it is to distinguish between two types of theorizing in Marx and contrast his general hypothesis on the relations of modes of production and class struggle and his analysis of the dynamics of an ideal capitalism with his explanations or strategies in particular historical circumstances.

In his general materialist theory, Marx pursued two “guiding hypotheses”. First, in the “Communist Manifesto”, he argued that “all history is the history of class struggles” (21). Second, to explain these political clashes, Marx looked to an underlying material foundation in the modes of production. In each entire social epoch, he argued, a determining relationship existed between the way men and women produced material wealth and their forms of political and intellectual life. Furthermore, contradictions between new forces of production (the mental and physical activities of the producers with existing raw materials and implements) and older social relations of production (the relations between exploiters or non-producers and producers) generated new relations of production and forms of class conflict, and ultimately, new forms of society.

Analytically, this general materialist hypothesis provided criteria for discerning the fundamental features of the newly arisen capitalist society: its enormous expansion of production, its vast uprooting of small property holders and dissolution of traditional customs, its revolution against feudalism.

Beyond this, modern factory production forced a property less working class to associate. Marx's study of this material underpinning indicated the type of class struggle and new society which would probably spring from capitalism. Politically, Marx's theory provided an insight into the historical process through which small groups of radicals or isolated working-class movements could hope, despite immediate appearances, to

become decisive revolutionary forces. In articulating this broad pattern of history, Marx occasionally offered very general, abstract formulations. It will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. Through *German Ideology* Marx says that “Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life” (625).

In “*Communist Manifesto*”, Marx draws a very striking picture of the rise of the bourgeoisie, its unheard-of economic transformation of the world, its political triumph, its forging of a property less proletariat, and finally the emergence of a working-class revolutionary movement against it. One might easily interpret Marx's argument as an example of a sophisticated economic determinism, and project a socialist revolution in 1848 only in advanced England. On the continent one might infer that Germany would generate only a bourgeois democratic revolution; European countries would not experience powerful nationalist movements; and the peasantry would play no significant progressive role.

Historical reality disciplined Marx's materialist political analysis. No abstract or “super historical” account of social forces or general trends could legitimately override real circumstances. During this period, Marx thought that a proletarian revolution in advanced Western Europe might precede a direct communist revolution in Russia. Thus, at a minimum, if one country passed through certain definite stages of production, it would condition the future development of others; followers on the international scene would not have to repeat the first country's history step by step. The productive dynamic of Marx's general theory in the “*German Ideology*” indicated a broad trend without

specifying the course which any given country must pursue. Therefore, Marx could expect socialism in Germany in 1848 and still defend his general pattern of history.

In analyzing these situations, Marx never concluded that general economic causes “necessarily” determined one political outcome rather than another. Instead he appealed to a specific combination of economic and political factors to define the alternatives in each upcoming case or to explain a unique result. Over time, alternate political strategies of the contending forces might potentially lead to dramatically different outcomes. While this second type of theorizing made use of arguments drawn from the first (criteria for beginning to analyze classes, for example), it examined a different, more complex object: the actual political setting of a revolutionary movement as opposed to the internal dynamics of capitalism (or earlier social systems). In applying the general to formulating theories to explain or strategies, Marx always modified it in certain characteristic, mainly in political ways.

Marxism divides the society into two parts: base structure and superstructure. The relation between economic base and particular aspect of superstructure is called ideology in Marxism. Ideologies are the ideas that exist in culture. It is how a society thinks about itself. Ideologies supply all the terms and assumptions, and frameworks that individuals use to understand their culture. Ideologies supply all the things that people believe in. It is the consciousness of the ruling class.

For Marxism, an ideology is a belief system, and all belief systems are products of cultural conditioning. Not all ideologies are equally producing or desirable. Undesirable ideologies promote repressive political agenda. Classism, religion, individualism are some of the major ideologies that exist in Marxism. Classism is the specific Marxist

ideology that equates one's value as a human being with the social class to which one belongs. In Marxism, only few rich people earn social respect and dignity among other poor people. Human consciousness is constituted by an ideology. That is, the beliefs, values and ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive, and by recourse to which they explain, what they take to be reality. An ideology is, in complex ways, the product of the position and interest of a particular class. In any historical era, the dominant ideology embodies, and serves to legitimize and perpetuate, the interests of the dominant economic and social class.

Marx represents ideology as a “superstructure” of which the concurrent socioeconomic system is the “base”. In the present era of capitalist economic organization that emerged during the eighteenth century, the reigning ideology incorporates the interests of the dominant and exploitative class, the “bourgeoisie”, who are the owners of the means of production and distribution, as opposed to the “proletariat”, or wage earning working class. In “German Ideology” Marx elaborates notion of ideology as follows; “If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life process” (625). Illusion created by ideology created false consciousness in the society.

Marx refers to alienation of people from aspect of their human nature. He believes that alienation is a systematic result of capitalism. Under capitalism, labors are always alienated. It describes objective features of a person’s situation in capitalism. It designates the type of human relation which is not controlled by their participants and the

ensuing results. It elaborates people from the aspect of human nature. It is the systematic result of living in socially stratified society because being a mechanistic part of social class alienates a person from his or her humanity. The theoretical basis of alienation within the capitalist mode of production is that the worker invariably loses the ability to determine his or her life and destiny, when deprived of the right to think (conceive) of himself as the director of his actions; to determine the character of said actions; to define their relationship with other people; and to own the things and use the value of the goods and services, produced with their labor. Although the worker is an autonomous, self-realized human being, as an economic entity, he or she is directed to goals and diverted to activities that are dictated by the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, in order to extract from the worker the maximum amount of surplus value, in the course of business competition among industrialists.

There are different aspects to the Marxist idea of alienation. The first is that labor which produces surplus value is alienated labor. The labor put into an object becomes part of the capitalist's profit, and thus no longer belongs to the laborer. In addition to alienating the laborer from his or her labor power, capitalism also forces the worker to become alienated from himself. The worker who is forced to exist as the commodity in the labor market is alienated from his/her humanness. The worker is alienated because there remains class struggle in society. First type of alienation is alienation of worker from his work, i.e. from the product of his labor. The second thing is from his working, i.e. act of producing. The third form of alienation is alienated from himself, means as a producer. And the last one is from other workers, i.e. from revolution.

For Marxist there always occurs struggle between two classes in society, the proletariats and the capitalists. The active expression of the class conflict looked at from any kind of socialist perspectives. Marx claims that history evolves not by any other reason but by material prosperity. Abrams comments on Marxism as follows; “The evolving history of humanity, of its social groupings and relations, of its institutions and of its ways of thinking are largely determined by the changing mode of its 'material production' that is of its overall economic organization for producing and distributing material goods” (147-48).

Marx says consciousness differs according to class. Relation of production, means of production and mode of production constitute the economic base and very base from superstructure. Again he says: “The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With his birth begins its struggle with bourgeoisie” (26).

On the top of the social rank are the Haves with power, money, food, security and luxury .They own the means of production, machinery and factory buildings. Their main source of income is profit. On the other hand, the proletarians are at the bottom of the social rank. They own their labor and sell it for hand to mouth. They have common misery of poverty, ignorance etc. In Communist Manifesto Marx presents the views that, the history of class struggle is the history of struggle for control the material condition upon which life rests.

Marx claimed that the evolving history of humanity is characterized by class conflict and is largely determined by the changing modes of material production. He believes that historical changes in the fundamental modes of production effect changes in the social class structure that leads dominant and subordinate classes to engage in a

struggle for economic, social and political advantage. Moreover, he thought that human consciousness is constituted by an ideology- that is, the beliefs, values and ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive, and by recourse to which they explain the product of position and interests of a particular class. Among class struggle, lower class people are always exploited by upper class.

Exploitation is a term that plays vital role in Marxism. Marx refers to the exploitation of the entire segment or class of society by another. He sees it as being an inherent feature and key element of Capitalism and free markets. The profit gained by the Capitalist is the difference between the value of the product made by the worker and actual wage that the workers receives; in other words, capitalism functions on the basis of paying workers less than the full value of their labor, in order to enable the capitalist class to turn a profit. Marx further says:

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjections. The proletariat cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; the mission is to destroy all previous securities for and insurance of private property. (28)

Exploitation is the theory which is most associated with Marxist that profit is the result of the exploitation of wage earners by their employers. It rests on the labor theory of value which claims that the value is intrinsic in a product according to the amount of labor that has been spent on producing the product. Thus the value of product is created by the workers who made that product is reflected in its finished price is then divided

between labor (wages), capital (profit), and expenses on raw materials. The wages received by workers do not reflect the full value of their work because some of the value is taken by the employer in the form of profit. Therefore, making a profit essentially means taking away from the workers some of the value that results from their labor. This is what is known as capitalist exploitation.

Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others in order to further particular desire and purpose. The general concept of power is centralization within the system of hierarchy. The absolute and higher power is conceived only in the centre from where the subordinating elements are controlled and ruled. In this condition power relations are determined by economic relations. Most theorist of power has seen individuals as oppressed by power relation. Lukacs through his essay “ The Ideal of the Harmonious man in Bourgeois Aesthetics” interpreted class struggle as follows; “With the development of the productive forces of capitalism, the subjugation inherent in the capitalist division of labor became more pronounced” (904).

Rulers like much more power. They crave the capacity to control the lives of large number of people. It is their job to make us believe that he/she is committed to helping people, or making the world a better place, or carrying out the will of his/her constituency. There are various types of power existing in the world. The rulers try to use power to control and rule their citizens. And power holders use the power according to their benefits.

Marx argues that reification is an inherent and necessary characteristic of economic value. This implies that objects are transformed into subjects and subjects are turned into objects with the result that subjects are rendered passive or determined, while

objects are rendered as active determining factor. It animates man as object. Those people are treated as they are the inherent, natural characteristics of things or vice versa, attribute of inanimate things are treated as if they are attributes of human subject. Adorno through his essay 'Cultural Criticism and Society' presents the view as: "Absolute reification, which presupposed intellectual progress as one of its elements, is now preparing to absorb the mind entirely" (1040).

This concept of reification is related to but is distinct from alienation and commodity fetishism. Alienation is the general condition of human estrangement. Reification is a specific form of alienation. Commodity fetishism is specific form of Reification. Lukacs presents the category of reification due to commodity nature of capitalist society; social relations became objectified, precluding the ability for a spontaneous emergence of class consciousness.

According to Lukacs, ideology is really a projection of class consciousness of the bourgeoisie, which functions to prevent the proletariat from attaining a real consciousness of its revolutionary position. People are unable to see things, especially exploitation, oppression and social relations as they really are the hypothesized inability of the human mind to develop a sophisticated awareness of how it developed and shaped by circumstances. It is any belief or view that prevents a person from being able to understand the true nature of a situation. It claims hypothesis that a proletariat unwittingly misperceive their real position in society and systematically misunderstand their genuine interest within the capitalist social relations of production.

False consciousness denotes people's inability to recognize inequality, oppression and exploitation in a capitalist society due to its adoption of the views that naturalize and

legitimize the existence of social classes in capitalism. Through *History and class consciousness* published in 1920 by Lukacs the notion of false consciousness gained popularity.

The term 'hegemony' was popularized in 1930's by Italian Marxist Gramsci, who investigated why the ruling class was so successful in promoting its own interest in society. It is the power of ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interest of all. Hegemony is the concept of power maintained without using the direct or physical force, or threat often used by minority class over the majority class whose interest are in direct opposition. Antonio Gramsci elaborates hegemony as follows; “Spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidences) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (12). The groups who are subject to the hegemony to the ruling class is subaltern group.

The origin of the term 'subaltern' can be traced back to the medieval age. By eighteenth century, it however came to denote lower ranks in military suggesting peasant origin. In India and America, historians and writers began writing about military campaign from the subaltern point of view by the nineteenth century. Eventually two terms got recognition and began to be used. Antonio Gramsci adopted it to describe those groups in the society who are subject to the hegemonic exploitation of the ruling classes. These subaltern classes include marginalized groups such as peasants, workers and others, who were forced to stay away from the Germanic power. As a Marxist, Gramsci was very much concerned with the proletarians whose voice remains unheard in the

history. As the history of the state is realized in the state, history being the history of the states and dominant groups, he was interested in the historiography of the subaltern classes. He realized the need of the revolution. To catapult the oppressed people to the privileged position from which they can speak on their own. He, however, observed that the politically disoriented people are not capable of carrying on such a great revolution on their own. Instead, they need the assistance of the intellectuals with the Marxist bend of mind. This is how Gramsci perceived and manipulated the term 'subaltern'. He, however, got attention only after his death when Raymond Williams introduced his works to the English reading world in 1977.

In 1982, Subaltern Studies Group emerged in India with the aim of writing the historiography of the people ignored by colonialist as well as bourgeois nationalist historiographies. The group led by Ranjit Guha was very much enthusiastic about providing the subaltern People with their own voice. This group is known as a group of historians, who's aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in south Asian Society and the general attribute of subordination in south Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way.

Subaltern Studies emerged as a theory of change, which sustained vigorous political commitment. The academic atmosphere was witnessing a great change at the time. Postmodernism and post-structuralism had a strong hold and the academic field. On the other hand, cultural studies were getting more and more attention from all sides.

Spivak in her essay writes: "The Subalterns studies' collective . . . generally perceive their task as making a theory of consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change" (330). It was the first major shift that emerged in the history of

subaltern studies. Meanwhile, socialist, communist and Marxist systems were deteriorating throughout world. And, the academic world was moving towards post-Marxist studies. So, it remained as the center of hope for the marginalized mass in the third world countries.

Subaltern Studies tried its best to establish the subalterns as an autonomous domain. It emerged as a theory of change. It sustained vigorous political commitment. Post structuralism and post modernism had swayed the academic world. It is a matter of great coincidence that the academic world was also moving towards cultural studies towards the end of the 1970s. The intellectuals and academicians were busy in studying colonization and its aftermath. The third world intellectuals found that the once colonized spaces were still culturally colonized despite the fact that they had acquired political independence. At the same time, the Marxist and socialist systems in the countries like Vietnam and USSR had turned into failures. It was seen as the failure of the state controlled system. The state was supposed to have failed to speak for its people. In a way the people and the state were getting separated from each other like oil and water. Consequently the historians begin separating society and culture from the state institutions and political economy.

In Chapter III, I will use these concepts of Marxist theory to show the identity crisis of Bakha in *Untouchable* and for this I will include important lines with exact page numbers. I will do my best to prove my logic within the boundary of theory.

Chapter III

Identity Crisis in *Untouchable*

Untouchable was written by Mulk Raj Anand who was one of the most distinguished social realists. It reflects the glimpse of social reality such as social protest, social evil, social injustice, social problem etc. of contemporary time of Anand in India. The text *Untouchable* is concerned with the reality of lower class people like pain, suffering, torture and loss of self identity. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, represents the identity crisis of lower class people.

Bakha, 18 years old boy, a sweeper and latrine cleaner is son of Lakha. Rakha and Sohini are the brother and sister of Bakha respectively. They belong to suffer group because they are poor and they have no high rank. Professionally, they are sweepers, latrine cleaners or scavengers. Bakha, a representative of lower class people is ill-treated everywhere. Wherever he goes, he gets dominated, exploited, suffered and tortured by so-called upper class people. Bakha is exploited economically, culturally, politically and religiously by upper class people. Like Bakha, poor people have very bitter experiences in their lives. They have to work hard. They struggle hard to exist in the society. They are not strong economically, politically, culturally and religiously. There is vast gap between so-called upper class people and lower class people.

Bakha, the main character of the Novel, belongs to dominated group who is passive. Bakha is passive but he is not revolutionary. He is silent revolutionary. Outwardly, he can not revolt upper class people. He can not take action against 'oppressors because he is poor and he has no self respect and self confidence. Like Bakha, lower class people express their plight in words but not in action. They raise their

voice for humanity, equality, liberty and human right only in words, not in action. Their voice is not listening by upper class people. They are suppressed, oppressed and depressed by Elites. They have very miserable condition in their lives. It is the reality of lower class people.

Mulk Raj Anand presents social problems here. He presents poverty and caste system as great social problems. He tries to fill the gap between upper class people and lower class people using bridge but there is vast difference between upper class and lower class. Anand is idealistic who just shows pain, suffering, torture, and miserable condition of lower class people.

Untouchables are also human beings. They have also human sense, kindness and love but they can not express these human feelings because of their low status in the society. They have to depend upon higher class people because they do not have food to eat and cloth to wear. They have to sweep the floor and clean the latrine as well. It is the duty of downtrodden people. It is what they deserve. One day when a child of high caste falls in accident badly, Bakha sees him. He helps him with kindness and sympathy but child's mother abuses Bakha badly.

Get away, get away, you eater of your master! She shouted at him. 'May you die! Why didn't you look after your brother?' Bakha handed over the child, and afraid, humble, silent as a ghost, withdrew. He felt dejected, utterly miserable. Was the pleasure of Charat sing's generosity only to be enjoyed for half an hour? He loved the child. (106)

The above lines clarify that because of high and low class system, they can't get co-operation from each other. It happens due to loss of humanity, social unity and

kindness between high class and low class in the society. To be good society, there must be unity of people. Untouchable people are so much dominated in the society that even they can't take water from the wells, rivers and streams. They do not get chance to drink water from these sources until high class people provide them. Lower class people are not allowed to touch the wells and also to touch the upper class people. Anand presents these great problems in *Untouchable* as follows: "The outcastes are not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the near by brooks as their use of it would contaminate the stream. They had no well" (14).

Bakha fails to act due to lack of his awareness about the overstepping wall of convention built up by the upper class. It can not be overlooked that Anand himself does not want his protagonist to assert himself in a challenging way in respect to the socio-cultural values of the time. It is because of the novelist's own scheme of things that he shows Bakha as a weak character even when he knows that he is being victimized by the upper class people. Bakha's disappointing figure is again explored when he accepts the bread given by a house lady in an insulting way. Anand further says:

Vay Bakhya, take this, here's your bread coming down. And she flung it at him. Bakha laid aside the broom and tried hard to be the good cricketer he usually was, but the thin, paper- like pancake floated in the air and fell like a kite on to the brick pavement of the gully. He picked it up quietly and wrapped it in a duster with the other bread. He had received there. He was too disgusted to clean the drain after this, especially as a little boy sat

relieving himself before him. He threw the little broom aside and made off without saying thank you (65).

Anand clarifies that downtrodden people do not have self-respect. They have lost their self respect and identity. They can not get love and affection in society because higher class people always dominate lower class people. There is horrible and awful memory in their mind. They are deprived from having love, liberty, equality and human right what upper class people have. There is no harmony, mutual understanding, and cooperation between upper and lower class people. Everywhere, there is disaster or wretched condition in the life of lower class people. The protagonist of this novel is exploited by upper class/caste people.

Lower class people are compelled to bear different kinds of exploitation and dominations in their lives because they are poor. Wherever Bakha goes, he gets exploited, dominated, tortured by rich group. Bakha is the prime example of such victimization. Bakha is representative of lower class people. He can not directly revolt Oppressors. He is treated inhumanly by Oppressors but he can not take action against them. He becomes angry but his rage only limits in words but not in action. He wants to challenge his oppressors but he can not because he is poor, a sweeper and a latrine cleaner. He is forced to do dirty works. In one sense, Bakha is silent revolutionary type of character. Similarly, Lakha, Rakha and Sohini belong to peasant group. They also do not have courage to be rebellion against their oppressors. Lakha tells his sons to respect their masters because they are our masters and we are slave, they are superior and we are inferior etc. Lakha has lack of self-respect self confidence and self identity.

Untouchables are not allowed to live together with upper caste people. They have to live separately from upper caste. The scavenger, the sweeper, the Latrine cleaner, the Leather worker, the washer man, the barber, the grass-cutters etc include in the peasant group. They do not have proper house, bathroom, latrine etc. They have mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows. They are forced to do dirty work such as ditch digging, scavenging, sweeping, latrine cleaning etc. Bakha, Lakha, Rakha, and Sohini are compelled to do these dirty works. They are out caste from the society. They are deprived up to get good opportunities in their lives. They can not read and write because they can not get chance to join at schools. They are simply ignored by upper class. We can find identity crisis in *Untouchable*. So, the text '*Untouchable*' is typically text with theme of identity crisis.

Not only the protagonist most of the characters in this novel belong to low caste. Bakha serves as a mirror to the pathetic correlation of untouchables. In the preface E.M. Forster writes: "The sweeper is worse off than slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolations of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes others when he touches them" (vi).

Untouchables are not allowed to touch the upper class people and stay in upper class people's house. When they stay some time in their house, upper class people treat lower class people inhumanly. Lower class people get insult from upper class without their mistake. This discrimination is reflected in the novel. "You eater of your masters, she shouted, 'may the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you

perish and die! You have defiled my house! Go! Get up, get up! You eater of your masters! Why didn't you shout if you wanted food? Is this your father's house that you come and rest here?" (63).

Caste creates power. It is the touchstone of measuring people's power. Those people who are in power always dominate the powerless people. Powerful people rule and control every thing. They determine everything. There is relationship of master and slave, rich and poor, centre and margin, superior and inferior etc. In every field, there is domination of poor people by rich people. In every sector, they are in backward because they have not got human right, freedom, equality and humanity what other people have got. They struggle hard for their survival. They are compelled to bear wretched, painful, miserable condition in their lives because they are poor. They have very bitter experiences in their lives.

Bakha seems passive and coward. When he gets ill-treatment, he becomes angry but he can not show his anger. He can not challenge the oppressors. He is not rebellious. Bakha's father Lakha is also not revolutionary. He suggests his sons to respect their masters. Lakha's opinion is that they are superior and we are inferior, they are masters and we are slaves etc. In this sense, Lakha is not also a rebellious type of character. In *Untouchable*, Anand creates Bakha as a leading figure of Untouchable people. Bakha has some inclinations in his life. He wants to be rich, to be like Sahib (English man), to wear trousers of Sahib but his desires only limit in words. We can realize that much of the sympathy for the sweepers and scavengers in the course of reading this novel. It is the real reflection of Indian society where untouchables are dominated by higher class people. Anand presents it as follows: "And he had wept and cried to be allowed to go to

school. But his father had told him that schools were meant for the Babus not for the Bhangis he realized that there was no school which would admit him because the parents of the other children were not allowed their sons to be contaminated by the touch of a sweeper's son'' (30).

The lower class people do not have chance to be admitted at school. Their society is based on Hindu Philosophy which believes in fate. It is the fate of lower class people not to be admitted at school. This happens due to fate as well as Untouchability. It brings suffering in the life of downtrodden people because they are pushed away from any good opportunity of the society. They can't read and write at schools. Automatically, they go backward in the society. The period of 1935 was the period of British colonialism. Mahatma Gandhi was a leading figure of that struggle in India. He condemned the idea of touchability and Untouchability. He felt that all people are created equal. Anand creates a character 'Mahatma' to show the view of Mahatma Gandhi in *Untouchable*. Mahatma Gandhi also wanted to have rebirth as an untouchable so that he would be able to share the sorrows and sufferings of the sweepers which also shows the problems due to being untouchable. His wants to be reborn as untouchable refers the problems due to being untouchable. This situation can be elaborated as:

I don't want to be reborn but if I have to be reborn, I should wish to be reborn as an untouchable, so that I may share their sufferings, sorrows and affronts leveled at them, in order to free myself and them from their miserable condition. Therefore I prayed that if I should be born again, I should be so, not as a Brahamana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra but as an outcaste, as an untouchable. (138)

People from the lower class have to live a life of scarcity as if they are cursed before birth. They do not have right even to touch the so-called upper class people. They are forced to do the dirty works, thus depravity them from formal education. Consequently, they feel alien and disregarded citizen. They are treated as if they are not human beings. They are compelled to do any work for their survival. They have to struggle hard to exist in this world. Every good field is banned for them. Upper class people do not hear the voice of poor. Such treatment hinders the development of harmonious society and distorts the feelings of unity.

Lower class people are always declined their identity among upper caste people. Upper caste people take lower caste as non human being. They always take lower caste people as means of humor and laughing. Lower caste people are not allowed to read and living together with upper caste. “And he had wept and cried to be allowed to go to school. But then his father had told him that schools were meant for babus, not for the lowly sweepers. He hadn't quite understood the reason for that then” (30).

Anand shows Bakha as helpless and passive character. He is normal and simple boy who is unaware about actual social condition. Bakha fails to show any reaction to the humiliating treatment he meets. It reflects his passivity and timidity inherent in his character which prevents him from displaying adequate resentment to the perpetrators of inhuman acts. But at the same time, he is severely handicapped to act in a decisive way. He offers a picture of an imprisoned tiger utterly incapable of translating feelings into reality. He asks for forgiveness, though he has not committed any sinful act. Anand Writes: “No, Lalaji, it is not true that I beat this child, it is not true, Bakha pleaded. I have erred now. I forget to call. I beg your forgiveness. It won't happen again. But the crowd

which pressed round him staring, pulling grimaces, jeering and leering were without a shadow of pity for his remorse” (40).

Upper class people treat lower class people differently. They take downtrodden people as a symbol of dog, bitch, pig etc. They think untouchable people as animal and treat inhumanly. They only concern about themselves. They do not want to listen the voice of poor. Lower class people are not allowed to touch the wells, to enter the temple and also to touch the upper class people. When Bakha enters the gate of temple, at that time, he is insulted ruthlessly.

Polluted, Polluted, Polluted! shouted the Brahmin below. The crowd above him took the cue and shouted after him, waving their hands, some in fear, others in anger, but all in a terrible orgy of excitement. One of the crowds struck out an individual note. 'Get off the steps, you scavenger! Off with you! You have defiled our whole service you have defiled our temple! Now we will have to pay for the purificatory ceremony. Get down, get away, you dog!' (53)

Poor people are not allowed to become happy without the permission of rich. They have to suffer without fault of their own. They have to live their life in the permission of upper class. When Sohini laughed near Gulabo, she insults her as: “Ari, you bitch! Do you take me for a buffoon? What are you laughing at, slut? Aren't you ashamed of showing your teeth to me in the presence of men, you prostitute?’ shouted Gulabo, and she looked towards the old man and the little boys who were of the company” (17).

When Sohini request her for not abusing, she again says: “You annoy me with your silence, you illegally begotten! You eater of dung and drinker of urine! You bitch of a sweeper women! I will show you how to insult one old enough to be your mother!” (17). Without any mistake Gulabo insults Sohini, it is because she is lower class/ caste girl.

Bakha used to clean the dirt everyday. If he does somehow mistake or if the work is not finished in time, he has to suffer. Havaldar Charat Singh scolds him when the latrines are not clean. “Why aren't the latrines clean, you rogue of Bakhe! There is not one fit to go near! I have walked all round! Do you know you are responsible for my piles? I caught the contagion sitting on one of those unclean latrines!” (7). Havaldar Charat Singh who is from higher class does not want to know the suffering of the lower class.

People from low caste are not allowed to bring water. It is their compulsion to request upper caste for it. Upper caste people do not feel the hunger and thirst of lower class people. Lower caste people are not able to satisfy their thirst until upper caste provides them water. Anand clarifies this miserable situation as;

'Oh, Maharaj! Maharaj! Won't you draw us some water, please? We beg you. We have been waiting here a long time, we will be grateful,' shouted the chorus of voices as they pressed towards him, some standing up, bending and joining their pahns in beggary, others twisting their lips in various attitudes of servile appeal and abject humility as they remained seated. (18)

Upper caste people take lower caste as they are inferior and non human beings. They treat that they are not human. Anand presents this vivid condition as follows; “You

swine, you dog, why didn't you shout and warn me of your approach!' he shouted as he met Bakha's eyes. Don't you know, you brute, that you must not touch me!'” (38)

If lower caste people touch the upper caste, then upper caste think about the purification. They think about loosing the self respect. They never take it easily and insult them as: “You have touched me,' he had heard the Lalla to say Bakha. I will have to bathe now and purify myself anyhow. Well, take this for your damned responsibility, you son of swine!'” (41).

Poor people are always in dilemma. They have lack of confidence and self respect. They wander here and there. They want to be rich and smart. Bakha wants to wear the clothes that the sahib wore and he wants to become sahib or Englishman.

Regarding the contrast between upper and lower class in '*Untouchable*', Anand seems to be obsessed with the poor people and their sufferings while searching their identity. His writings, therefore, tend to deal with issues of identity. Obviously, Anand's works are deals with socio-political problems prevalent in the Indian society. Despite his various experiments with forms in his different works, his issues remain almost the same. Infact, he depicts cultural disintegration resulted by upper class. In his writings Anand emerges as a social critic as. It seems his works aspire to provide the downtrodden people with justice, freedom and their own voice. It demonstrates how Anand tries to speak on behalf of untouchable people, who are simply ignored by upper caste.

In the text *Untouchable*, Anand presents Bakha, Lakha, Rakha, Sohini etc. as representative of poor people whereas upper class people like Babu Ji, Sahib, house lady etc. represent the elite group. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel '*Untouchable*', always concerns with the suffering, torture, pain and miserable condition of downtrodden people.

Bakha is wretchedly treated in his life by upper caste. Bakha has frustration as well as disaster condition in his life. Bakha is compelled to do dirty works because he is poor. Poverty causes problems in his life. He moves door to door to collect foods and clothes. He has no proper house. He is deprived up to get good opportunity in his life. He can not read and write because upper class people do not let him to join at school.

When Bakha begs for food, he is insulted by house lady. Bakha rests few minutes in the doorstep of house lady, later he is insulted by her such as; “you eater of your masters, you have defiled my house as well as my religion” (63). Similarly, downtrodden people are not allowed to touch the wells of water, to touch the upper class people and also to enter the temples. One day, Bakha enters the temple but immediately, he is scolded by Brahmin such as “get off the steps, you scavenger, you have defiled our whole service and our temple ” (53).

In order to understand the reality of women, they have experience of patriarchal structures/situations: a form of patriarchy that deeply effect dalit women because of their caste status, as well as the more intimate forms of control by dalit men over the sexual and economic labor of their women. Lower caste women are victims of caste and gender violence, used by Landlord, upper class men and middle class men.

Females are exploited not only by males but also by females as well. When Sohini goes to the well to bring water, she is mocked, by Gulabo who also belongs to lower-class. Gulabo is jealous at Sohini’s beauty. The delicate feature of Sohini’s beauty has added fuel to Gulabo’s fire. The girl is potential rival. Gulabo hates the very sight of her innocent honest face. Gulabo treats Sohini badly using different words. Not only upper-class people exploit lower-class people but also under outcast, there is exploitation by

each other. Sohini being of the lowest caste among the outcastes is dominated by Gulabo who is lower class women.

Bakha's sister Sohini who is very beautiful represents poor female character. Sohini is sexually exploited by pundit Kalinath who belongs to upper class people. Pundit Kalinath tries to molest Sohini. When Sohini bends down to work, he comes and holds her by her breasts. When Bakha knows all things, he becomes angry. He tries to take action against Pundit Kalinath but he cannot take action against him. He becomes internally angry. He clenches his fists relaxed and falls loosely by his side. He feels weak and he wants support.

Like Bakha, Sohini also does not have courage to take action against oppressors. She is sexually exploited by pundit Kalinath. She just weeps but she cannot revolt against him. She is not only representative of lower class women but also of lower class people. Women are not only exploited sexually but also in other sectors. In patriarchal society, males dominate females. Males are rulers and females are ruled. The women's voice as well as deed is ignored in the patriarchal society.

In the course of the Novel, child's mother, pundit Kalinath, Hakim ji, house lady etc represent the elite group whereas Bakha, Lakha, Rakha and Sohini represent poor group. Child's Mother mercilessly scolds Bakha whereas Bakha does not commit any bad thing against her child. Bakha is vainly insulted by child's mother. Rich people do not have human relation with lower class people. They treat lower class people as animals like son of pig, son of bitch, son of dog etc.

The novel is closely related with each identity crisis. There is sense of master and slave, upper class and lower class, superior and inferior, benefited and marginalized,

touchable and untouchable, subaltern and Non-subaltern passive and active etc. The text created a boundary between upper class people and lower class people. Downtrodden people are exploited badly everywhere by upper class people. They are treated inhumanly. Upper class people take lower class as worthless and compare with value. For upper class people lower class people are object.

Poor people work a lot in few earning. They have problem of hand to mouth. To fulfill the hunger is their great task. They also want to live better life but their desire is not fulfill. Bakha always lives with scarcity. He does not have appropriate dress for appropriate time. This situation can be elaborated as:

The nights had been cold, as they always are in the town of Bulashah, as cold as the days are hot. And though, both during winter and summer, he slept with his day clothes on, the sharp, bitter wind that blew from the brook at dawn and penetrated to his skin, past the inadequate blanket, through the regulation overcoat, breeches, puttees and ammunition boots of the military uniform that clothed him.(2)

It shows how lower class people live with problems and scarcities. They do not get appropriate food, dress etc. not only that they are unable to fulfill their primary basic needs. Poor people always think to become rich but their dreams are not fulfilled. Their desire is just in imagination. They become happy not in reality but in the imagination. They want to live happy and prosperous life but they are unable to get it. They labor hard to achieve very small thing. “The consciousness of every child was full of desire to wear Western dress” (92).

In the marriage ceremony of Ram Charan's sister Bakha felt shy to participate. Bakha does not have nice dress to wear and he didn't know how he could approach the house where festivities were going on. On his scarcity he faces many problems. He feels uncomfortable to participate. Anand elaborated it as: "All the members of the washermen's brotherhood will be there, dressed in their best clothes, singing strange southern music. How shall I be able to stand there and look?" (80).

Upper class/caste people try to use power to control and rule lower class/caste people. They use lower class people as their needs. They convinced lower class people that they always do good for them. Lakha also live with this false thinking. He suggests his son to respect their masters.

When Bakha tries to explain his father about the suffering he faces, his father is not ready to revolt against upper class/caste people. According to him it is their compulsion to respect them. "No, no, my son, no, 'we can't do that. They are our superiors. One word of theirs is sufficient to overbalance all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us. Some of them are kind'"(71).

People belong to upper class and caste take lower caste people differently. They use bad word like chandal, bhangi etc. Lakha had bitter experience on this matter. In the context of bring medicine to his son he was suffered as: "Maharaj, Great One, I forget. *Your shoe on my head.* I am not in my senses. Maharaj, you are my father and mother. I can't compensate for the medicines. I can only serve you. Will you come and give some medicine to my child? He is on his death-bed!" (73).

Bakha's family lives with many obstacles and problems. They are not able to fulfill their hunger. "I have brought only two chapattis," (68) shows the miserable condition of Bakha's family. Bakha's family gets hunger and waiting for something to eat but the situation goes in another way.

The more Bakha knows the more his identity fragments. He gets lot of torture in the community. He suffers without any fault of his own. The thankless mother of the child shouts at him shows inhuman treatment.

When Bakha was child, he had desire to become superior. But, his desire limited only in dream. He lives with problems from where thinking about superiority is not possible. It can be elaborate as; "I will look like a sahib,' he had secretly told himself. 'And I shall walk like them. Just as they do, in twos, with Chota as my companion. But I have no money to buy things'" (3).

Among his family too, Bakha lost his self respect and identity. He can't get good response even by his father. The sequence can be mention as; "Get up, ohe you Bakhya, you son of a pig,' came his father's voice, sure as a bullet to its target, from the midst of a, broken, jarring, interrupted snore. 'Get up and attend to the latrines or the sepoy's will be angry'" (5).

Bakha is unable to create his own identity. He is just sweeper, nothing more than that. He can not go away from his difficult life. He shows his identity as sweeper and Anand clarifies it as follows; "For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable!" (43).

Ram Charan's mother does not like his son to play with Bakha. She shouted at his son as: "Are you running away to play with that dirty sweeper and leather- worker on the

very day of your sister's marriage? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you little dog!"' (83). In fact Bakha never did anything, things always happen to him.

In order to searching identity Chota wants to hide the truth that Bakha is sweeper. The above line clarifies it. "I have told them that you are the sahib's bearer: they don't know that you are a sweeper"' (103). It justify in order to get self respect lower class/caste have to hide the actuality.

Anand seeks to make his novel as a vehicle for good Indian literature that quest for the identity of the lower class/caste people. He is trying to show how lower class people live with problems. Bakha seems unable to demarcate a line of acceptance and rejection, which is neither gives him an opportunity to neither create an identity nor let him live with prestige.

Study of the relationships between master and servant occupies an important place in novel. Similarly Bakha and his family were exploited in society. In this way Mulk Raj Anand depicts the struggle between two classes have and have not. Moreover, he presents the exploitation of the lower class people by upper class throughout the novel.

Mulk Raj Anand as a social realist tries his best to present Bakha as a representative of silence group. Bakha is a real picture of contemporary India which creates the caste division. Problem of Bakha is the problem of untouchable with suppression and depression. Like Bakha, untouchables have to face identity crisis. They are not able to raise their voice for humanity, liberty, equality and human right. If they raise their voice is not listened by upper caste people. They raise their voice but their voice is limited only in words but not in action. They are not released from suppression

and domination. It is the reality of lower caste people like Bakha. That's why, the text *Untouchable* explores the identity crisis.

Chapter IV

Conclusion: Caste and Identity Crisis

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is deeply concerned with the experience and worldviews of the lower class people. It revolves around the poor people like Bakha, Lakha, Sohini and other. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, faces the identity crisis as he is from the so-called lower caste in the Indian society.

Bakha, son of Lakha, is a sweeper and latrine cleaner. He has great responsibility for his family because his father Lakha is old and can not work. As elder son of his family, Bakha has to run the family. Bakha works hard to collect food and cloth because he is poor. He struggles hard to exist in the society. Wherever he goes, he gets dominated, exploited, tortured, suffered by upper class people. He is ill-treated by upper class people. Upper class people treat him inhumanly. One, who gets birth in the lower class family, has to face the untold suffering. S/he is prohibited from public places, not allowed even to touch the so-called upper class people. If s/he touches even unconsciously, s/he has to face a severe punishment. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, is the striking example of such victimization.

Bakha represents the plight of lower class people. When he gets dominated, exploited by so-called upper class people, he tries to take action against them but he can not do that. He can not revolt oppressors because he is passive and helpless. In the novel *Untouchable*, Sohini, Sister of Bakha, is sexually exploited by Pundit Kalinath. When Bakha knows all things, he becomes angry and he tries to challenge him but he can not. But the irony is that Kalinath himself scolds Bakha with abusive words when Bakha

happens to touch him. At that time Pundit thinks he is contaminated by a low caste person.

Like Bakha, poor people have very miserable life. When they get tortured, dominated in their lives, they try to challenge oppressors but they can not. Their caste and economic condition make them powerless to revolt. They want to be treated as equal as higher class people. They raise their voice for humanity, equality, liberty, fraternity and human right. Their voice is not considered. Their voice is limited only in words. Their voice is never practiced. They are oppressed, suppressed and depressed by upper class people. Frustration covers their lives. It is the reality of lower class/caste people.

The so-called lower class people are exploited in every field. Before the society, the so-called upper classes people bend to touch the downtrodden people, if they happen to touch them, they think themselves defiled or contaminated and purify themselves with different ritual rites. But, when they see a beautiful girl from that downtrodden society, especially the males from the upper class society become eagle eyed and exploit her sexually. These incidents create social division and loss of unification in the society. Thus, *Untouchable* displays the penetrating insight and human attitudes toward the grim realities and social evil of the lower class people especially of Indian society.

Untouchable directly reflects the poor condition of humanity. To be a human being, we have to get the human freedom and human right but it is impossible for lower class people as seen in Indian Society. Lower class people are not allowed to enter the house of upper class, to worship God in temple and also to touch the upper class people. Certainly, it creates the loss of human freedom and human right. There is no dignity of lower class people even though they are human beings but they are not treated as human

beings in society. So, there is no humanity as well as social justice in the life of lower class people. Poverty as well as caste system function as a great social problem that demarcates the lower and upper class people. Those people who are rich always dominate the poor people. The novel portrays the difference between master and worker, rich and poor vividly. In every sector poor people are backward because they have not got enough human right, freedom, equality and humanity as the rich people have.

There is a proverb that, to be human being we need humanity otherwise we have only human body, which is meaningless. In this novel there is lack of humanity with upper caste people. They behave untouchables as non human or animals. It is the expression of deepest personal feeling of protagonist which is isolated and fragmented.

To conclude, Bakha represents the downtrodden people. In his life, he suffers in the name of Untouchability. Sometimes he wants to struggle with social norms and values, but he can't. He wants to read and write but doesn't get opportunity. Even if he helps an injured upper class person, he is scolded by the mother of that injured person because she thinks Bakha has defiled her son. In such a situation, we can't imagine a harmonious society. Voice of lower class is the voice of submission as well as of revolt. But, Voice of Bakha is the Voice of submission as well as voice of suppression, oppression and depression. Bakha has voice for humanity, equality, liberty and human right. So, the novel *Untouchable* reflects the identity crisis.

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