

Chapter One

Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand and His *Untouchable*

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) is regarded as one of the most controversial Indian novelists writing in English. Born in Peshawar of India, his father was a coppersmith in Amritsar who later joined the British Indian Army. His mother came from a peasant family. In 1925, after graduating from Khalsa College, Amritsar, he went to London on scholarship to obtain a Doctorate degree. In 1933, he returned to India, lived in Sabarmati Ashram with Mahatma Gandhi and wrote the first draft of *Untouchable*. He was deeply affected by the wretched condition of the untouchables imposed on them by so-called upper caste Hindus. This was the cause that initiated him to write the novel, *Untouchable*, which is his first literary venture.

Untouchable (1935) depicts the social evil of untouchability prevailing in the traditional Indian society due to which the untouchables like Bakha are exploited, suppressed, subjugated and dehumanized. His writing goes into the very depth of the social system and issues. As a contribution to Indian novels, he has brought social questions rather than romance and pleasure. He is concerned with the suffering, misery and mistreatment of untouchable.

The major character of the novel, Bakha, is the analogical metaphor of human enslavement, persecution and oppression. Bhangis are the lowest of the low caste and they are given the job of clearing the latrines and sweeping the streets. The dirty nature of the Bhangi's work furthers the view of them as impure.

The central character of *Untouchable*, Bakha, refers to the whole Bakhas of the Hindu society who are dehumanized and degraded. From sunrise on Bakha is forced to endure with discrimination, hatred, and hypocrisy.

'Untouchable' refers to a dispossessed man, deprived even of the basic right to live like a human being in freedom, honor and dignity, in utter poverty and isolation. The innate creative impulse in him is choked, his sensitiveness to beauty strangled and his tenderness or love crushed. Yet the resilience of his spirit cannot be broken, it has remained intact, despite centuries of oppression, holding out a promise for the future of humanity. "The god-like" Bakha of Anand's novel, *Untouchable* provides an archetypal figure for such a dispossessed but defeated man. Bakha, the untouchable, undergoes harrowing experiences. Humiliation after humiliation shocks him into recognition into plight. His consciousness grows from an unfailing inner impulse to a purposeful act of defiance against the oppressive forces of traditional authority symbolized by the temple. Bakha is, in the beginning, only a helpless sacrificial animal but towards the end emerges a thinking articulate individual. Bakha attains the level of consciousness, as in the temple scene, through rebellion. Yet, he does not rebel aimlessly but for freedom, dignity and love. It is in fact for existence. In the process, Bakha grows as a mighty specimen of humanity.

Anand's Major Works

Untouchable was Anand's first novel which was published in 1935, after being rejected by nineteen publishers in England. His four other novels came in quick succession. These were *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939), and *Across the Black Waters* (1940). *The Death of a Hero* (1964), *Morning Face* (1970), and *Confession of a Lover* (1976) are some of his other important novels. Besides these novels his collection of short stories as well as other miscellaneous writings are published. Anand, who is mostly known as novelist, is indeed a prolific writer. His writings cover a wide range of subjects and topics. He has seven collections of short stories: '*The Lost Child and Other Stories*' (1934), *The Barber's*

Trade Union and Other Stories (1944), *The Tractor and the Corn God and Other Stories* (1947), *The Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories* (1953), *The Power of Darkness and Other Stories* (1959), *Lajwanti and Other Stories* (1966), *Between Tears and Laughter and Other Stories* (1973). These are tales of pathos with full of overtones of social criticism. Some of his stories reveal his acute understanding of complex social forces at work in modern India. Like many other major Indian writers writing in English, Anand has experimented with the idiom of the English language and made these works as a fit vehicle to convey nuances of Indian thought and culture.

Anand died on December 2004 at the ripe old age of 99, just a year short of completing his century in Khandala (near Bombay now Mumbai) his home, where he started a very busy life, writing, attending conferences, meeting people, and doing social work. His busy schedule of work showed him one of the most energetic of literary men of the twentieth century.

Shaping of Anand's Mind

The activities of his father and mother along with the changing social political idea of time made him feel in state of utter confusion. Parents play vital role in shaping the children's mind during their seminal years. But his father could not leave any inspiring mark on Anand because of his dualistic nature toward the value of life. Anand's unhappy relation with his father is clearly reflected in his own account:

No, I do not think that my father was particularly troubled by the necessity to discover a way of life. In fact, so great a portion of his time was spent in reading the clauses, sub-clauses and paras of orders from headquarters, that the army code seemed to have become his Bible and interpretation of its means of livelihood. (32)

Anand was unhappy with his father because his father had his own ways of life and Anand very soon came to realize that his father was not person of genuine interest in religion. But he was attracted by his mother's honesty and sincere belief in the authority of god. Anand got his early education in cantonment school in Amritsar. The Britishers ran the school and he was not satisfied with the British education. The system of education was neither innovative nor scientific. The students were deprived of their creative activities. He says in his *Apology for Heroism*:

The education was imitative, giving very little idea of Indian Tradition, but mainly bastardized version of English curricula in English, with particular emphasis on English History, ideas forms and institutions, deliberately calculated to show everything relating to Indian history and tradition as inferior. (33)

During these childhood days, Anand was obsessed with things like British clothing and manners especially and his school days were full of agony, tension and turbulence.

After completing his school, Anand joined the Khalsa College, Amritsar where he remained until 1924. The years 1921-1924 which Anand spent as a student of Khalsa College, Amritsar, were marked by his introduction to nationalist activity, Non-violent campaigning and brief imprisonment. This period was also marked by his growing interest in Gandhian ideas. The influence of Gandhi upon him was great. During the period of Khalsa College, he read the works of great writers like Mazzini, Gorky, Karl Marx, Victor Hugo, Thomas Hardy, P. B. Shelly, John Keats, and Goethe. Besides these literary personalities, he read the poem of the great Muslim poet Mohammed Iqbal. The revolutionary poems of Mohammed Iqbal caught the imagination of young Anand and further pushed him towards the nationalistic

currents. Anand frequently met Mohammed Iqbal to discuss various literary issues. He also read the *Das Capital* of Karl Marx. At the same time, Anand fell in love with a beautiful Muslim girl named Yashmin but the affair could not succeed because of her murder.

In order to fulfill his desire to research in philosophy, he decided to go to England. But his father rose against his will and forced him to engage in job. Without paying attention toward his father, he finally decided to go to England. He got help and encouragement from the poet Iqbal, his mother and the principal of his college, Lal Man Mohan. This time Anand's mother sold her jewellery for Anand's passage to London.

In the month of September of 1925, he arrived in London. During this period, Anand became aware of his potentialities as a writer and decided to win recognition as a novelist. In London he registered his name at the university college to do his Ph. D. research in the philosophy of Berkeley, Hume, Locke, and Russell under the supervision of Prof. G. Dawes Hicks, the famous Kantian scholar and co-editor of the *Hibbert* journal. In the beginning, Anand felt quite difficult to understand the philosophy. However, due to the constant help and encouragement of Prof. Hicks, he soon managed his difficulties during those days; he again fell in love with a beautiful Irne, who was a daughter of a Prof. at the University of Wales.

Anand was awarded the Ph. D. degree in 1929 for his thesis on the philosophy of Berkeley, Hume, Locke, and Russell. After having degree, he did not return back to India promptly. In England especially after Ph. D., he wrote for T.S.Eliot's *Criterion*. Though he wrote some articles for Eliot's *Criterion*, his outlook on life never impressed him. Later he met several distinguished writers and critics. Because of his interest in Indian art and architecture, Anand visited India in 1932. Soon, he visited

Sabarmati ashram of Gandhi and he stayed there with Gandhi for three months and revised the manuscript of his novel *Untouchable*. Anand was so much impressed by Gandhian philosophy.

During the long period of his stay in London, he had worked in different sectors. He lectured at Workers Educational Association in London. He also fought with Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. During World War Second, he worked as a broadcaster and scriptwriter in the film division of the BBC in London. During the same period, he was very much influenced by the Marxist progressive movements and his “Letter on India,” published in *New York Herald Tribune* in 1933. Beside these, he participated in several conferences held by progressive writers. After the Second World War, Anand returned permanently to India, his hometown and center of activity.

When he came to India in 1946, he got involved in different activities. He worked for Indian National Congress and Krishna Shava. He played an important role to organize the second ‘All India Progressive Writers’ conference in Calcutta. Similarly, he worked at the World Peace Council, Academy of Writers Association, the National Book Trust, The Indian Council of Cultural Relations, the UNESCO Dialogue of East West, and so on. He received many literary and academic awards including Padma Bhusan, SahityaAcademy and International Peace Prize.

The death of his cousin Kaushalya, the forced death of his aunt Devaki and his own arrest during the Jallianwala massacre had firstly played an important role in his literary career. He was deeply touched by his mother’s loving nature and it was another impact in shaping his literary career. Another fundamental impact in making his mind was the encouragement and help of the poet Mohammed Iqbal and the college Principal Lala Man Mohan. Likewise, the Coal Miners’ Strike of 1926 had a

far reaching impact in Anand's life. Beside these many national and international political movements, his unsuccessful love affair, numerous participations in literary activities and Gandhian philosophy have also played a crucial role in shaping his literary career.

Critical Reviewson *Untouchable*

After the rejection of dozens of publishers in London, the novel *Untouchable* has got a wide range of reception. The novel has been critiqued positively and negatively. SarojCawasjee, in his book, *So Many Freedoms* comments on the trouble of untouchable. He evaluates this novel destroyed the image of both of British and Indian. He writes, "the trouble with untouchable was that it was quite unlike anything written about India: a book which, without propaganda or sentimentality, destroyed the image of the British and the Indian people built over the years"(111). Naomi Mitchison, sister of J. B. S. Haldane, viewing the novel from the standpoint of the average reader, was right in saying: "I have just finished reading your book and found it fascinating and horrible. I think you might find that a good many people just won't read it, because of the dirt and cruelty you have conveyed in it"(46).

Mulk Raj. Anand is critiqued as a revolutionary intellectual. He is marked off from other Indian writers for his writing of struggle of downtrodden people against imperialism and hegemonies.

As a humanist writer, his aim of writing is to free human beings from all sorts of boundaries. He strongly criticizes the exploitation existing in the society. He believes in struggle and suggests to take part actively to those who are being exploited, dehumanized, subjugated and so on. Anand himself acknowledges in the preface written in *Apology for Heroism*, "Always I believe in the struggle for men to

free themselves and to expand freedom to others to sustain the ever expanding areas of consciousness, to make man truly human” (25).

The aforementioned statement shows that Anand writes of those who are in miserable condition in the society. Through his novels, he wants to make a man truly human being. In the same line of thought Dr. ShreedharGautam says in *Changing Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand's Novels*, “his message for the poor and downtrodden is so broad that it can be equally applicable to all the suffering people of the world”.

Anand's place in Indian writing in English is prominent among others like Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan. He belongs to that class of writers who have made a powerful impact on the consciousness of the educated class of India.

His earlier novels show a sense of horror disgust against social and economic ills; the novels of middle period show a great concern for and with the human heart. And the later novels show the passion for social justice and they sound greater emotional depth. Before 1932, Anand's view of literature and arts was mainly concerned in religion and philosophy but after 1932, his literary perspective changed substantially. By his own account his change was due to his reading of Karl Marx's three letters on India in “The New York Herald Tribune” of 1853. Hence he was committed to a special concept of the function of literature: to raze the old society and build a new one (57).

With his first novel, *Untouchable*, Anand inaugurated the literature of the oppressed which mirrors out Bakha's struggle for existence. Bakha, the central character of the novel refers to the whole Bakhas or untouchables of the society. In *Untouchable* Mulk Raj Anand claims that economic status is crucial than the religion

based social status for an individual's struggle for existence. SarojCawasjee puts it as follows: "Money is the great god, and in novel after novel Anand repeats that there are types of people . . . the rich and poor. In the final analysis, money decides both caste and class and that is the cause of an individual's struggle for existence. It also decides one's political affiliation". (137)

Anand in his novel *Untouchable* draws the social problems skillfully. The central focus is concentrated on Bakha's struggle and his experiences of a single day. Anand has depicted the actual life of an untouchable in this novel. Thus he has become successful writer to capture the essence of the sweeper's existence.

The hero's maturity develops through the conformation of the catastrophe of 'touching'. When Bakha confronts his father after all the insults happen to him in the morning, he tells his father, 'They insulted me this morning, they abused me because as I was walking along a man happened to touch me. He gave me a blow and a crowd gathered round me, abusing and...'(79).

As mentioned in the above lines, Bakha, in the name of untouchable, is humiliated, dehumanized, insulted, rebuked and so on from morning to evening wherever he goes. He cleans the latrines, sweeps the road but no real paid salary. Instead he has to beg food walking street to street. He regrets of having picked up a loaf of bread from the pavement thrown to him by a Hindu house wife. In fact it is the Bakha's struggle for existence against casteism.

G.S.Balram Gupta has rightly measured the protagonist as a perfect character struggling for existence against casteism. He further writes:

Bakha is a perfect individual with vigourous struggle for existence whose excellence is flawed by his low caste for which he is definitely

not responsible. But this becomes a serious shortcoming and forms the cause of so much humiliation and ill treatment suffered by him at the hands of the caste Hindus. Thus we find that Anand suggest that man's fate in the contemporary world is controlled and shaped by society and man rather than god. (29)

Anand has a dynamic aspiration for modern life. And the forgoing study of the novel shows that Bakha's real struggle is against the old tradition. Bakha's father, Lakha, represents the followers of the old tradition. Lakha thinks to rebel against the traditional belief is a crime. He says to his son Bakha, "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 ours masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us. Some of them are kind" (80). That is what we may call a traditional representation of Lakha. But Bakha disagrees with the view of his father and feels disgust and anger. About the differences in father and son, K.D. Verma writes:

The boy was of course, too kind and self-sacrificing to believe that he grudged his old father the food that he was going to eat, but a feeling of disgust ran through him, the objection to the force of that biological expedient in him which, in its race across the stream of life, was sweeping everything out of its course. To the young and healthy animal in him, with the strength of his close knit sinews, his old father was as good as dead, a putrefying corpse like that of a stray dog or cat and the rubbish heap. (83)

Bakha struggles and breaks old tradition to search a new way of life. This is why he meets the poet IqbalNathSarshar who suggests scavengers to change their

profession. The poet further says that the modern sanitary system, the flush system, will bring about the change. The poet concludes that the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status. With the introduction of the flush system, change seems to be inevitable. Regarding this E.M.Forster also speaks, “It is the necessary climax, and it has mounted up with triple effect. Bakha

returns to his father and his wretched bed, thinking now the Mahatma, now of the machine, his Indian day is over and the next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not the depths of the sky, a change is at hand” (338).

Various critics have had their say on this novel. K. R. S. Iyengar speaks of the novel’s photographic fidelity that convinces us at once though it also overwhelms us by its cumulative ferocity of detail. Jack Lindsay points out the kaleidoscopic movement of colour, sight, touch, and sound in the novel. K. N. Sinha admires the novel for its graphic and moving scenes which have the hero as their central focus. Commenting on thematic aspect, Sinha says: “The theme of *Untouchable* is expressed by authentic and eloquently public. The idea of untouchability as a social evil obsessed the minds of men in the 1930s. Gandhi called the untouchables ‘harijans’ (men of god) and fought almost single handed for the eradication of the evil of untouchability”. (30)

Thus, Sinha evaluates the novel from the general theme of untouchability. Margaret Berry analyses the novel from mythical point of view. She declares the protagonist as a mythical hero and she again maintains he is not a myth when he speaks. She opines: “The *Untouchable* offers moments for example. When Bakha

becomes mythical becomes an idealized and symbolical representation of all Indian sweepers and even of the universal poor. The mythical

quality vanishes however, when Bakha indulges thoughts, words, and actions not justified in terms of his history". (93)

Untouchable is both a realistic description of sufferings and miseries of untouchables and a fierce struggle against the high caste Hindus who exploit these helpless, downtrodden who are sunk in poverty and superstition. *Untouchable* is a simple yet powerful work which marks Anand's great success as a writer having the keen observation and a proper awareness of Indian society stratified in terms of caste, class, race and gender.

Different critical responses demonstrate that they have different views towards '*Untouchable*'. For further explanation of the text I would like to see the novel through Existentialist perspective. This may help us to understand the text more vividly.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Tool

Existentialism: An Introduction

The word 'Existentialism' comes from 'existence' which is derived from Latin, where *ex*=out + *sistere*= to stand. Thus, the meaning of existence is to stand in the world that is incomprehensible (Stumpf448). Existentialist philosophy as such emphasizes human existence, man's vital experience in intimate relation with his body, the world and the society. Man is the central theme of existentialism. Neither God nor the world apart from His or its relation to human existence is the concern of existentialism. Though existentialists are both atheists and theists in types, even theists lay greater stress on man who experiences God or on the meaning of God in human experience. Existentialism emphasizes man's interpretation of the world and the human society. It is not concerned with the nature of the world as it is in itself. Its standpoint is not that of a scientist, just as its approach to God is not that of a theologian.

Under the influence of pre-modern and pre-philosophic thinkers, 19th and 20th century thinkers developed a new philosophic trend by placing man at the centre of their thought. This philosophic trend was developed as existentialism. Though originated in 20th century Existentialism as a philosophical movement got prominence particularly in Germany and France after the great two world wars. Great wars separated mankind from their relatives and nearer ones. That separation brought feeling of alienation and loneliness which further spread anguish, despair, forlornness, frustration, and so on. They could not believe in old concepts like unity, rationality, morality, value and even Christianity. It was during the time of war, when Europe found itself in a crisis and faced with death and destructions the existentialism began to flourish as a movement. Existentialism analyses dread, anguish, despair, fidelity,

hope, love, etc. and attempts to cover their meanings. By observing the world war period, Stumpf writes:

Existentialism was bound to happen. The individuals had over the centuries been pushed into the background by system of thought, historical events and technological forces. Every man and woman was losing their peculiar human qualities. They were being converted from 'persons' into 'pronouns', from 'subjects' into 'objects' and from an 'I' into 'it'.(449)

Existential philosophy was highly used in literary writing as well during the years following the war, the time when Europe was in a despairing mood, perhaps with pessimistic intention and with the nausea of human existence and its frustration. Even the works of optimistic and confident authors like Karl Marx, Soren Kierkegaard, Frederich Nietzsche have the dark portrait of human life with existential themes.

Existential themes have been hinted at throughout the history of western philosophy including Socrates and his life, St. Augustine in his *Confessions* and Descartes' *Meditation*. Before the modern existentialists, we could find some norms of existentialism in the works of St. Augustine, Socrates, Pascal, Duns Scots and others in extent. They were followed by Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Husserl, Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, Simon de Beauvoir, Camus and others. Blaise Pascal published his book *Pensees*. In the work, he described many fundamental themes of existentialism. Pascal argued that without God, life would be meaningless and miserable. Gabriel Marcel persued theological version of existentialism, most notably Christian existentialism. Other theologian existentialists include Paul Tillich

and Martin Buber. Hegel and Schopenhauer are other important influences on the development of existentialism.

Existentialism arose as a reaction against both Naturalism and Idealism and against other traditional European philosophies. According to Naturalism, material phenomena are governed by mechanical laws and matters, life and mind, though they are different from one another but are different functions of material phenomena. The actions of man are determined by motives and impulses, which are ultimately functions of matter. Radhakrishnan writes: "Naturalism is the philosophy of the

scientific man and is fast becoming ... The point to be noted for us here are these: man is an item among innumerable other items in a vast objective structure; he has no real freedom and everything in reality is in principle knowledge. Human freedom is only an illusion". (423)

According to Idealism, mind, spirit or consciousness is the ultimate reality; the Absolute is the ultimate ground of everything including the human mind. The divine will shall be the ultimate will. Hence, human freedom is only an illusion. In idealistic picture the position of man is improved than in naturalistic picture, because it is in man both consciousness and the ideal are realized. Man is considered as a mere tool and has no real freedom. Radhakrishnan on the very book says: "Idealism tends to falsify our sense of death. In fact, in making us one with the ideal, it puts us beyond death" (424). Existentialism, thus, is a revolt against this falsification of real human existence. Both naturalism and idealism deny human freedom and individual human being. We have irrepressible consciousness of freedom and responsibility but this is not really explained by these philosophies.

Existentialism draws a distinction between 'essence' and 'existence'. In *Being and Time* Heidegger means by the term 'existence' the being of man (316). Idealists

regard 'essence' universal concept or thought as prior to 'existence' where as existentialists take it vice versa. Radhakrishnan says, "man should not be dehumanized, idealized or conceptualized. Man as he is, as he lives with his actual existence in all its layers has to be analysed, interpreted and evaluated" (435).

Existentialism stresses subjectivity of man. Unlike naturalism and materialism, which reduce man to matter and explain him by material phenomena, existentialism emphasize the subjective inwardness of human experience. Human experience can neither reduced to thought nor to matter. Existentialism lays stress on the individual. It talks about individual and stresses freedom of the individual. To quote *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "Existentialism is investigation of the meaning of being" (822). But such investigation is not an easy task. This being that exists is man, according to Heidegger in "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics." *Contemporary Philosophic Problems*. He says "Man only exists. Rocks are but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist" (316). So, existentialism is generally considered a study that pursues meaning in existence of human being. More generally it rejects all of the western rationalist definitions of being. To quote Radhakrishnan again: "It (existentialism) tends to view human beings as subjects in an indifferent,

objective, often ambitious and 'absurd' universe in which meaning is not provided by natural order, but rather can be created, however, provisionally, by human beings' actions and interpretations".(427)

Though all existentialists talk about human being in individual with some common tendencies among them, they have many differences and disagreements among them. In general they give their personal ideas about human lives. The following illustration of J. B. Coats may clarify it:

Every existentialist philosophy is necessarily a personal interpretation, it is limited by the limitation of the author; if the quality of his experience is not of a high level, his thought will display his mediocrity; if he is lacking in wisdom his interpretation will record his folly; if he is a neurotic, his failures of adjustment will be manifest.

(qtd. in *Sinha*386)

Coats gets Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as neurotics; for him Jaspers and Buber are the wisest existentialists.

Existentialism is dominated by pessimism. It emphasizes on pessimistic feelings like solitariness, subjective inwardness, dread, despair, anguish, etc. Existentialism places the emphasis on the lack of meaning and purpose of life and solitude of human existence. Sinha talks about human being, "The human being as a being is nothing. The nothingness and the non-existence of an essence is the central source of the freedom the human being faces in each and every moment" (386).

Existential philosophy says human beings are condemned to be free. The existentialists emphasize that freedom is necessarily accompanied by responsibility. Because as Sartre says our actions and choices are ours and ours alone, we are condemned to be responsible for our free choices. Yet the human choices are 'subjective'. Individuals are free to make their own choices and are completely 'responsible' for their choices.

The human beings have to take this freedom of being and the responsibility and guilt of his actions. They must not slip away from their responsibilities. They must take decisions. If human beings reject the false pretentions, the illusions of their existence having meaning. They encounter the absurdity. The human beings' role in the world is not pre- determined or fixed; they are compelled to make a choice.

Choice is one thing the human being must make. When one refuses to choose, the trouble comes. Here, he cannot realize his freedom.

Human condition in the world is pathetic because he is in domination, humiliation and unsuccessful. In his famous essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* Albert Camus says that the world is void, meaningless, irrational and at least absurd. To quote him further "For the existentialist the meaning of life is the most urgent of all those question, suicide is nothing but mercy of a social phenomenon" (57). In *The Rebel* camus talks about a slave who says yes and no at the same time. Immediately the slave refuses to obey humiliating order of his master. He demands respect for himself. So, he rejects the condition of slavery.

Basically, existence has two forms: authentic and inauthentic. The authentic form of being is the being of the human being. But it is attained rarely by human. Yet it is what human must strive to gain. It is being for itself. The inauthentic being is the being of the things. It is characteristically distinctive of thing; it is what the human being is diseased with for his failure to act as a free agent and his impotency to reject bad faith. Inauthentic being is being-in-itself. Things are only what they are. But the human beings are what they can be. Things are determined, fixed and rigid whereas human beings are free because they can add essence in the course of their lives. The human beings do not live in a pre-determined world, they are free to realize their aim and their dreams. The human beings disguise themselves from freedom by self-deception, acting like things, instead of realizing the authentic being for the human being – this is bad faith. In such bad faiths, the human beings imprison themselves within inauthenticity for they have refused to take the challenge of responsibility.

Evolution of Existentialism

Existentialism covers diverse and vast areas both geographically and theoretically. Because of many delimitation in the study, it is not possible for me to in-corporate all the philosophical doctrines and philosophers in this study. I have attempted here to deal mainly with Martin Heidegger. Before going to him I start with the evolution of existentialism in brief.

Existential thought consists the modes of existence, the condition of despair, the human being's tendency to avoid authentic existence, his relation to things, to his body or to the other beings, the suffering of life, etc. This thinking about being and his condition, and his relation is not a recent phenomenon. Though existentialism as a distinct philosophical and literary movement began and developed in 19th and 20th centuries; its elements can be found in many works of pre-modern philosophers and writers. Existentialism goes back to man's pre-philosophical attempts to attain self-awareness and understanding of existence around the world. While studying pre-modern, pre-philosophical thinking, we get many existential elements and can realize that modern existentialists are only trying to reestablish those ideas. In ancient Greek thinking, Man was one part of their study. Man was the centre of existentialism.

Socrates showed his concern for personal existence. He recommended to Everyman as edited by Peterfreund and Denise, "Know thyself for the unexamined life is not worth living" (183). In platonic tradition, the emphasis is on Socrates playing the role of philosopher rather than on Socrates himself. In the *Apology*, Plato's Socrates has said – "Men of Athens I honour and love you; but I shall obey god rather than you, and while I have life and strength I never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy" (Peterfreund184).

The main ideas of existentialist theory were already common to religious thoughts like the idea man being responsible for his own action and so on. These thoughts left many influences to theistic existentialism developed later. Theistic existential movement has been properly developed by St. Augustine and Pascal. In his most poignant work *Confessions*, Augustine has talked about human beings, their conditions, their enslavement to the desires, swept by conflicted winds of passion and their corrupted morality. Augustine discovered that man is unable to make himself free from these deprived and helpless conditions through his own capacities. Like Socrates Augustine counsels us to "know ourselves"(49). To Augustine it is in God alone that human despair comes to rest.

Existentialism got a distinct philosophical mode with the Danish Christian thinker Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1853) who is the first thinker to call himself an existentialist. He, being a religious thinker is an existentialist because he accepts the absurdity of the world as fully as Sartre and Camus. His works were popularized by Martin Heidegger. Kierkegaard is critical of Hegel's philosophical system which analyzed being or existence in an abstract and impersonal way. He discussed man's essence with the existential predicaments and limitations: hope, despair, anxiety, and so on. Kierkegaard takes human beings as god's creatures and offers many possibilities of being without reasons of heart or mind, Kierkegaard can get to God by a leap of faith. He believes only in existence of God, and not in any other doctrine. For Kierkegaard "to think in existence means to recognize that one is faced with personal choices. Human beings find themselves constantly in an existential situation" (*Gaarder* 450). This is Kierkegaard's central point that each person possesses an essential self which he or she should actualize. He became very much influential to later both theistic and atheistic existentialists.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), German Philosopher and poet, gave a new mode to existentialism. Before him there was majority of theistic existentialists. He strongly stood as an atheist declaring the death of God. With this idea of Nietzsche that God is dead, existentialism got a new mode where human existence is perceived with a new conception. Nietzsche was among catalytic literary writers like Dostoyevsky and Rilke who have talked about human subjectivity and problematic human existence. His response to the tragedy of modern man was of anger and disgust. Nietzsche advocated for 'authentic living' and insisted that the individual must make his decisions entirely on his own. He advanced his thesis that for modern man 'God is dead.' In the absence of God or in replacement of God, Nietzsche proposes the concept of superman and will-to-power which is applauded by all modern existentialists. The superman is the higher man above 'the herd' with triumphant 'will-to-power'. He is free who takes what he wants and does what he likes. He is authentic. Toward the beginning of 20th century existential philosophy got company of some religious thinkers. Among those, famous theistic existentialists are Martin Buber, Karl Jasper and Gabriel Marcel.

The development of modern existentialism gets help from the works of the German phenomenologist FrezeBrento (1838-1917) and Edmund Husserl. 20th century German existentialism is represented by Martin Hiedegger (1889-1979) and Karl Jaspers, French existentialism by Jean-Paul Sartre, Spanish existentialism by Jose OrtegoGasset and Italian Existentialism by Nicola Abbagnano. The most forceful voice of existentialist thought are the works of German and French existentialists: Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus.

Highly influenced by the ideas of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Marcel, German Philosopher Martin Heidegger, made further shaping and elaboration of the

movement. He notably tried to disclose the ways of being in his most famous influential and controversial books *Sein und Zeit* (1927). In this book, Heidegger discusses what it means for a man to be or how it is to be. It leads to a fundamental question – "what is the meaning of being" In his another book, *what is metaphysics?* Heidegger has given a phenomenological approach to the situation of human existence.

If not in whole, talking about atheistic existentialism French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre is considered as the most influential of all-modern existentialists. He made existential philosophy popular even among laymen. His main idea is of freedom of human consciousness, freedom to act, freedom to value and freedom to make ourselves. Sartre is one of the self-declared existentialists. He declares the core of the existentialism to be 'existence precedes essences' which many others also have talked. Sartre takes the concept of individual conscious existence from Heidegger and concept of death of God from Nietzsche. He divides existentialists in two groups: theists and atheists. He makes a distinction between being – in itself and being – for itself. For him, the existence of God is not necessary for the existence of human beings. He believes we are makers of our destiny. We can make our future choosing it as we are condemned and free to choose. Hence, the human being is responsible for what he is.

Sartre's lifelong companion and intellectual associate Simone de Beauvoir chooses to concentrate on the personal and moral aspects of life. She attempts to apply existentialism to feminism.

Albert Camus was a journalist and a philosopher. More than that he was a literary practitioner of existentialism. His famous novel *The Stranger* (1980) concentrates on the alienation of the human being failure of human being and his

inability to find values to shape his life. Thus the human being remains an outsider. For Camus, this world is absurd yet man has to face it or accept it as his destiny. This idea of Camus has been presented in his most influential essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). Camus reaches to the conclusion declaring the condition of man absurd. By portraying a tragic hero like Sisyphus, Camus tries to express man's pathetic, toilsome existence in the meaningless world. Camus makes the final of existentialism. Some say that Camus cannot be called an existentialist, but his ideas evolved alongside those of Sartre and others.

Martin Heidegger and His Ideologies

Primarily a phenomenologist, Martin Heidegger is regarded as an existentialist thinker though he personally never accepted it. Though his philosophy is scorned as rubbish by some contemporaries like the Vienna Circle and British Philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and Alfred Ayer, it became highly influential to others. His ideas about being, existence and metaphysics have influenced all modern philosophy. Moreover, almost all well – known modern existentialists are heavily relied upon Heidegger's philosophy about nature of human existence. Heidegger is regarded as a major influence on existentialism, deconstruction, hermeneutics and post- modernism. Thinkers such as Maurice Merleau-ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Luc Nancy, Philippe LecoueLabarthe, Hans-Georg Gadamer have developed their Philosophies on the basis of Heidegger. Such an influential philosopher and his philosophy has been overshadowed and even scorned as rubbish because of his political loyalty to Nazism. For Heidegger, there is only basis question in philosophy: *Seinsfrage* or the question of being. Heidegger developed a philosophy in which he argued that the nature of human existence involved active participation in the world. His philosophy focuses on existence than on essence, on Being than on

beings, consequences of choices and mode of being. Heidegger's personal life was as an 'active thinking being' which he loves much for human beings.

Being and time (German: *Sein und Zeit*, 1927) is Heidegger's most important work. Though his many latter works as well have become popular, almost all those latter works have depended upon the central idea of *Being and Time*. The book as published is only one-third portion of the total project outlined in its introduction. This book marks a turning point in continental philosophy. It is said that many philosophical views and approaches, such as existentialism and deconstruction, would have been impossible without *Being and Time*. Existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre is strongly influenced by it. His notion of freedom, choice, responsibility, human consciousness and his famous work *Being and Nothing* are due to Heidegger's philosophical influence. Heidegger's other works like *What is Metaphysics?* (1929), *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), *Kant and Problem of Metaphysics* (1929), *The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics* are some important with their philosophical emphasis on existentialism. Though Heidegger claimed that all of his writings concerned a single question, the question of being, in the years after the publication of *Being and Time* the focus of his work gradually changed. His latter works focus on art, technology and truth.

Most readers today tend to classify Heidegger as an existentialist, even though he never specifically adopted the term to describe his own philosophy nor accepted himself to be an existentialist. Moreover, Heidegger also distanced himself from Sartre's existentialism because the latter focused so much more on the nature of human reality than on the nature of being more generally. However, many latter philosophers relied heavily upon Heidegger's analysis of the nature of human existence as it relates to one's engagement with the outside world. Especially

Heidegger's lifelong focus on the single question- what is being? and his ideas about being and existence made readers like me to take him as a prominent existentialist. Heidegger's concern is with being in its unity and totality rather than with existence but his very concept about being gives the existentialist movement an important mode. Greeks and other philosophers too had talked about the meaning of being but Heidegger has attempted to find being not as a derivation from the individual existent but as being in itself, revealed in a context far more fundamental.

The question 'What is being?' is not Heidegger's coin. It seems that from Brentano's dissertation Heidegger learned that the philosopher has to answer one and only question, the question of being. Furthermore, he learned that this question is more fundamental than the problem of the special sciences, and that it is the most fundamental question a human being can ask. The history of question of being does not end only with Brentano. According to Aristotle "the question of being is the fundamental question of philosophy" (Qtd. in Philipse5). Certainly, Heidegger studied Aristotle deeply. It seems in Herman Philipse's book that Heidegger was not satisfied with Aristotle's answer for the question of being for the following reason- "Although Aristotle analyzed different meanings of "being", he didn't discover the one leading and fundamental sense (*sinn*) for which the other meanings are somehow derived" (6).

Heidegger claims that being aims at discovering one fundamental sense that underlines the other senses of "to be" (6). It means his question of being aims at revealing "the sense of being" (31). In his essay, *The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics*:

In whatever manner beings are interpreted whether as spirit, after the fashion of spiritualism; or as matter and force, after the fashion of materialism; or as becoming and life, or idea, will, substance, subject;

or as the eternal recurrence of the same events-every time, beings as beings appear in the light of Being. (The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics 310)

Heidegger's existential philosophy begins with and moves round the question of being. This question also helps us to differentiate being from thing. By which he talks about human beings in the world, their lives here, their possibilities for future with their path of choices, anguish they experience in their living and their survival with an awareness of inevitability of death. Philipse writes, "in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger often uses the term 'being' for constitution of being, whereas 'a being' refers to an entity that has a specific constitution of being"(17). From his interpretation of the concept of being, Heidegger produced a new conception and understanding of humanity. Between humanity and things for Heidegger there is this fundamental difference: only human being can raise the question about their being or about itself. Heidegger found an error in traditional philosophy and sought to correct it that is the tendency to think about humanity in the same way as we think about things. Unlike the being of things, the being of humanity includes an awareness of being. Referring to Heidegger's idea Stumpf writes in his book:

'Unlike hammer, which is simply as kind of being, a person,' says Heidegger, 'always has to be (i.e. realize) his being as as his own'- by which he means that one is aware of the possibility of being or not being one's own self. Whether one realizes or fails to realize this possibility of being one's unique self is a matter entirely of one's personal decision. (469)

Heidegger's use of the world 'being' is not only for passive existence; instead it is for the active engagement with the word-Dasein or 'being there', sometime is

translated as 'presence'. Heidegger says a person's "being in the world" is a mode of being rather than a matter of spatial and temporal location. The word here is not an impersonal container of human being like a glass is a container of water; rather it is the field of human concern where we discover and develop our full potentials. Our 'being in-the world' is possible because of our relation with things and other beings in the world. For we need an active existence. To talk about this concern of being, Heidegger's term Dasein in details will be suitable here.

Dasein is an important concept, which remained his most striking achievement, forged by Martin Heidegger in his magnum opus *Being and time*. By looking at the history of philosophy, Heidegger thought the word 'human' can be deceptive, because definitions of humanity have tended to resemble the definitions of things. So, to talk about human beings and their existence, he used the term Dasein. This term is derived from German word *da sein*, which literally means being there /here. Though many interpreters of his book have explained the term with its literal meaning, Heidegger was adamant that this is an inappropriate translation of Dasein. Some have translated it to mean 'Humanity' .For Heidegger we human beings are thrown into a world and Dasein is our consciousness of this thrown quality between concepts that form the reality of the present and the concern for the safety into future. Being comes into existence at the limit of the thrownness of everyday existence between past and future.

Dasein, according to Heidegger possesses a threefold structures which makes a being's relation to the world possible and worth some. These structures are: understanding, mood and discourse. The structure of understanding is Dasein's projecting of the context of purposes and their relationship within which any particular thing derives its meaning. Next structure is Dasein's mood that is how we

will encounter our environment and get it. In a despairing or joyful mood our projects will open up as either despairing or joyful. The third structure of Dasein- discourse is subject of our speech which depends on our environment and so upon our moods. Together these three structures in their interrelationship represent the essential structure of Dasein's existence.

Heidegger analyzed Dasein in its temporal or historical character. For Heidegger, man is the being that knows he is going to die. This consciousness of and about his being is Dasein. He dies not only at the end of his life but every day or every moment of it. Death is a certainty among innumerable uncertainties of life. Death is life's boundary and is its supreme possibility. Death becomes goal of a man's existence. It is primordial reality. JadunathSinha says: "Man's being is for death"(388). For Heidegger, man is the being that knows he is going to die. This consciousness of and about his being is Dasein. He dies not only at the end of his life but everyday or every moment of it. Death is a certainty among innumerable uncertainties of life. Death is life's boundary and is its supreme possibility. Death becomes goal of a man's existence. It is primordial reality. Stumpf adds, "He (Heidegger) emphasises element of time in human existence. We know time, he says, because we know we are going to die. Man's existence therefore is temporal (471). This is the temporal awareness for Heidegger. This awareness of time, the being knows his approaching death. Man looks his past, observes it in memory and estimates for future counting the approaching death. Death is a scary subject. Most people don't look forward to death, and wish to post pone it as long as possible. However, accepting our temporal finiteness implies confronting death. Philipse further elaborates, "We try to hide our finiteness from ourselves, and to make ourselves feel at ease in everyday life. The tendency to flee from finiteness and from it into worldly

occupations is what Heidegger calls *verfallen*, the 'falling' of Dasein" (18). About temporality of Dasein Fuller writes:

The Greeks failed, in Heidegger's view, properly to assess time other than as a sequence of presents. But man is not simply his present. He is his past and his future. Man is forever oriented to his future, to his possibilities. He is projected toward the future, toward something yet to come and this inspires *anxiety* and, to use a term which Heidegger has filled with meaning *care*. Man transcends himself toward the future. He lives continually ahead of himself. His very being is temporality. (608)

Man wants to live longer as he thinks new possibilities may improve his daily existence. He lives waiting for new possibilities to choose.

For Heidegger man is possibility and his existence is in the choice of possibilities open to him. He keeps on choosing and gets new possibilities to face ('Stumpf' 469). Our present is outcome of our own choices. We chose many possibilities throughout our present we lived (past) and construct our new present. Our every moment is outcome of our own choices. We must stay in the world and to create lives for ourselves. We must create ourselves from choices. This choice is never final as existence is indeterminate. Man is free and acts in accordance with the demands of historic situation that gives more possibilities. But man is not totally free. On the basis of Heidegger's ideas, Jadunath Sinha says: "I can free myself from a particular preoccupation but not from some preoccupations; so I can free myself from dependence upon some persons but not from all relations. I am in the world in the sense that I am an existence not chosen, but having to be chosen". (381)

Out of possibilities man is not only free to choose, he is also condemned to choose, condemned to be free. Philipse adds- "Heidegger contends that Dasein is faced with a fundamental choice: the choice between being oneself (authentic) and fleeing from oneself (inauthentic). It may seem that the choice between authentic and inauthentic is merely a choice at the ontical level" (19). Being's continuous task of choice ends when its existence ends.

Heidegger evaluates man's existence in two modes i.e. authentic and inauthentic. Human existence because authentic only when he faces up to the world in all its particularistic and concreteness. His authentic existence requires that he recognizes and affirms his own unique self with his responsibility for his every action. But generally we live an inauthentic life because we deal with the world through abstractions. We level us downward toward an averageness and behave like the average 'everyman,' leaving our selves. Authentic existence, a particular mode of being, is a necessary condition for being able to obtain a specific kind of knowledge, ontological knowledge of Dasein (Philipse19). Heidegger agrees in this point that people tend toward inauthentic rather than authentic existence. According to him it is because people want to avoid dread or anxiety.

According to Heidegger, anxiety ultimately has its origin in our very mode of being (197). A person knows limitations and temporality of his existence and when he sees transparently what and who he is, anxiety intrudes. The experience of anxiety brings one to the profoundest level of human emotion. It is not simply a psychological state, nor is it similar to fear. Fear has an object, a definite enemy against which it is possible to defend oneself. But anxiety is an indefinite 'feeling about', it refers to nothing. It is not any things in the world but the fact of being in the world that produces anxiety. Anxiety reveals the presence of 'nothingness' in our being. It

demands a choice between inauthentic impersonal existence and authentic existence.

Being's existence has inevitability of death. So, man always lives with dread.

Dread is the experience of nothing. But this nothing for Heidegger is not merely the negation for something Heidegger wonders when science investigates of what is and reject any consideration of what is not or nothing. In his unusual essay entitled *What is Metaphysics?* he talks about very nothing. Nothing for him can be experienced and its experience is an experience of naked 'is-ness' and being devoid of all meaning. Nothing is primordial being the ground from which everything comes and to which it must return. Man always experiences that nothing and exists with anxiety. Heidegger agrees with Hegel's logic that "pure Being and pure Nothing are the same." He says: "Being and the nothing do belong together, not because both form the point of view of the Hegelian concept of thought but rather because being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of Dasein which is held out into the nothing".(8)

Heidegger makes a sharp distinction between 'essences' and 'existence' in his view, when we ask a thing we are actually asking about its essences. This doctrine-existence precedes essence became pivotal idea of existentialism. The essence of Dasein lies in its existence. Through Dasein we seek one's being rather than it's whatness. Dasein must be distinguished from existent things. The existent things always belong to a genus and have describable qualities. They have essence. But with Dasein there is no essence. Dasein is being that can be a conscious existence man has existence and has possibility. He exists through his choices. Fuller's lines speaks more about this: "Animals and inanimate things' are there 'because they are localizations in space and time, but they do not exist'. Only man exists, because only man has a conscious awareness of his existence. True being is self

being, involving not only consciousness but responsibility and free decision as well". (607)

The individual being achieves self transcendence through ethical choice. Self transcendence is transcendence of the world through active participation. It is also transcendence of the individual's momentary existence in his absorption in the thought of death. Man's struggle for existence always remains for at least an existence only; though their main struggle is to achieve a meaningful existence or to achieve self-transcendence.

Anand's Concept on Existentialism

Existentialism draws a distinction between 'essence' and 'existence'.

Anand is of the opinion that the forlorn individual, in the threat of anguish and despair', learns to confront the existence in the world without God. Each man, however, circumscribed by his historical and environmental situation, is the author of his own life. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Anand claims, "Man makes himself what he is by his choices, choices of . . . particular actions" (4:631-32).

Existentialism is a set of philosophical ideas that stress the existence of the human being and it also deals with the anxiety and depression which pervade each human life. Existentialism is less of an '-ism' than an attitude that expresses itself in a variety of ways. Because of the diversity of positions associated with Existentialism no single strict definition is possible. However, it suggests one major theme: the stress on concrete individual human existence and, consequently, on subjectivity, individual freedom, and choice. Anand gives an explanation of Existentialism in *Apology for Heroism*:

Hence there is no single existentialist philosophy and no single definition of the word can be given. However, it may be said that with

the existentialists the problem of man is central and that they stress man's concrete existence. His contingent nature, his personal freedom, and his consequent responsibility for what he does and makes himself to be. (639)

It is a revolt against traditional European philosophy which takes philosophy as a science. Traditional philosophers produced knowledge that would be objective, universally true, and certain. The existentialists do not go with the traditional attempt to get the ultimate nature of the world in abstract systems of thought. Instead, they search for what it is like to be an 'individual' human being in the world. They point out the fact that every individual even the philosopher seeking absolute knowledge is only limited human being. So, every individual has to confront important difficult decisions with only limited knowledge and time to make these decisions. This human condition resides at the core of the existentialists. They find human life as being basically a series of decisions that should be made with no way of knowing conclusively what the correct choices are. The individual must continually decide what is true from false: what is right from wrong: which beliefs to accept and which to reject: what to do and what not to do. "Yet, there are no objective standards or rules to which a person can turn for answers to problems of choice because different standards supply conflicting advice," says the *World Book Encyclopedia* (437). Therefore, the individual must decide which standards to accept and which ones to reject.

Existentialism places the emphasis on the lack of meaning and purpose in life, and the solitude of human existence. Existentialism maintains that existence precedes essence. This implies that the human being has no essence, no essential self, and is no more than what he is. He is only the sum of life in so far that he has created and

achieved for himself. We may use the following illustration to clarify Anand's view mentioned in *Apology for Heroism*:

We are like actors who suddenly find themselves on stage in the middle of a performance, but without having a script without knowing the name of the play or what role they are playing, without knowing what to do or say- yes, without even knowing whether the play has an author at all-whether it is serious or a farce. We must personally make a decision, to be something or other- a villain or a hero- ridiculous or tragic. Or we can simply exit, immediately. But that is also choosing a role- and that choice, too is made without our ever knowing what the performance was about. (444)

This is how we are plunged into existence- We exist, we find ourselves here-free, because there are no prescriptions- and we must decide for ourselves, define ourselves as the kind of person we are going to be. The essence, thus, follows existence.

Chapter Three: Textual Analysis

Casteism: A Cause of Bakha's Struggle for Existence

Untouchable follows a day in the life of Bakha, an 18 years old Bhangi boy. The fictional story is set in the outcastes' colony outside an unnamed town during the British occupation. The story is narrated by Bakha who is a hard working boy who never disobeys his father despite his repugnance for him and his lifestyle. Bakha had worked in the barracks of a British regiment and, "had been caught by the glamour of the 'white man's' life (9)". The British, or 'Tommies' as Bakha called them, treated him with respect despite his caste. "Bakha had looked at the Tommies, stared at them with wonder and amazement . . . and he had soon become possessed with an overwhelming desire to live their life (11)". The simplest way for Bakha to imitate the Tommies was through 'fashun', "by which he understood the art of wearing trousers, breeches, coat, puttees, boots, etc. (10)". Bakha is trying to rise above his caste by westernizing, yet he receives insults from his friends about his dress. They chide him for dressing like a sahib and trying to appear to be something he is not. However, it seems to be the only way he can remove himself from his caste.

Bhangis are the lowest of the low caste and they are given the job of cleaning the latrines and sweeping the streets. The dirty nature of the Bhangi's work furthers the view of them as impure. However, they are unable to maintain good hygiene because they are not allowed to access the local well, as their use would render it impure.

No matter the skill or intelligence of the person he is confined by caste to his job. Bakha is a very dexterous workman who made passerby often marvel at his skill saying he is, "a bit superior to his job, not the kind of man who ought to be doing this [cleaning toilets] (16)". Despite Bakha's skill and work ethic, he has no chance of

moving up in his life. He is forever confined to his dirty, demeaning job. Each day Bakha saw the Brahmin boys walk to school and he dreamed of going with them, "How nice it must be to be able to read and write! One could read the papers after having been to school. One could talk to the sahibs (38)."

Bakha has no chance for education as outcastes were not allowed in school because "the parents of the other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of the low-caste man's son (39)". Bakha's desire to be educated like the sahibs was strong and he offered to pay another boy to teach him to read. Bakha did not have much money so his offer to pay was indicative of his desire for education. Education was denied to people like Bakha and by becoming educated Bakha hoped to distance himself from the stigma of his caste. A lot of Bakha's actions are motivated by his desire to distance himself from the outcastes. He tries to dress western, he wants to be educated, and he becomes disgusted with the filth of his brother.

Bakha endures one of the most humiliating and depressing days of his young life in this story. From sunrise on, he is forced to deal with discrimination, hatred and hypocrisy. He is woken this early morning by his father's shouts. The first chore of the day is to clean the latrines before the rest of the community gets up to use them. When Bakha sleeps in, he is chided by a local Hindu man who wants to use the toilet, "Why aren't the latrines clean, you rogue of a Bakhe! There is not one fit to go near! (15)". Bakha takes this customary abuse in stride and begins to clean the toilets. The local man is thankful for Bakha's work and offers him a hockey stick in a rare display of generosity. This gift pleases Bakha greatly as he has "the smile of a slave overjoyed at the condescension of his master, more akin to pride than to happiness (17)".

Bakha is compared to a slave a number of times throughout this book. As the above quote shows Bakha is more proud that he satisfied the needs of the local Hindu man than he is happy that he got a new hockey stick. Despite Bakha's hatred for his job and lifestyle he still feels proud when serving the higher castes. Bakha's duty in life seems to be imbedded into him. As much as he wants to separate himself from his outcaste position, it is the only one he has had in his life. He has been conditioned to do his duty and to do it well. That is why, he takes pleasure when the higher castes compliment him on his job or show him some other sign of courtesy. As much as Bakha hates the work, he recognizes that it is his duty, so he does the work with no complaint.

More humiliation is in store for Bakha before his day is out. His curiosity takes him to a local temple, where he climbs the steps to get a glimpse of the wonders inside. Untouchables are not allowed to see the inside of the temple for purity reasons. While Bakha was peering through the window, he was interrupted by the priest shouting, "Polluted! Polluted! (60)". Soon a crowd had gathered and they all berated Bakha saying they would need to perform a purification ceremony now: "Get off the steps you scavenger! Off with you! You have defiled our whole service!" shouted the crowd" (61). Bakha ran down to the courtyard where his sister was waiting. Here he got a shock as the priest claimed, "I have been defiled by contact(61)". Sohini explained the priest's claim saying, "That man made suggestions to me, when I was cleaning the lavatory of his house there. And when I screamed, he came out shouting that he had been defiled (62)". Bakha was enraged by this and flew into a tirade. Unfortunately, the priest had gone and the crowd had dispersed. This is an example of the hypocrisy of the other castes in their attitudes towards the untouchables. The higher castes view them as impure and make them do all the menial labor, yet they are

not adverse to sexual relations with them. It seems the idea of impurity is only there to suit the higher castes desires.

Bakha is harshly treated wherever he goes being an untouchable. Nothing in his life is made easy, and it reminds me of all that we take for granted. At the end of Bakha's day he finds himself following a crowd of people who are going to hear Gandhi speak in town. Bakha listens attentively to Gandhi's speech and much of it strikes a chord in Bakha's heart. Gandhi tells the untouchables to stop accepting this treatment; he wants them to refuse the leftovers of the high castes. The road out of untouchability is to purify their lives, they need to improve their hygiene, and get rid of their vices.

Bakha's Struggle for Existence in *Untouchable*

Untouchable, the first novel of Mulk Raj Anand, is a poignant expression of Bakha's struggle for existence. Bakha is an untouchable or lower caste person who refers to the whole Bakhas of the society. People of upper caste enjoy very equipped life style like that of capitalists while untouchable group pushed to the margin are deprived of those privileged condition. Feudalism and casteism are the causes of the miserable living condition of the Untouchables as mentioned below:

The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, outside their boundaries and separate, from them. There lived the scavengers, the leather-workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society. (9)

With this description of the isolated colony, the novel introduces the protagonist, his family and his poor hut. The protagonist, Bakha is an eighteen

year old sweeper boy who lives in the outcaste colony situated outside the town of Bulashah. His duty is to clean public latrines of the town. These latrines are used by upper-class people of the town and the men of the cantonment but not by Bakha and other lower castes. This is a very incompatible situation where a man cleans the latrines but cannot use because of being a lower caste.

Bakha as a hero of the novel represents the pain and torture, loss of self-identity of untouchables, so called lower class people. The whole story of the novel revolves round the experiences of Bakha and his work during the day. He suffers a lot throughout the day wherever he goes and reaches. Anand provides miserable life condition of the lower class people. In this regard he writes, "Bakha . . . lay half awake in the morning of an autumn day, covered by a worn out greasy blanket" (10).

Bakha's daily activity begins from the dawn of a cold day. He is in half-sleep state in his rag bed and the time for starting the work in the public latrines has come. At the same time, Bakha hears abusive words from his father, Lakha: "Get up, oh you son of a pig" and "Get up attend to the latrines or sepoys will be angry" (13).

Here, Lakha abuses his son because of fear of the so called upper caste people not because of his anger towards the son. The fear of Lakha shows the oppressed condition of the lower level people in the society.

For a while, Bhaka tries to forget the words of his father but he constantly flings the blanket off his body as he listens to another insulting voice from Charat Singh out of his muddy hut: "Oh, Bakhya! Oh Bakhya! Oh you scoundrel of a sweeper's son! Come and clear a latrine for me!" (15).

This insulting epithet of Charat Singh towards Bakha shows the much degraded social position of the untouchables. Charat Singh is a *Habildar* (head constable) in the 31st Punjab Regiment and is an excellent hockey player. Though he shows his liberal attitude towards Bakha in the latter parts of the novel, his very rebuke in the morning to Bakha indicates that he has not come up of caste Hindus' instinct of superiority and cleanliness yet.

Not only this, Bakha's sister, Sohini also becomes victim of internal practice of caste superiority among the outcastes themselves. Sohini, along with other untouchables, goes to fetch water from public well of caste Hindus where untouchables are prohibited. Their humble request to a caste Hindu reveals enough to show how they have become victim of caste system. Here, Anand explores this fact:

Oh, Maharaj! Marharaj! 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 palms in beggary, others twisting their lips in various attitudes of servile appeal and abject humility as they remained seated'. (26)

Their dependency on the system has become their fate. The more they are dependent the more they are bound to live miserable and alienated life. In the case of Bakha, Sohini and other character, their social status as outcastes doesn't permit them to rise in society and to perhaps secure material means for themselves might allow them to lead a more independent life.

In the course of hockey practice, "the boy of 'the 38th Dogras boy's eleven' were mostly the poor sons of untouchables, dependent on the bounty of the Babus' sons for the loan of a stick every afternoon for a practice game" (38). The sons of

Babus talk of 'to go to school create enthusiasm in the face of Bakha. He felt beautiful, "one could read the papers after having been to school and he had wept and cried not to be allowed to go to school. But then his father had told him that schools were meant for the Babus, not for the lowly sweepers" (38). Here, again the lowness and highness that is creating problem in the life of Bakha's will to live a beautiful life. It is the caste system which has formed the mindset of Lakha, Bakha's father, and restricted the protagonist to become independent.

As he walks across the bazaar in the course to fulfill his duty, "Bakha's eyes travelled to the cigarettes . . . suddenly . . . he joined his hands and begged to know where he could put a coin to pay for a packet of 'Red Lamp'" (42). He puts his arm on the point on the pointed spot. "The betel leaf seller sprinkled the betel leaves now and again . . . thus purified it. . . Then he flung a pack of 'Red Lamp' cigarettes at Bakha" (42). All such repeated and humiliating ways of treatment has created an alien mind set in him and the outcastes. He continues his walk and in the course to try to read a hoarding board his gaze is drawn to a figure "keep to the side of the road, you, low caste vermin! He suddenly heard someone shouting at him 'why don't you call you swine, and announce your approach'" (46). Caste system has, thus, become a machine to make a person feel foreign. Due to this caste system, human beings are feeling stranger to each other. The so called high class is unfamiliar to the low class. They are becoming remote to each other.

Further the novel moves, the deeper the readers are led to the incurable and humiliating world of caste system which has almost bent the outcastes to walk only on the main roads. Leaving and forgetting the abuse of someone, Bakha moves forward he meets his fate; "You have touched me" he had heard Lalla says to Bakha, 'I will have to bathe now and purify myself anyhow . . . and the tanga-wallah heard a sharp,

clear slap through the air” (50). Bakha runs away and he feels everyone is looking at him. The physical distance of the people to Bakha is bound to create mental distance as well. How can he think such people in a familiar and friendly way? Certainly not.

Bakha’s sense of not belonging to the high class creates in him a feeling of alienation, dehumanization. And his despair and rejection convert in the form of rage. But there was smoldering rage in his soul. And in the smoky atmosphere of his mind arose dim ghosts of forms peopling the scene he had been through. Regarding the expression of the rage of Bakha, Anand writes:

Why was all this fuss . . . I could have struck him, why didn’t I shout to warn the people of my approach? That comes of not looking after one’s work . . . why couldn’t I say something . . . the slap on my face . . . not one of them spoke for me the cruel world! All of them abused, abused, abused, why are we always abused, the sentry inspector and the Sahils that day abused my father. They always abused us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. I was tired of working on the latrines every day . . . Muhammadan(s) . . . don’t mind touching us. It is only the Hindus . . . who are not sweepers. For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable! I am an untouchable! Untouchable! (51)

Clusters of humiliating dehumanizing events are rampant throughout the novel. When Bakha's sister Sohini is sexually violated by so-called high class, he wants to kill the man but can’t and when they move from temple, Bakha’s mental state is noticeable. “Bakha looked out to it vaguely . . . he had no patience to see anything or to hear anything, and he didn’t want to speak. ‘Why didn’t I go and kill that hypocrite!’ he cried out silently” (65).

When Bakha goes to beg bread after hard work, nobody responds him. Tired and fatigued, he sits nearby and little later a sadhu comes whom the housewife treats with respect and carefully gives alms but when she sees Bakha sitting on wooden plate form, she scolds him brutally. “You eater of your master” she shouted “may the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! Get up, get up! You eater of your masters” (71). He is discarded and hated in the every looks and corner of social activities. He is socially and individually humiliated.

Anand decently exposes in detail behaviors of the so called outcastes. He does it through the character of Bakha. In spite of different forces cornering them, Anand shows humanitarian aspect of ‘untouchables’. At the same time, he also exposes the cruel behaviour of the so called upper caste Hindus. While playing hockey, one of the caste Hindus gets hurt by another fellow. Two aspects force Bakha to help the hurt boy. One is his natural kind heart and that next a social one. By rescuing the boy, he wants to get praise from the mouth of caste Hindu. Result goes reverse of his thought:

Bakha picked him up in his arm and took him to the hall of his house . . . the child’s mother . . . met Bakha face to face. ‘You eater of your master, you dirty sweeper!’ She shouted. ‘What have you done to my son?’ Bakha was going to open his mouth and tell her what had happened . . . ‘Get away, get away. You eater of your master!’ She shouted. ‘May you die’ Bakha handed over the child, and afraid, humble silent as a ghost, withdrew. (115)

Caste system has thus, become a machine to make a person feel foreign. Due to this caste system, human beings are feeling stranger to each other. The so-called high class is unfamiliar to the low class. They are becoming remote to each other.

Though Bakha becomes victim of underdog treatment, he does not react against it rather he picks up the packet and moves his way to the town. After that, the further he moves the more he is defamed, degraded and dehumanized. He does not find any place where he is received as a human being, where he can walk with total freedom though he finds a little consolation in the latter part of the novel.

A little later, Bakha feels to buy some sweets from a sweetmeat-seller. The sweet seller not only shows same animal-like treatment to Bakha as earlier cigarettes-seller did but also cheats him not weighing the sweet fairly. The sweet-seller also throws the sweets at Bakha because he does not wish to be polluted touching a sweeper. Bakha knows that he has been cheated and treated as an animal but he dares not to oppose it because of being an untouchable. This plight of Bakha reflects the defenseless position of the untouchable in the Hindu-feudalistic society for ages and centuries.

Carrying the sweet Bakha goes further on his way to the town. On the way he happens to pass close to a caste Hindu. Then the man after being almost touched by a sweeper boy makes an outcry and starts outburst of abusive words at Bakha: “You swine, you dog, why didn’t you shout and warn me of your approach! . . . Don't you know, you brute, that you must not touch me!” (47). The outcry gathers a big crowd and the crowd adds fuel to the fire or the crowd encourages the man to curse Bakha more. After that, the man becomes more aggressive and slaps on the face of Bakha. In this miserable condition too, Bakha cannot utter even a single word. Such situations point to the endangered position of the untouchables in the society.

In such brutal and dehumanizing situation of Bakha, Anand in the novel visualizes the pitiable condition of Bakha as follows: “Bakha’s turban fell off and the jalebis in the paper bag in his hand were scattered in the dust. He stood aghast. Then his whole countenance lit with fire and his hands were no more joined. Tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks”. (50)

The above mentioned lines show that he is very angry with the ill-treatment but he is helpless and just weeps in state of reaction. Then wiping the tears off his face with his hands picks up his tools and walks on to the substitution work of his father. Here, anyone who has a soft heart feels to weep after realizing the plight of Bakha. The tear in the eyes of Bakha is the shock for whole humanity and the slap on his face represents the slapped face of whole lower caste people.

Such a hostile situation of Bakha displays the rotten moralistic value of the Hindu society and the insecure status of the untouchables; the downtrodden class people.

The movement of the downtrodden class people towards modernity is vividly noticed throughout the novel. Untouchables are compared with caste Hindus. Even though some of the high caste people are dirt, they are supposed to be cleaned and civilized. If an untouchable has made a mistake, he is regarded to be irrational and punished for it. Bakha, an untouchable boy, is punished because he happens to touch a high caste Hindu. On the other hand, Pundit Kali Nath, one of the priests in the Hindu temple in the town, tries to molest Sohini, an untouchable girl, but he is highly respected in the society. And surprisingly, he blames Sohini that she has polluted him:

'But I . . . I . . . shouted the lanky priest historically and never finished his sentence. The crowd on the temple steps believed that he suffered most terribly and sympathized, for it had seen sweeper boy rush past him. They didn't ask about the way he had been polluted. They didn't know the story that Sohini told Bakha at the door of the courtyard with sobs and tears. (62)

Nobody would know that a priest can fall into such low behaviour. But more of it, nobody would believe it. Even Lakha, Bakha's father, would not believe it. Lakha could not believe that a priest, any priest could seduce a girl who belongs to the low caste family(67). This is how a high caste Hindu is evaluated. But the Untouchables are always regarded to be dirt in the eyes of caste Hindus. Even the untouchables themselves think that caste Hindus are superiors to them.

The Narrator shows the high caste Hindus' nature and the Untouchables' reactions to it. The high caste Hindu scholars have corrupted the minds of downtrodden class people in such a limit that an untouchable could hardly think a caste Hindu as a savage and unkind. Lakha is an example of it. The conversation between Bakha and Lakha proves it:

'He might have killed me,' Bakhacommented. 'No, no,' said Lakha. 'They are really kind. We must realize that it is religion which prevents them from touching us.' He has had never throughout his narrative renounced his deep rooted sense of inferiority and the docile acceptance of the laws of fate(83).

The influences of the caste system are still working upon them. The memory of the rigid caste system is still haunting India. Bakha represents the whole class of his people.

Hindu caste system does not allow untouchables to read and write. Bakha is an untouchable. Bakha wants to study but the education system is not for him. Bakha thinks, "How nice it must be to be able to read and write! One could read papers after having been to school"(38).Bakha has understood the importance of education that is he will be able to take to the Sahibs. He says, "One could talk to the Sahibs. One wouldn't have to run to the scribe every time a letter comes. And one wouldn't have to pay him to have one's letters written" (38).

Bakha could not go to school. Masters would not teach the outcaste children. But he does not agree with the view that outcastes should not touch the books. This concept is imposed upon them by the caste Hindus. But Bakha is eager to feel to be educated and a sudden impulse comes on him to ask the Babu's son to teach him:

'BabuJi,' he said, addressing the elder boy, 'In what class are you now?'

'In the fifth class,' the boy answered. 'Surely now you know enough to teach. "Yes,' the boy replied. Then, do you think it will be too much trouble for you to give me a lesson a day?' Seeing the boy hesitate, he added: 'I shall pay you of it.'(39)

Outcastes are deprived of education in the caste system. Ilaiah highly says that "Hinduism with its Brahmins hold prohibited education to the untouchables. Thebabu's sons do not get much pocket money. Their parents were thrifty and considered,perhaps rightly, that a child should not eat irregularly, as the low caste boy did," buying things in the bazaar"(40).

What outcaste children learn about themselves is nothing. The sources of knowledge are nothing except their own experiences in the life. They are deprived of education. The knowledge they learn by hearing is too constructed knowledge from the high caste Hindus. Bakha tries to show that he is civilized. We can take an

example that his style of drinking tea. Bakha drinks tea with a small sip because the English does so. He does not, as his father does, blow on the tea to cool it. "This was another of things he had learnt at the British barracks from the Tummies"(32). Bakha tells his father that Sahibs don't drink like that. The Indians were heavily influenced by the Britishers. These examples show Bakha's will to be like Sahibs and the high class people.

The consideration of caste Hindus as superiors is further questioned through the contrast of a Brahmin who was doing a scavenger's work in order to teach the Gandhi's ashram scavenger cleanliness. Anand quotes Gandhi in his speech says: "I

love scavenging. In my ashram an eighteen-year-old Brahmin lad is doing scavenger's work, in order to teach the ashram scavenger cleanliness. The lad orthodoxy. He is a regular reader of the Gita and faithfully says his prayers". (147)

The narrator, thus, highlights the fact that the relationship between the untouchables and the caste Hindus is conflicting, mainly because of the high caste Hindus' concept of themselves as being the 'superiors'. In the notion of writers and critiques, the hierarchical words for mapping the division of the untouchables must be subverted.

The division of the society in the name of touchable and untouchable should be recorded mainly in the words of history. All are equal in this world. Poet Iqbal Nath Sarahar is right in saying: "Some of us are born with big heads, some with

more potential physical strength, some with less. . . . But essentially, that is to say humanly, all men are equal "Take a ploughman from the plough, wash off his dirt, and he is fit to rule a kingdom" is an Indian proverb". (154)

Viewing all the incidents, the hero of the novel who is searching for the identity through his vigorous struggle never gets success for achieving the goal of his life. He wants the equality among all the human beings. He wants freedom not in heaven but he wants freedom in the earth. But instead he is brutally dehumanized, subjugated and suffered inhumanly. He is struggling for existence. But his path is from nowhere to nowhere or his passage of life provides nothing to him.

Chapter Four

Conclusion: Discrimination Hinders the Free Existence

Anand's *Untouchable* is a manifestation of Bakha's Struggle for Existence.

What he wants is the authentic existence, i.e. the meaningful existence. But whenever he tries to get to it, problems intrude and meaninglessness hunts him. This meaninglessness and his suffering force him to struggle hard. Bakha refers to the whole Bakhas or untouchables of the 1930s Hindu society of India. The untouchables have been pictured as dirt, squalor, unclean; hence unable to sustain their own lives by themselves. The need of caste system and the subjectivity of religious books putting the brahminical values always on the centre have marginalized the untouchables. There has been no existence of the outcastes people in the society of the caste Hindus. The superiority of the Brahmins and priests has been the central motif of the religious books and writings.

The Indian writers in English writing from the socialist perspective have tried to subvert this notion of superiority of the high caste Hindus. They have tried to dismantle all types of stereotypical images of the untouchables that have been generated by the high caste Hindus and the temple priests in the traditional Hindu society. The Indian writers are making various efforts to re-study and re-write the history of marginalized people. The reverse discourses to the high caste Hindus' images have been produced to project the autonomous identity of the outcaste people. The subjectivity of writing for the Indian writers has been the lower class people, their misery, exploitation and the protest. The writers have been creating a place of their discourses in the world of literature. The efforts of Indian writers have been significant in making the reality of untouchables known to the world. The Indian

writers focus their writings on the contradictions and complexities faced by untouchables.

Mulk Raj Anand attacks the fossilized systems of society with the hostility of a modern rebellion hero and modernity as an alternative to the traditional ways of life. *Untouchable* emerges as the authentic fictional voice of the mute sufferers and a powerful indicator of rebellion against of all forms of exploitation.

Untouchable is an attempt to examine the Indian society in the light of caste discrimination. Caste discrimination is the centre point of the novel through which the protest arises. Untouchability, exploitation, caste discrimination, and Suffering are the themes of the novel. Bakha's heroism reveals an internal conflict within him between two parallel attitudes: devotion to a cause and readiness for action. Broadly speaking, Bakha wants the Indian untouchables to shake off the slavery off the untouchables and achieve the emancipation.

At first, the protagonist has been depicted as a simple, innocent, direct in his responses, and he is engaged in a straight conformation with society. He is a victim and accepts sufferings with meek submission. He does not take a conscious and creative role in changing his destiny. Pessimism envelops his life. In the middle of the novel, after the complex, profound and the man of destiny. The vivid drama of his inner feelings show human mind in all its contradictions. The mature hero always has been engaged in an inner struggle to sort out right and wrong. Again, in the third and final phase the hero has been developed into a symbolic figure. He becomes a viable symbol of India's New Age. This development of character is an indication of the process of maturing as a vital protester. Thus Anand's *Untouchable* shows the hero's gradual growth from the simplicity and directness to the depth and complexity and a rebellion.

The novel is an excellent example of literature of suffering. Bakha, the protagonist in *Untouchable*, seeks to explore new values rooted in realities. Bakha always tries to cross the boundaries imposed on him. He happens to break the laws of ancient caste system by touching caste Hindus. He asks the question to himself through interior monologue that does not remain within himself but is put forth towards the Hindu society which challenges the society to seek the answer of his questions of the exploitation and caste discrimination being done to the untouchables.

Bakha breaks the caste laws frequently. He tries to enter into the temple where the untouchables are prohibited to enter. He defies the Hindu rules made by caste Hindus. He wants to revolt by breaking traditional mode of caste system and wants to create a society where there would be no caste barrier.

Bakha's journey from the morning to the end of the day is a journey for the solution of the problems being faced by his kind. He tries to convince his father about the injustice of caste system. Bakha tells it to his friend Ram Charan and Chota. Then Bakha takes part in the speech by Gandhi in *Golbagh*. Thus the development of the story in the novel shows Bakha as an active hero and his wish to create a new classless, casteless society.

Untouchable shows the struggle of lower class people amidst the harshness and cruelty imposed by the elite class. The novel shows a firm belief that by observing human values and creating awareness among all, many of the problems faced by the untouchables in existing social system can be solved. Bakha is forced to visit the town which is full of evils of caste discrimination and which needs immediate social reformations and the cause of these evils are the Brahminical orthodoxies. What strikes the reader of this novel is Anand's ability to see the world through the untouchables' eyes by exposing its cruel face.

Bakha is a daring character without any feeling of pessimism. His feeling is highly dominated by the sense of optimism. Whenever problems arise on his way, he faces them with patience and intellect. He is never guided by any negative attitudes. He endures blow after blow from life: poverty, exploitation, and insult from Hindu caste people as well as rebuke of his father. Despite all these, he looks for meaning of life and continues his Struggle for Existence.

Though the degree of Bakha's existence (authentic, normal and inauthentic) may vary, all his struggles are for existence. His preference of existence to career, love or happiness, and his wish to sustain his existence proves the novel to be existential and his practices to be struggle for existence.

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