

CASTE AND SOCIAL REALISM IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S

'UNTOUCHABLE

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Abstract:

Anglo – Indian writers, who emerged in 20th century have made a significant contribution of Indian English Literature, to depict the caste system, exploitation, humiliation, Verna system, discrimination etc. which Functioned as a main hurdle of the development of equality and universal brotherhood. From the ancient time, Indian Society was divided into four categories such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. This caste system was imposed upon others by the hegemony so called upper class born people. According to Antonio Gramsci, any ruling classes achieve domination not by force or Fraud alone, but also by creating subjects who willingly accept the rule. This is aptly applicable to the Indian caste system, where the upper class people insisted about Four categories which came out from the God Bramha.

The caste system imposed by upper class (Bramhmins) is nothing but a politics of hegemony which will never be practiced and accepted in 21st century. The caste system is sometimes supported as Hindu religions ideology but now it is the best opportunity of all the citizens of our country to eradicate caste system and start cosmopolitanism views as we are citizens of the world. Otherwise the pathetic situation created by various political parties such as giving tickets of various elections on the basis of the candidates population in the respective constitution. This is not but a politics of hegemony which has disturbed the health of society and it is hurdle for the welfare of humanity. India is the world's largest democratic country, but it is often said that citizens do not caste their vote, they vote their caste. Ideologically, caste and democracy differ from each other and can-not co-exist because caste advocates Fragmentation of society whereas democracy advocates social inclusion. Caste provides wealth, power and status to specific groups but democracy provides equal opportunity to all categories irrespectively bias.

Keywords: exploitation, universal, hurdle, hegemony, democracy, humanity.

Mulk Raj Anand is a well-known writer of Anglo-Indian literature who depicts the social realism of Indian society during the period of British rule in

India. The colonizer made exploitation of native people in the name of education all over the world. But, at the same time, they also awaken natives to improve their daily life. So, the new enlightened, educated class started writing novels and short stories by taking inspiration from the colonizers. Mulk Raj Anand is one of them and being a pioneer of Anglo-Indian fiction, he openly describes class, caste, exploitation; suppression "Untouchable" describes caste system practices in the contemporary society. The so-called upper class people made humiliation name of superiority complex. Through this paper I would like to highlight social realism described in the novel 'Untouchable' by Mulk Raj Anand. Anand has taken the theme of his novels from real life and so his novels are nothing but social realism. Whatever Mulk Raj Anand wrote in different novels is certainly based on his personal experiences and keen observations. He saw social inequality and injustice between rich and poor and the high and the low and he felt it and gave it expression in his novels. His main aim was to bring about the necessary changes and reformation. He wished the Indian society where all should enjoy economic social justice without any distinction. 'Untouchable' is Mulk Raj Anand's first novel and it brought to him immense popularity and prestige. This novel shows the realistic picture of society. In this novel 'untouchable' he describes the low and back word life of men, women and children belonging to the lowest caste of untouchable during the British rule in India. They used to do the lowest work of cleaning and sweeping latrines and roads yet the upper class men looked down upon them.

The real theme of the novel is the description of the conditions of the poor men women and children who belong to the untouchable class of society. In this novel Mulk Raj Anand portrayed a picture of untouchable Bakha who is a sweeper boy. This character is the representative of all down - trodden society in pre-independence of India. The protagonist of this novel is the figure of suffering because of his low caste. With Bakha, the central character, there are other characters who also suffer because of their lower caste. In

their day to day life, they did the work of sweeping and cleaning latrines and other such hard work even then they were treated with inequality, contempt, hatred and caste inferiority only because they belonged to the lowest caste of untouchable.

After reading the novel we come to Bakha a young man of eighteen years of age suffered from social discrimination and inequality. For ex. Bakha went out door to door in the street of upper caste begging chapatis in return of cleaning there latrines. He got only abuses and insults and came back to home only with three chapatis which could not satisfy the hunger of his family members

Another pathetic event is related with the beating of Bakha of the road side. One day Bakha was going along the road to clean the courtyard of the temple. He was eating sweet jalebis and enjoying their sweet taste with great pleasure in a mood of forgetfulness he touched a fat Lalaji who raised a great hue and cry in the spot soon large crowd of men and women assembled and began to abuse and curse Bakha for his insolence. Then Lalaji slapped Bakha mercilessly and no one came to his rescue. The poor Bakha treated the severe beating as he belonged to the lowest caste of untouchables. Sohini, the sister of Bakha could not get water at the public well because she was an untouchable. Pandit Kalinath helped Sohini by giving her water at the public well out of turn because he was very much impressed by her excellent beauty. So he asked her to come to sweep the compound of the temple house, as she went there and started cleaning he caught her and tried to molest her. The poor girl tried to get rid of his clutches. He cried 'polluted' 'polluted'. Hearing his cry the people gathered there and cursed the innocent girl. Bakha saw his sister standing beside the priest and he soon understood the evil intention of Pandit Kalinath. But both Bakha and Sohini suffered all this silently as they were helpless.

Thus, the lower caste people are suffering because they are by birth out-caste. Here Mulk Raj Anand had depicted the hypocrisy of the upper caste people that men like panditkalinath who enjoy the touch of the Harijan girls. Mulk Raj Anand exposes all this hypocrisy and double standard or double dealing. Bakha the protagonist of the novel is a universal figure to show the oppression,

injustice, humiliation to the whole community of the out-castes in India. Bakha symbolizes the exploitation and oppression which has been the fate of untouchables like him. His anguish and humiliation are not of his alone, but the suffering of whole out-castes. The novel 'Untouchable' is rightly called a social novel as it expresses the lowest contemptuous and in-equal life of the untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand. It clearly shows two classes of the Indian society. One is the caste of upper class men who are born to enjoy the pleasures of life. The others is the class of untouchables who live under sorrow and suffering of economic inequality and social injustice. They are all ill treated and looked down upon and they have no social status.

The title and its aptness: The caste system has been pathetically described in the novel which shows the evil of the Indian society. In short, the social evil of Untouchability in India has been described in a realistic way so "Untouchable" is the most suitable title of the novel, because it deals with the pitiable conditions of the different types of untouchables living in the Indian society. They did not enjoy any equal and respectable social position in comparison to the people of upper caste people. It describes the suffering given to the untouchable by the upper class people, the sweepers, barbers, grass-cutters; water carriers had no social status of their own. They had to suffer many mental torture, deep suffering etc. As we see Bakha suffering many troubles so, it may be rightly said that 'Untouchable' is the most appropriate title of the novel.

Conclusion:

The novelist Mulk Raj Anand has described the pathetic condition of the lives of lower caste people untouchables in a realistic way on the basis of his observations of the contemporary society. The scenario presented in the novel during the British rule India. The discrimination on the name of caste system is never existed in the world. But only in India or in Hindu mythology caste system existed. So, it must be eradicated. We should not bear caste distinction as we all persons are created equally by God who teaches us to be kind and just to all persons in a equal way. So human beings should be treated equally. According to Dr. B.R.

Ambedkar “Caste is the greatest monster in the development of human being, you can not have economic, social, cultural and religious reform unless you kill that monster.” In modern society right from Independence, we still have exploitation, discrimination and suppression on the name of caste. Wherever we go any one is recognised not by his intellectual ability but by his caste and religion. This is the curse to the development of India in 21st Century. So, it must be discarded.

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