

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Social Exclusion and Exploitation in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*:

A Subaltern Study

A Thesis

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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## **Abstract**

*Untouchable* is Mulk Raj Anand's first novel which brought him immense popularity and prestige. This novel shows the realistic picture of society through 18 year old boy, Bakha. He is the central character who suffers because of his lower caste. Anand is concerned with the curse of untouchability in pre-colonial period. The novel exposes how an untouchable boy is condemned to live a hellish life in so-called civilized society. Anand argues that the practice of untouchability is totally the matter of pretentious religiosity and exploitation. The novel describes a single day in the life of Bakha; belonging to the scavenger caste, commonly known as Bhangi in many Indian languages. There is sense of subordination among the privileged people. Even for water, the basic necessity of human existence, the sweepers have to depend on the mercy of the upper caste Hindus. Almost every page of the novel is drenched in Bakha's unseen tears who patiently endures the most humiliating and depressing days of his life in this story. In their whole life the Bhang's are forced to live in discrimination and hatred. This research attempt to reveal the social exclusion and exploitation from subaltern perspectives.

## Chapter 1 Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

### General Overview

Mulk Raj Anand is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest, Indo-Anglian literary figure. The term “Indo-Anglian” is used to denote original literary creation in the English language in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Indians. He is well known novelist, essayist, autobiographer and short story writer. Moreover, he is also known as a humanist, social reformist, social interpreter, social realist, cultural critic, socio-political writer, etc. He does not recognize literature as pure art or art for art’s sake, but he believes in the social significance of literature. He focuses his attention on the sufferings, misery, social evils, tensions, hardships of the hybrid culture, dislocations and conflict in a tradition-rooted society. Anand is considered to be God or Messiah for backward castes and exploited class just because of his brilliant works which describe downtrodden and poor Indias' social, political and cultural condition.

As an Indo-Anglian writer his work of art contains the theme of religious hypocrisy, feudal system, East-West encounter and the place of women in the society. He is a committed social critique whose writings have portrayed the voice against social injustice. They are realistic and sympathetic portraits of the poor people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century India. His personal experiences and the India’s political, social and cultural institutions are major elements in his writing.

The period of 19<sup>th</sup> century is the high time for British imperialism, therefore, the literature written in English only were allowed to publish. That gave the chance for Indian writer to translate number of the English classic literature into Indian languages, which provided the great inspiration for Indian writers by those translations. Thus, English classics were for the Indian writing in English.

R.K Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand are the major trio and founding fathers of Indo-Anglian literature. In this regard William Walsh points out that “If Anand is the novelist as reformer, Raja Rao the novelist as the metaphysical poet, R.K Narayan is simply the novelist as novelist” (96). Anand as a novelist engages himself with other international figures like Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, R.K Narayan, Raja Rao-etc. They continue their writing to achieve the excellence in Indo-Anglian literature.

As a social realist, Anand has brought back the Indo-Anglian novel from history and romance to the hard realities of the present and made it from mere entertainment or escapist light reading into an instrument of social reform. His projection of brutality and cruelty of centuries- long tradition, which prevailed in Hindu society helps to control evil practices in the name of tradition and culture.

Anand's novel projects the real theme of problem and real solution in which his aim is to address contemporary social problem to bring about a change in the tradition bound society for the betterment of the poor masses. Through his art, he has rendered valuable service by highlighting the plight of the under-dogs of society, by arousing our sympathy for Heroism- “The theme of my work is the whole man and the whole gamut of human relationships, rather than only one single part of it”. (Anand, *Apology for Heroism* 20)

Anand adds; “Just as I desire a total and true humane view of experience a view of the whole man, in order that a completely new kind or revolutionary human may arise, so I have been inclined to stress the need for a truly humanist art commensurate with the need of our time” (*Apology* 20).

Humanism is the major theme that prevails in Anand’s novel. His purpose of writing

is to reinforce human subjectivity and human values. He always tries to motivate human beings to make free from all sorts of social boundaries and restrictions. He believes in struggle and suggests people to fight against evil practices and exploitation prevailing in society. In the preface he writes “Always I believe in the struggle of men to free themselves and to expand freedom to others to sustain the ever expanding areas of consciousness, to make man truly human” (*Apology* 25). He believes in struggle for the change of society, and for him art and literature is the instruments of humanism, not only a way for personal expression.

On the account of humanism, Aamir R Mufti delivers the speech about:

Anand argued that the goal of social realism is as much the portrayal of all those tragedies in the obscure lands and alleys of our towns and villages as is the imperative to release the dormant potentialities of our people in an animal biology and make them the creative will which may take us from the infancy of our six thousand years to the millenniums of less elemental struggle for individual freedom and protection. Realism here is only as much a matter of mimesis as it is of narrating the passage from primitivism to modernity. (12)

Here, Anand, as a prolific writer, explains the miserable life and conditions of Indian peasants is above the level of animal biology. The writer narrates the condition of theirs to uplift for existence. Through the character Bakha, Anand has shown the deep feeling for the deprived people. Thus, the material manifestation of life is not the whole truth for him. His man is not dominated by the environment and chained to a material or physical universe. His realism embraces all aspects of life. He has the commitment to humanism.

As a cultural critic Anand exposes all malpractices in human society in the name of culture. He further believes that literature should promote culture which implies enlightenment and the dignity of man. His novels are based on cultural consciousness which project the caste, community, religion, etc. *The Sword and the Sickle* (1992), *Gauri* (1960), *Across the Black Water* (1940), *The Village* (1939) cover the entire cultural perspective of India. William Walsh mentions:

His fiction is, of course, exclusively concerned with India. He is passionately involved with the villagers, the ferocious poverty, the cruelties of caste, and the wrongs of women and with orphans, the untouchables and urban laborers. He writes in an angry reformist way, like a less humorous Dickens and more emotional as well as of the personal sufferings induced by economic injustices. (64)

Likewise, he can be analyzed from the patriotic point of view. His feelings of patriotism and devotion for motherland can be reflected in his various novels. The period of nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties has been the time of movement for freedom in India that strengthened Anand's humanism. He is deeply impressed by *The Gandhian Satyagraha Movement* (1930-1932), *The Three Round Table Conferences*, *The Government of India Act* (1935), *The Gandhian Movement for Political and Social Change* and *The Gandhian Ideology* have impressed him.

As a socialist novelist, he is always conscious to help the underdogs, untouchables, the coolies, peasants and the suppressed people. In this sense, Saroj Cowasjee quotes:

Anand is deeply concerned with social problem and he is committed to eradicate the evils which infest modern society. Is this a deplorable aim of artist? Is *Untouchable* a propaganda because it reveals the exploitation of the poor by the rich? Propaganda is a term given currently by the bourgeois critic and loosely used in India to caption any work where the author's intention is plain. (*The Letter of Mulk Raj Anand* 21)

Anand's novels *Untouchable* (1935), *The Road* (1961) *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) and *The Big Heart* (1945) are based on social theme.

Similarly, Anand is very successful novelist who is able to place himself in a high position in Indian literature. He expresses novelist's experiences, ideologies, love affairs and their ways of life in his autobiographical novel. Some of his autobiographical novels are *Seven Summers* (1951), *Morning Face* (1968), *Confession of a Lover* (1976), *The Bubble* (1984) and *The Seven Ages of Men*.

Anand's view of literature and art is mainly concerned in philosophy and religion but after 1932, it has changed. Due to his reading of Karl Marx's *Three Letters on India* in The New York Herald Tribune of 1853, his perspective is changed to a socio-economic view of literature. So, he became a communist. The socio-economic aspects play the important role to build the subjectivity of an individual.

Anand writes in favor of marginalized people bringing forth uncomfortable truths about the social structure. He always protests against social malpractices prevalent in India. He exposes internal as well as external realities of society. His novels include the most important voices of Indian literature and emerging consciousness.

*Untouchable* is Mulk Raj Anand's first novel published on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1935 which draws the realistic picture of the contemporary Indian society when poverty, slavery and the inhuman exploitation of the masses were at the peak. It is the most controversial novel which was welcomed by few and criticized by many. Therefore, the novel was published after revising four times. Anand, in frustration tried to commit suicide but was helped by British poet Oswald Blakeston. Several newspapers in London criticized it as 'a dirty work'.

The novel gained its popularity among the Western readers; the preface written by E.M Foster made them perceive its aesthetic value. Later, Anand's *Untouchable* gained immense popularity and prestige that it was translated into more than twenty languages. Saroj Cowasjee, in his book *So Many Freedoms* rightly observes, 'The book however quickly cut its way through supercilious criticism and established for itself a popularity that remains unrivalled for work of fiction by any Indian author (45).

Anand's *Untouchable* was highly criticized as a dirty work in the beginning but later it was rewarded as a piece of art of fiction that helped to arouse all the poor and suppressed people in India. *Untouchable* is the novel that articulates the hopes, aspirations, pains and frustrations of untouchable or exploited class. Anand exposes the hypocrisy and double standard or double dealing of the upper caste people. Moreover, it is a pinch of irony for high caste Hindus.

E.M Forster praises Anand for his writing in the novel *Untouchable*, as a praiseworthy work of art. The novel presents the views of unbelievable situation of the human beings in the society. Forster again continues:

I cannot trust myself either though for a different reason: the book seems to me indescribably clean and I hesitate for words in which this can be conveyed. Avoiding rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it. None of us are pure-we shouldn't be alive if we were. But to the straightforward all things can become pure, and it is to the directness of his attack that Mr Anand's success is probably due. (V)

Forster remarks that we are not pure human beings, somehow, we all are connected in any case, and if we were pure we shouldn't be alive.

The sweeper is worse than off a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may ever become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolations of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes others when he touches them. They have to purify themselves and to rearrange

their plans for the day. Thus he is a disquieting as well as a disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public roads, and it is his duty to call out and warn them that he is coming. (VI)

A sweeper becomes the object of disgust or a dirty thing- to the orthodox as he walk along the public places, it is his duty to give them warning for his approval. Bakha is the real individual, lovable, frustrated, sometimes grand and sometimes weak. Thus, the novel emphasizes on an individual's attempt to emancipate himself from the age old evil of untouchability. Anand, here, is concerned with evils of untouchability and the need for empathy.

*Untouchable* is the single day experiences of sweeper boy Bakha, a young, smart and ambitious Bhangi or a latrine cleaner, a member of an untouchable caste. Bakha the protagonist of Anand's *Untouchable* represents all of the downtrodden society in pre-independent India. He suffers only because of his lowly birth. He and his whole family is compelled to have the slavish life. He has the dream of going to school and speak like sahib, an English man. Bakha and his fellow friends were very much fascinated with the way of living, dressing and speaking of the English man Tommy. But Tommy treats them as the sub human being and scolds with vulgar words. Bakha is not allowed to play, speak and sit with the children of his colony because he is from the lowest caste in society.

Bakha is mentally as well as physically punished because he happens to touch a corrupted Pundit Kali Nath on the way to Bazaar. Bakha has a young and beautiful sister Sohini who is sexually exploited by the Pundit Kali Nath. When Bakha tries to speak against the exploitation, he is again punished by the mass of people for his crime of accusing the religious man. All off the people are deaf and they are not ready to listen the cry of Bakha and his sister. His father has subordinated consciousness therefore he accepts his fate as untouchable. Throughout the novel Bakha cannot dare to raise voice against the exploitation and compelled to bow his head as an outcaste.

Anand has shown three solutions in this novel. The first solution is that of Colonial Hutchinson, the Salvationist missionary. Anand through the word of Colonial Hutchinson says 'I am a padre and my God is Yessuh Messiah,' 'if you are in trouble, come to Jesus in the girja ghar.' He was seeking vainly to paraphrase the promise: 'Come all ye that labour and I will give you rest'(116). Colonial Hutchinson emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the son of God who receives all men equal, irrespective of caste and class, there is no distinction between human beings. And God will help to solve the problems of Bakha but he feels bored and dissatisfied because the missionary is unable to tell who Christ is.

In the second solution Anand denotes to the speech given by Mahatma Gandhi at the Grand Trunk Road near the railway station of Bulashah. There was going to be a meeting in the Golbagh where Mahatma was going to speak. Gandhi too says that all Indians are equal, and the account he gives of a Brahmin doing sweeper's work in his Ashram, it touches Bakha's heart but feels sad because he was aware of the fact that only Brahmin doing sweeper's work is not the ultimate way to end the barrier constructed between him and that most of the crowd. Forster concludes his assessment with the third solution and opines:

Hard upon this comes the third solution put into the mouth of a modernist poet. It is prosaic, straight-forward, and considered in the light of what has gone before in the book, it is very convincing. No god is needed to rescue the Untouchables, no vows of self-sacrifice and abnegation on the part of more fortunate Indians but simply and solely- the flush system. Introduce water-closets and main-drainage throughout India and all this wicked rubbish about untouchability will disappear. (VII-VIII)

The third and closing section is preferred to be more practical and valuable than previous ones. Bakha overviews all three solutions and favors the third one. He concludes that it is

machine that will help to end the curse of untouchability. He becomes hopeful that change is pervasive, his dark day is going to over and the bright day will come.

Anand describes the pathetic condition of the untouchable through the character Bakha, their lifelong hardships, physical and mental agonies are skillfully reflected. In this sense Marlene Fisher says that Anand's first novel, then, is at one and the same time a fine piece of creative work in terms of its own artistic integrity and an indication of its author's humanistic commitments and future novelistic directions (1).

Bakha's tears are converted into words and our heart feels pity on such miserable untouchables. Anand deserves salute for narrating beautiful interwoven piece of art which is real as it came out directly from the society he has seen.

Bakha is a real individual, loveable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian. Even his physique is distinctive; we can recognize his broad intelligent face, graceful torso and heavy buttocks, as he does his nasty jobs, or stumps out in artillery boots in hopes of a pleasant walk through the city with a paper of cheap sweets in his hand. (Preface VII)

Though, Bakha is socially excluded and treated brutally, he is always devoted to his work. His dedication for work and hope for future implies his optimism for life. He remains voiceless character in the novel. Anand has a mission to put an end to hypocrisy, cruelty, insensitivity, dichotomy and injustice prevailing in society.

This research paper makes the close study of social exploitation of the poor and the under privileged people in India by the force of capitalism and British imperialism. The British colonization seeds to root on the thinking of upper class and lower class, superior to inferior, majority to minority. Anand has beautifully woven these all social factors to project the truth of contemporary Indian society.

### **Review of Literature**

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is a sociological document that focuses attention on the sufferings, misery and wretchedness of the poor. The novel shows the evil of untouchability in Hindu society. Anand feels that to some extent Hindu religion itself is responsible for this social discrimination. So, he condemns the temples for being the instruments of exploitation. Through the miserable plight of untouchables he wants to make the reader aware of the horrors of the poverty and sufferings. Social exclusion and exploitation are the crucial issues of untouchability and casteism.

Moreover, Anand opines that traditions and politics are responsible for the creation and sustenance of caste system. Although, Anand has given his own perspectives, no single interpretation is more convenient than the text itself. This book has got many critical out looks from various perspectives after its publication. Some of the critics have focused on evil practices of caste system in the name of religion, culture, class and tradition which is indigestible for modern advanced society. In the issues of caste, class and untouchable, Mahatma Gandhi relates his ideas:

I see no germ in accepting clear water from a pool filled in a clear manner by a clear Atyaja [Dalit]. Ordinary members of other community accept water served by Ghatis [Dalit] that is in dealing with them the same rule should be followed which are so-called upper caste. The upper caste people should follow their intercourse with the other caste. (77)

These lines express that no water from the well is impure. If the water is filled with good manner no matter who fills the water, it is pure and good for drinking. Water is equal for all human beings whether he is Ghatis or the high caste Hindu. The dirt can be washed but the evil thoughts cannot be washed. In this sense Dalits are cleaner than high caste people.

Gandhi regards the practice of untouchability as a sin that should be removed from the society because the system of untouchable hinders the progress of nation. According to

Gandhi:

The practice of untouchability is the bad concept of casteism that creates hierarchy and discrimination in the name of class, religion and culture. The practice of untouchability is sin and should be eradicated. I look upon it as my duty to eradicate this sin. It is however, to be eradicated on the initiation of other Hindus not the Antyaja. The practice of untouchability is an excrescence on Hinduism. (93)

These lines are the speech given by Mahatma Gandhi in front of huge masses. He is against on casteism and untouchability prevailed in Hindu society.

Further, Gandhi says, “there is no any verdict evidence about caste system. It is only man made theory” (55). There is no proof of untouchability and the exact origin of caste system in Hindu religion. So Gandhi includes his concept as follows. “Now no remaining of the issue of untouchability. Nobody can trace exactly about origin of caste system. I have many ventured guesses. They may be either right or wrong. But even a blind man can see the practice of untouchable in contrary with Dharma” (48).

Anand is most revolutionary 20<sup>th</sup> century Indo-Anglian writer whose works have challenged the norms of mainstream Indian cultures and institutions through his anti-elitist vision of social relations and political institutions. The government of contemporary India has somehow promoted the evil practices of untouchability because it did not show any concern to make any laws against superstition. The inhuman treatment given to the untouchables sows the seeds of revolt in the mind of low caste people against the rigid caste system but their sense of protest remained silence. Moreover, *Untouchable* is an inner conflict of an individual who is caught in the web of an age old evil system of caste.

As K.N Sinha comments;

The novel has a tragic beauty of its own. The will to revolt and the sheer impossibility of successful doing under the circumstances constitute the basic tension in the novel. The hero is simultaneously a rebel and victim. His anguish becomes our sorrow. But Bakha has no tragic status as scapegoat and a victim, tyrannized by a recalcitrant society. He is the lowest of the lowly whose destiny does not suffer any appreciable erosion. (14)

These lines give the clear vision on the then Indian society through the character Bakha. He is simultaneously an exploited person. He is not the scapegoat as it happens in classic novels but he is the scapegoat of the rigid class system. He has high ambition. He becomes much distressed, when he comes to know that he is ostracized even though he is aware of it. He tries to fight the enemies not from within but from without and he is not as against the whole hierarchical stiffness of the social custom. He realizes that he can do no more than being enraged against the brutalities of the high caste people.

Similarly, Aruna Mukherjee has attempted to make the thematic approach of the novel *Untouchable*. She has raised the question about the self-authorizing practices in pre-colonial era. The period of 1930s is the high time for orthodoxy and conservative thinkers; it is Anand's courage to write about untouchability of contemporary society. Reviewing the novel, Mukherjee writes:

Even a cursory comparison of Anand's *Untouchable* with text written by the untouchable contemporaries of Anand makes it quite apparent that no untouchable could have written the book that Anand has written. For an untouchable, author would probably not have created a hero with an almost inability to revolt. An untouchable author going by what I know about the literature produced by the untouchable, would have produced a hero capable of thinking his own thoughts and making his own decisions. (37)

The protagonist is not only fearful but also totally incapable of the confronting spirit needed

to survive in a society. Anand has focused the process of Bakha's victimization rather than suggesting his creative role in society. He emphasizes that the evil practice of untouchability is the real problem of the contemporary society. His two realistic and famous novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie* reflect the miserable and pathetic condition of the underdogs. His character Bakha and Munnoo are the victims of their own social values.

Further, Mukherjee comments "They are dominated and exploited not by external oppressors, by those who own and those who rule but by forms of consciousness which presents them from liberating themselves" (70). Anand's aim of writing *Untouchable* is to attack on the whole social exploitation and it is the symbolic slap on the face of so called high caste people. He wants to fight against the anti human and anti social elements. And, he explains that human beings should be able to live with human rights. Anand shows his satisfaction that his novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie* touch the feeling of being exploited and dominated by high caste society.

Anand always deals with human rights, human awareness and freedom which are essential for our life. His anguish and humiliation for social evils are not of his alone but of whole outcastes and underdogs. He believes that all human beings have right to live with human rights. No religion is greater than humanism for him. Therefore he appears in his fiction as the companion of suffering of humanity on the humanistic subject matter, Seth Vijay Mohan reviews:

See the filth in their homes, in their society before setting down to write, Anand himself concentrates on the corrupt atmosphere abounding in sham, hypocrisy, ignorance and illiteracy, the unavoidable situations in which his characters are caught strike the humanistic chords of the reader's heart and make aware of human predicament. Histories seek to release an ideology by which man gains of fuller understanding himself to become the whole man.  
(6)

Anand's observation is conscious about the problems with unflinching fidelity to the spirit of reality. His support and inspiration empower victimized people to be aware about their human rights. He includes lots of social issues in his novels such as poverty, hypocrisy, cruelty, insensitivity, ignorance, illiteracy, etc. Anand believes that when victimized people are aware of their problem there comes the way of solution. So, humanism is only solution to the problems.

The organized evil in the society is the real enemy of an individual on the way to make his identity. It deliberately denies the basic human rights to the unprivileged class. Caste system has killed the human dignity by giving an unfair advantage to a certain class. Bakha's hope for change in the hand of time is the passive implication in the novel.

Mulk Raj Anand has ventured to address a specific question with writing *Untouchable*; this is how to alleviate the exploitation of the untouchable class in India. In this account Andrew M Straccuzzi reviews as:

It may lie in the transformation of words into prophesy. Because, what is writer if he is not the fiery voice of the people who through his own torments urges and exaltations by realizing the pains, frustrations and aspirations of others, and by cultivating his incipient powers of expression transmutes in art all feeling all thought, all experience thus becoming the seer of a new vision in any given situation. (qtd in Dhawn 14)

Anand is preferred to be a realist writer who encourages the radical but less famous texts to provide new rational way in the work of art. In this sense K.D. Verma argues:

Mulk Raj Anand in his first novel *Untouchable* has shown none of Western theoretical models of attaining social justice, including the Rousseautic, the Hegelian and the Marxist models, is appropriate to theorizing the tragedy of

Bakha's deterministic existence and the stubborn order that is responsible for the creation of the Bakha's society. (47)

This explains that Anand's models of writing are unique mixture of art and reality. He is often determined by narrowly conceived notions of 'taste', tradition or genre on aesthetic and literary judgments. He evokes the fate of Bakha that is in the hand of rigid social structure. Moreover, it gives the ironical implication that the Western philosophical debate on human amelioration, progress and on liberty, equality and justice from Hobbes to Rousseau, from Hegel to Marx has apparently failed to find any conclusive answer. Anand, in contrast has tried to find a comprehensive theory that would allow him to understand human values in terms of the politics, economics and culture.

Most of the characters in Anand's novels belong to the low caste, down trodden society. In this sense, Mulk Raj Anand says, "I wished to create the folk whom I knew intimately, from the lower depth, the lumpiness and the suppressed, oppressed, repressed those who have seldom appeared in our literature" (*The Source of Protest in my Novels*, 20). The characters in Anand's *Untouchable* embody a particular vision of reality which the novelist has assigned to them. They are normal, simple, credible human being unaware of their social condition. Anand has chosen those characters to give the clear view of the society.

The plight of the Indian poor was in the hand of the rich, affluent, higher caste people. They treated the lower-caste people as sub-humans. Injustice inflicted upon Bakha makes him rebellious. Excessive abuse and insult makes him think about retaliation but he realizes the chain around him. At such moments he feels like a tiger at a bay. Saroj Cowasjee says: "But he is a tiger in a cage, securely imprisoned by the conventions his superiors have built up to protect themselves against the fury of those whom they exploit" (*So Many Freedoms* 52). Bakha feels himself as a tiger in a cage that can do no more than being enraged against the brutalities of the high castes. The social boundaries and limitations forced him to remain passive towards the evil practice.

The photographic description and presentation of untouchable castes made his theme universally more appealing. The outcaste people are backwarded in every aspect of society and unaware about their rights. Bakha, the protagonist of this novel gets the sympathy by his readers. We realize that we all have negative and positive aspects in our culture. So, the book forces us to draw parallels to our own culture whether we like it or not. Moreover, the book forces us to think equal not differentiate one to another.

Likewise Singh points out that while the Christian missionary persuades Bakha to change his religion, "Bakha's eyes are keen enough to see the dichotomy of the missionary's existence who is himself living a miserable life with his sensation-loving, hot-tempered wife. He comes to believe that the religion of his father is in no way inferior to Christianity" (40). It describes Bakha's intelligence when Christian missionary tries to convert his religion, taking advantage of the Hindu superstitions. Bakha is keen and smart enough to analyze the aim of Christian missionary. He is able to understand that replacing one religion to another one is not the ultimate resolution of casteism.

Bakha aspires after education and wishes to go to school even when he is child. Likewise about sex and sexuality Ambuj Kumar Sharma expresses;

To satisfy his lust Pundit Kali Nath in *Untouchable* takes advantage of the lower social position of Sohini and holds her by breasts in the laboratory. He succeeds in getting away with all the mischief because of the girls' very low social position when she defied and far from being beaten receives the sympathy of the crowd of worshipers in the temple. (56)

These lines describe the lustful act of Pundit Kali Nath, a corrupt priest in Anand's *Untouchable*. Through the character of Kali Nath, Anand brings out the underlying hypocrisy

of the high caste advocates of the so-called morality and religious belief. Anand has exposed all this hypocrisy and double standard or double dealing. Though he is a priest he lacks the real strength of spirituality. His moral weakness has been exposed when he tries to molest Sohini, a sweeper girl. When he fails in his sexual assault he accuses her for polluting him. The so-called high caste people forget their social responsibility and do whatever they like for their benefit and to fulfill their sexual lust and emotional desires.

Moreover, Anand advocates that poverty plays the greater role to fix their social structure. In this sense, Srinivas Iyengar says, "The problem of caste and poverty, squalor, and backwardness, ignorance and superstition admits of no easy solution" (338). Here, the poverty is the dominant reality of low-caste people which is the cause of ignorance and superstition.

Anand's novels are not only for protesting social system of India but also for raising questions about human dignity and tradition. In other words, the tone of protest and treatment can be seen in Anand's novel. On the issues of social protest of the untouchables, Iyengar reviews:

*Untouchable* strikes the picture of a place of a society and of certain person not easily to be forgotten a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy. As a novelist addressing himself to the task of exposing certain evils, Anand has been as effective almost as Dickens himself. (339)

Anand represents the force of tradition, orthodoxy and conservation. Through his protagonist Bakha, Anand picturizes the immitigable hardship and physical and mental torture imposed by age-old social belief on casteism.

*Untouchable*, as a whole, is the manifestation of Anand's long oppressed and repressed psychology in a so called high caste society. The exploited untouchables try to blur and subvert the demarcating line which is created by so-called higher castes. The main character of the novel, Bakha himself reconstructs and represents the experiences of the untouchable minutely and meticulously.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study explores how Anand presents oppressive norms based on religious, cultural, social and family values. The present study is divided in to three chapters to fulfill its aim. In the first chapter the biography of the writer, review of the literature and various critical reviews are mentioned. The second chapter is the textual analysis along with the theoretical concept of subaltern study. In this chapter the important quotations and statements are projected and analyzed very clearly which show the social exclusion and exploitation of subaltern class in 1930s. The third chapter is conclusion in which the research paper aims to propose a resolution of social inequalities and class discrimination by implementing humanism. Moreover this research looks into the dominated and the exploited society in the Indian social context. And, it also exposes the British colonization which is equally responsible to implement the thinking of superiority and inferiority.

## Chapter 2 Social Exploitation and Passive Resistance

### Subaltern Studies

The people or group of people at the margin of a society has become the major concern of subaltern study, one of the sub-divisions of post colonial theory. The post colonial theory is the latest and most attractive academic field of study. The post colonial theory studies the power and the continued dominance of Western ways of knowing of intellectual enquiry.

The concept of subaltern remains very difficult to define from its historical development. It is most slippery and difficult a notion to define. Subaltern originally refers to the subordinates in military hierarchy. The term subaltern and subaltern studies entered in the field of post-colonial studies through the subaltern studies groups that was launched in the 1980's by a group of Indian Intellectuals. In post-colonialism, the term subaltern describes the lower classes and the social groups who are at the margins of a society. A subaltern is a person rendered without human agency, by his or her social status. Subaltern study turns away from traditional methods of historical research. Moreover, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern- space of difference. The principle aim was to rectify the elitist bias found in most of the academic works in South Asian studies.

Antonio Gramsci's notion of subaltern is detached from that of the mechanistic and economistic form that narrowly characterizes most of the Marxist traditional studies. He called Marxism 'monism' and was obliged to call the proletarian 'Subaltern' (*Selection from the Prison Notebook* 52). Gramsci refers the term subaltern to the groups who are outside the established structure of political representation in his article "Notes on Italian History" that was later widely known as "*The Prison Notebooks*".

Ranjit Guha is an extra ordinary Indian historian and political economist highly influenced by Gramsci. The first volume of *Subaltern Studies: Writing on South Asian History and Society* appeared in Delhi in 1982 in the editorial work of Ranjit Guha. In his editorship the group of scholars have attempted to study Indian history from a colonialist and elitist point of view, whereas the large part of Indian history has been made by subaltern classes, hence they present the need for a new historiography. This group includes a number of other South Asian historians, social critics and intellectuals. The main thinkers associated with the school were Ranjit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakravorty, Homi K Bhaba and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the greatest Indian American post-colonial feminist critic whose concept of subaltern moves to a more complex theoretical debate. Spivak is famous for her deconstructionist approach for the representation as deployed by Marx, Foucault and Deleuze. Her decoconstructionist strategies of reading seem to be more complex though it attributes her skill and intelligence.

Spivak's seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" a critical and challenging reading of a conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze forcefully raises deconstructive and philosophical objection to any straight forward program of "letting the subaltern speak." In this essay, Spivak highlights how Gilles Deluza and Michel Foucault confine the decentering of the subject of the West, which problematizes the non-Western Other as real and knowable. This essay is considered to be the foundational text of post colonial studies, even today it is highly discussed, debated and criticized text for subaltern and subaltern studies.

Spivak disapproves the first place of Gramsci's assertion of the autonomy of the sublatern groups. Her justification of this rejection of Gramscian view is based on her view that this autonomy results in homogeneity of the subaltern group and subaltern subjective identity.

Spivak's second critical overview leads towards Marxism. Spivak criticizes Marxist theory as a European centered model of social change and political emancipation on the grounds that it ignores the plight of colonized subjects in non-Western societies. Although Marx was certainly aware of European colonialism in the nineteenth century, he never really incorporated his writing on India and Africa in developed analysis of imperialism. This omission has led Spivak to criticize Marxism as the political and economic legacy of colonialism, globalization and the international division of labor.

It is truly situational. 'Subaltern' began as a description of a certain rank in the military. The word was used under censorship by Gramsci: he called Marxism 'monism,' and was obliged to call the proletarian 'subaltern.' The word, used under duress, has been transformed into the description of everything that does not fall under strict class analysis. This is so, because it has no theoretical rigor. ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 154)

### **The Plight of the Social Outcaste**

Subalterns are socially neglected people. They can neither unite for their rights nor dare to raise voice for justice. They are exploited and dominated in society; Gramsci uses the term subaltern to any low rank person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of ruling elite class that denies basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation (*Notes on Italian History* 76). Subalterns become a subject matter of study only when they are connected with some other powerful groups. In order to study the history of the subaltern groups, Gramsci designs a plan composed of six steps that are found to be explained in details in his book. He intends to study:

Firstly, their objective formation by changes taking place in economic production; secondly, their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations and their attempts to influence their programs; thirdly, the birth of new parties and dominant groups, which are mainly created for the subjugation and maintenance of the subaltern; fourthly, the formation which the subaltern group themselves made to vindicate limited rights; fifthly, new formation which maintain the subaltern groups autonomy within old frameworks; sixthly, those formations which may help to affirm their entire autonomy. (58)

Moreover Gramsci talks about the subordination of master and slave, elite and non elite, bourgeois and peasantry. And the process of dismantling these patterns can be realized within Gramsci's theoretical frame work by releasing the subordinated consciousness of non-elite group. The elite culture refers to the law, customs civilization, religion, power and system whereas non elite people are from lower strata sub proletariat group, illiterate, peasant and working class. Elitists always have the hegemony and domination over lower strata sub-proletariat groups in politics, economy and other social activities. Elitist voice is heard in literature and has the power over group of subordination. Non-elite groups are culturally obliged to follow the culture of elite group.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* articulates the cry of the marginalized group of people in contemporary India. Anand has concerned with the wretched plight of the millions of subalterns in India who are toiling, suffering, starving and dying of bitterness and despair and are unable to carry the burden of lifelong sufferings. Anand does not use literature for the sake of art or beauty; rather he is always concerned with the use of literature to modify society and to protest against social malpractices prevalent in India.

Anand's major focus of writing in *Untouchable* is to show social exploitation in terms of class, caste, religion, culture and customs. Untouchables are subordinated by the upper caste society. Untouchables are those marginalized groups of society which are exploited in

various levels of society. As exploitation is the major theme of *Untouchable*, it deals with different types of exploitation such as economic exploitation, religious and sexual exploitation. The social exploitation is at the root of all other exploitations.

Anand has chosen the character Bakha and his sister Sohini to express the theme of social exploitation. These two characters are the low rank persons of contemporary Indian society who suffer under high caste society that denies basic rights and opportunities. Moreover, those deprived people cannot dare to raise their voice for justice. Anand's hero is not of a particular race not of the time and the place, but exemplifies all humanity caught in contingencies of an antiquated social order that impedes his evaluation into a self-consistent social life. "Bakha is one of those millions who crawl and creep to exist almost anonymously" (7).

Ranjit Guha, the pioneer of Indian subaltern studies group has developed the concept of subalternity and he gained worldwide issues of study. Guha defines subaltern studies as the definite entity, which constitutes "the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the elite" (*Selected Subaltern Study* 44). The group members of subaltern project, guided by the foundational concept of Guha, aim for studying the subaltern groups as an "objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of that role's" (*Selected Subaltern Study* 35).

Bakha is an outcaste who has to engage in an intense struggle with oppressive forces. He has to struggle and suffer every minute because he is an untouchable and he has no right to live like other upper caste people. As Guha says there is difference between elite and non-elite group from cultural hegemony exposed by ruling or dominant caste. There is subordinated consciousness among non-elite group that makes the elite more powerful and non-elites as the means of subordination. The non-elite groups are only heard when they are connected with other powerful groups of society. *Untouchable* begins with a scene of public latrines, dirty bazaars, lanes, alleys, gutters in which the flow of dirty water is obstructed by soil filth and of children relaxing themselves in front of their houses. Anand writes:

A brook ran near the lane, once with crystal clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odors of the hides and sins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to make into fuel cakes. (*Untouchable* 2)

It describes the demographic difference between non-elites and elites. The marginalized groups of people are discarded from society and compelled to live a hellish life, no more better than the animals. It is the cause of social exploitation that untouchables are living far from the main stream of society. The plight of untouchable is really heart rending.

Guha criticizes "Bourgeois Indian nationalism for failing to take into account the different needs of the subaltern classes, but takes the central issue for modern Indian history to be the historic failures of the nation to come into its own" (*Reading Subaltern Studies* 7). According to Guha, subalternity is constructed in opposition to elite nationalism that only supports the elitism which results nothing more than the failure of the national development. This concern originates from the assumption that the writing of Indian national history has been controlled by nationalist- bourgeois elitism. From the historical period the non-elites or subalterns have been controlled by elites.

The untouchables' life is insecure with unpredictable aches. As Bakha explains his experiences "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 and abusing. He couldn't continue. He was possessed by an overpowering feeling of self pity" (70). For the critical condition of outcaste, the historiography of Indian nationalism is responsible because it always creates the sense of subordination and domination over the poor deprived beings of society. Bakha bursts out with an explosion and tells the truth that

happened with him in the morning when his father asked what the matter of his anxiety was. Bakha is exploited by high class elites. A boy is slapped by a high caste man on the way because he happens to touch him accidentally.

According to Gayatri Spivak, subaltern is the term that remarkably refers to the predicament of those who are preferred to be sub or secondary space in the human society ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 159). Subaltern here, in this context, is used as an umbrella term for all those who are underrepresented group of society. Anand has projected the plight of outcaste people realistically. Anand describes the plight of outcaste through the situation of Bakha:

Bakha thought of the uncongeniality of his home as he lay half awake in the morning of an autumn day, covered by a worn-out, greasy blanket, on a faded blue carpet which was spread on the floor in a corner of the twelve feet by five, dank, dingy, one-roomed mud-house. His sister slept on a cot next to him and his father and brother snored from under a patched, ochre-colored quilt on a broken string bed, further up. (2)

Anand gives the short description of the livings of outcaste through Bakha. Their whole family has to adjust their life in a one roomed mud house. They use a single room as their kitchen, bedroom, washroom everything. It seems as if the animals are living there. Bakha remains half a sleep because he has no enough clothes to cover his body from the cold. The room is very dirty with bad smells. Bakha has to use ragged clothes because of his critical economical situation. His family lives in poverty and scarcity; there is the leakage of water from the roof of the house, as well.

To show the problems of human beings, R.S. Singh explains Bakha's roll effectively and convincingly as –

He was aware of the limitations of the given social structure, and was also ready to acknowledge the rebellion within him, but in the absence of any perceptible alternative, he was unable to translate the protest into action. That moment came only at the end of the novel when he saw three alternatives to the same problem of untouchability. (41)

It shows the inherent problems of Bakha to change his protest into action. The boundaries and limitation imposed by social beliefs and values create obstruction in the ways of marginalized people. Bakha's overall action represents the voice of the marginal who have been facing hostile condition and sense of insecurity due to the discriminative socio-economic system.

Human beings have been living in a social group from the origin of evolution. They need love, support and affection to comfort their lives. They exchange their happiness, pains and agonies. But the hypocrisy of high caste people makes the livings of poor people hellish. And they are being tormented by mosquitoes, snakes, insects and other animals. They are suffering with sinking water from the roof in summer and in winter it is very difficult to sleep because of cold. "Bakha sleeps with his day clothes on, the sharp, bitter wind that blew from the brook at dawn has penetrated to his skin, pass the inadequate blanket, thorough the regulation overcoat, breeches, puttees and ammunition boots of the military uniform that clothed him" (5).

Spivak is a practical Marxist feminist- deconstructionist. Like Guha, Spivak also attempt to rethink Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of the peasant insurgencies during the colonial occupation. And, as a post-colonial feminist critic she makes her concern especially on subaltern woman both in discursive practices and in institution as much as Western cultures. Spivak is very keen, erudite and intelligent enough that to justify her stance regarding the notion of subalternity, she skillfully gives the example of sati woman in Hindu society in her foregrounding essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Spivak in her seminal essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" reconsiders the problems of subalternity within new historical developments as brought by capitalistic politics of undermining revolutionary voice and divisions of labor in a globalized world. She faces the difficulty and complexity to specify the realm of subalternity. She represents the problems of gender and particularly Indian women during colonial times. Spivak puts the deconstructive philosophical position that has been explored effectively.

On the abolition of sati women as a subaltern who were lost between two powerful polarities; one is British humanist discourse calling for individual freedom of Sati women and the Hindu native policy calling for voluntary participation in the ritual. The conflict between these two positions produces two different discourses with no possible solution; one postulates that, "white men (are) saving brown woman from brown men," the other maintains that, "the woman actually wanted to die." ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 271)

These lines clarify that the Hindu women are the silenced subaltern who lose the voice for justice. These two antagonistic poles stand in such a contradictory position and tease her to make a conscious decision. The voice of Hindu woman itself disappears while these two discursive groups try to represent the sati woman. They impose their own will and deprive them of their subjectivity and a space to speak from. Finally, the Hindu woman "disappeared not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shutting, which is the displaced figuration of the third world women caught between tradition and modernization" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 306)

Spivak gives the example of widows burnt at the pyre of their husband. She emphasizes the condition of third world woman who are doubly oppressed and exploited firstly by patriarchy and secondly by British colonialism.

Anand's main purpose of writing *Untouchable* is to show the social exploitation and the passive resistance of deprived people of Indian society. Anand exposes the suffocated life of Bakha which is mixture of pain and servility. It can be read as:

'Bakha stood amazed, embarrassed. He was deaf and dumb. His senses were paralyzed. Only fear gripped his soul, fear and humility and servility. He was used to being spoken to roughly. But he had seldom been taken so unawares. The curious smile of humility which always hovered on his lips in the presence of high caste men now become more pronounced. (38)

As Spivak advocates there is misrepresentation of subaltern and deprivation from their every possible rights and opportunities, the subjectivity of Bakha is also lost between the tradition and modernity. Bakha is exploited in every turn of his life. For Bakha every second seems an endless age of woe and suffering. His whole life is suffocating with bitter experiences. There is no hope for better life in future. It seems Bakha as subaltern is waiting for upcoming exploitation and humiliation. As the Hindu sati woman Bakha is also remains silenced, he cannot dare to raise his voice of revolt. We can see the passive resistance of Bakha throughout the novel. No revolt is seen against the social exploitation in the name of tradition and religion, practices upon the entire outcaste society.

In *Untouchable* there is also the hegemonic power of British colonization and on the other side the sense of untouchability prevails in Hindu (upper caste) society. Bakha as the subaltern is lost in between two antagonistic figures that always try to control the lower dregs of people.

Spivak further deconstructs the concept of under eraser employed by Derrida. According to Derrida the voice of marginalized people is under duress in the process of representation. The voice of subaltern is misrepresented and there is the process of writing and erasing by so called intellectual who is in fact silencing the subaltern by asserting to be able to speak for them ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 317). Spivak argues that nothing is stable,

the life of subaltern is not constable, and their life is also changing with new form and new identity in social, political and historical level. Therefore, Spivak insists that the social, economical and political level of subaltern is different from the main stream society. Therefore it is important to change the voice of subaltern according to demand of time and social values. So, there should be a process of rewriting and requisitioning begun in appropriation of their real life and needs. Eventually, Spivak comes to the conclusion: "The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry list with woman as a pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe task which she must not dissolve with a flourish" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 308).

In her concluding part of essay, she talks about the impossibility of voicing the marginalized groups' resistance without representation of intellectual group of society. She insists that the dominant language or a dominant voice of society is needed to make the voice of subaltern heard. The voice of oppressed groups cannot reach in between the civilized society because of their linguistic, political, social and economical background. As a whole, we can conclude that the whole discourse of subaltern theory itself is to be considered as speaking for voiceless and politically marginalized groups by their intellectual representatives.

Like Bakha, the outcaste people are assigned for the work that is hated and disgusted by upper caste people. Bakha has to clean latrines continuously without any rest. The outcaste person like Bakha has to depend upon superior caste people for living. He has to spread his hand for bread. He is compelled to visit the doors for a piece of bread. He shouts:

Bread for the sweeper, mother, he shouted again. There was no response. His legs were aching. There was lethargy in his bones, a curious numbness. His mind refused to work. Feeling defeated, he sat down on the wooden platform of a house in the lane. He was tired and disgusted; more tired than disgusted, for he had almost forgotten the cause of his disgust, his experiences in the morning. A sort of sleepiness seemed to steal into the bones. He struggled hard against it by keeping his eye open. (59-60)

These lines explain the unspeakable pains of Bakha due to the elitist's bias or the exploitation of an outcaste boy who is weak, tired, innocent and hungry. We can analyze how cruel the woman really was. There is no limitation of her cruelty and exploitation. As Spivak asserts in her essay, Bakha as a subaltern boy is victimized by superior caste people and he has passive resistance towards the exploitation.

The disappointing feelings of Bakha are again explored when he accepts the bread given by a housewife in an insulting manner. Bakha is a weak subaltern cannot produce a single word to protect himself though he knows he is victimized by the upper-caste people. Anand mentions:

The picture of the touched man stood in the forefront, among several in distinct faces, his bloodshot eyes, his little body with the sunken cheeks, his dry, thin lips, his ridiculously agitated manner, his abuse, and there was the circle of the crowd, jeering, scoffing, abusing, while he himself stood with joined hands in the center. (42)

The practice of touchability and untouchability is the social evil and it is good for nothing. It brings enmity among the brothers and sisters. Bakha is physically and mentally punished for the crime of touching. There is big crowd observing the plight of Bakha amusingly and curiously but no one wants to speak against this social harassment prevailed in society.

Bakha stood with joined hand in the centre of the high caste people; he is abused, avoided from society. He as the subaltern cannot go against the age old traditional belief that promotes untouchability. These so-called superior beings of society practice the hegemonic power to control marginalized people. They think the responsibility of society and state is in

their hand along with representing all the lower caste people.

Likewise, Bakha's father Lakha represents the weak subaltern who is compelled to pay high interest for the money even to cover a dead body. Anand presents the realistic picture of society:

He withdraw his gaze immediately, because there had recently been a quarrel between the Bania and his father on account of the compound interest Ganesh had demanded for money Lakha had borrowed on the mortgage of his wife's trinkets to pay for her funeral. That was an unpleasant thing. (36)

Anand tries to show that the marginalized people like Lakha are exploited even in the sensible incident of human life. Here we can see big gap between the livings of two different classes of people. The lower caste people are socially crushed and victimized where the courage of superior caste people has been increasing. The money lender exploits the subaltern by demanding extra charges for the money they have given. Lakha as a deprived subaltern has taken some money for the funeral of his wife, but the immoral hypocrite, exploiter, money lender demands extra charges for the money. Untouchables are compelled to bend down their head in front of high class people to fulfill a single need. These expressions are shown in the novel through the voice of Bakha's father Lakha:

You know when you were a little child; I had a nasty experience too. You were ill with fever, and I went to the house of Hakim Bhagawan Das, in this very town. I shouted and shouted, but no one hear me. A babu was passing through the Dawai Khana (dispensary) of the Doctor and I said to him: "Babuji, Babuji, God will make you prosperous. Please make my message reach the ears of the Hakim Sahib that I have a prayer to make to him. My child is suffering from fever. He has been unconscious since last night and I want the Hakim ji to give him some medicine. (71)

The poor outcaste people are exploited and oppressed very mercilessly. They are even deprived of their right for good treatment. The upper caste people are so mean, hypocrite and immoral that they have no sense of humanism and morality. The life of poor subaltern does not count for high-caste Hakim or doctor. All the market is monopolized by high caste people. The doctor does not show any attention to treat even for a dying baby from lower class. Their pride, social status has made them totally blind and inhuman. Anand again presents the voice of Lakha which shows the extreme level of exploitation. When Bakha becomes totally unconscious Anand expresses the painful voice through Lakha: "still there is a little breath left in child's body, I shall be your slave all my life" (72). Lakha as marginalized person is compelled to sacrifice his whole life as a slave to rescue the life of his body. These poor people cannot raise the voice for revolt.

The theme of exploitation is best expressed through the character of Sohini. She exemplifies not only caste exploitation but also sex exploitation. As a caste exploited, Sohini has been waiting patiently for a long time to fetch water from the public well. "She had in her docile and peaceful bearing"(33). Gulabo, a washer woman a caste superior to all other outcastes exploits Sohini. "Now Sohini, being of the low caste among the outcastes would naturally be looked down upon by Gulabo" (34). Gulabo not only abuses the sweeper girl but also rushes to hit her. Sohini behaves unlike any other outcaste woman. She remains patiently without any action when she has been tortured by other women. She is the fine example for passive resistance.

By the character of Sohini, Anand tries to show the picture of Indian sweeper class, especially the lower caste female. Anand's characters are real and subjective. Most of Anand's writing directly or indirectly investigates deeply the social process. Sohini becomes the victim of sexual exploitation due to her caste and poverty. She is very beautiful but she has no enough clothes to protect her beauty from the hungry eyes of the high caste males. She

is exploited by the vulgar eyes of pundit Kali Nath. Her ragged and torn clothes are unable to cover her body and a hypocrite, religious, orthodox; Kali Nath takes full advantage of her poverty and innocence. Kali Nath tries to molest her, when she screams out for help; no one is ready to listen the cry of deprived people like her. The hope of Bakha and Sohini change into frustration. As Spivak views that the subaltern cannot speak though they attempt to raise their voice. In the same way the voice of Sohini and Bakha is suppressed though they want to take action against the exploitation practices upon them.

Sohini stops her brother from taking any aggressive action against the priest because she realized that it is useless to speak in the corrupt society. She accepts her humiliation and exploitation with the docile humility of the woman of her caste. As Sohini describes "That man, that man, she said, '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 defied (53)". It explains how the so-called superior minded pundit exploits the innocent, poor girl. He misuses his power to humiliate Sohini. And Sohini's attempt for justice becomes useless. Sohini as a subaltern woman is exploited and controlled by upper caste people and her voice is suppressed in the corrupt society.

Anand accuses Hindu gods or rituals as responsible for untouchability and explains that upper caste people misuse their gods and temples for their own benefit. They create fear in the mind of low castes. "While going to the temple Bakha feels the temple seemed to advance towards him like a monster" (82). Anand expresses his anger, agony and despair of the exploitation of the out-castes in the name of religion. Through the miserable plight of untouchable he wants to make the reader aware of the horror of the untouchability.

### **The Projection of Discrimination**

Antonio Gramsci becomes interested in the study of the subaltern classes, consciousness and culture which is one of the ways to make their voice heard instead of relying on the historical narrative of the state. He presents the legitimized fact that, "The Subaltern classes by definition are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a state, their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of states and group of states"(52). Thus Gramscian's view about the history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic. Their voice of revolt has been suppressed and disappeared from the historical period.

Anand has exposed the reality of Indian society in the 1930s in this novel. The people have blind traditional belief regarding the caste, class, religion and God. The high caste people are hypocrite, corrupt and immoral due to their concept of superiority. There is big gap between two castes; the high caste people discriminate the low caste people in the society. The author criticizes the social injustice practiced in the name of social custom and traditional value. Though the book was written in pre-independent era, it still holds its importance as the stigma of casteism that has its grip in the society. *Untouchable* is the novel that reminds us that half of Indians are still carrying the burdens of slavery in the name of caste.

In *Untouchable*, Anand shows a sure grasp of the psychology of both the upper caste and the untouchable. His dealing in the group of the *untouchable* is the lower caste Hindus that is armed with the foaling thousand years of social and class superiority. This is a feeling which refuses to accept the fact that an untouchable is a human being, but insists on treating him like a sub-human creature, to be ignored or bullied or exploited as the occasion demands.

The untouchables are the weak subaltern and Bakha as representative character of entire outcaste subaltern has been the scapegoat of the rigid caste system. His sub-missions to the superiors who exploit him are the result of the inborn slavery that he inherits or he is discriminated on the basics of birth. The sense of discrimination is deeply rooted in religious elitism. It is religious or traditional value that always supports caste system. In *Untouchable*,

Anand tries to explain that it is the trend of discrimination that is guided by religious faith.

The term 'people and subaltern classes' are used as synonymous throughout Guha's definition. The social groups and elements included in this category represent the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom it refers to 'elite'. Guha describes elitism in terms of Indian nationalism.

The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism-colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism (sharing) the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness-nationalism which confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo-colonialist historiographies these achievements are credited to British colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institutions, and culture, in the nationalist and neonationalist writings-to Indian elite personalities and ideas. (*Selected Subaltern Study* 137)

The history of Indian nationalism is largely based on elitism and colonialist elitism that control and over look other marginalized group who are weak in their political, economical and cultural background. Bourgeois elites are the best native informants for the first world intellectuals who are interested in the voice of the other. This way Indian elitists and colonialists have secured their place in Indian national historiography.

Guha has attempted to show the difference between subaltern and elite, and how century long history originates by the domination of the elites over the subalterns. Change is inevitable to replace the history instead of elite-based history. The elite political mobilization has been possible due to the British colonial institutions and laws. Moreover, subaltern political mobilization is based on traditional belief and social organization such as: kinship, blood relationship and tribal affiliations. Subalterns are more heterogeneous but it does not matter for their low status, rather it is constant domination of elites or bourgeoisie towards subaltern groups. The upper caste people refer to the elitists, who are the exploitators and lower caste people like Bakha, is the victim of the social discrimination. Anand gives an example of the social discrimination:

The outcastes were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the nearby brook as their use of it would contaminate the stream. They had no well of their own because it cost at least a thousand rupees to dig a well in such a hilly town as Bulashah. (14)

Gulabo, a washer woman, abuses Sohini with vulgar words because Sohini is from lower caste among them. "Go back home; said Gulabo mockingly. There is no one to give you water here and, at any rate, there are so many of us ahead of you" (16). Gulabo mistreats Sohini and shouts at her with disgusting words, only because Sohini is from lower caste. Sohini becomes a bit frightened and grows pale, but she keeps intensely still and avoiding the shock, subsides into a listless apathy.

Spivak is also highly concerned about the social discrimination on her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She exposes the plight of a Hindu widow as subaltern woman. In fact Spivak tries to represent all the subaltern groups by exemplifying the Hindu widow and her real condition of contemporary India. There is social discrimination regarding the subjectivity and freedom of a widow. Spivak states:

The debate left no room for the widow's enunciator position. Caught in the contest over whether traditions did or did not sanction sati and over whether or not the widow self-immolated willingly, the colonized subaltern woman disappeared. She was literally extinguished for her dead husband in the

indigenous patriarchal discourse, or offered the choice to speak in the voice of a sovereign individual authenticated by colonialism. ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 275)

There is conflict between tradition and modernity, inhuman Hindu practices and the British civilizing mission in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in which the Sati woman cannot raise her voice in between two versions of power. These two antagonistic poles continuously tease her to retrieve the woman's voice when she is not given a subject position to speak. So, the Hindu widow was a silenced subaltern who was nonetheless sought as sovereign subject asked to declare whether or not her immolation was voluntary.

In the same way Anand's attempt is to show that Bakha as subaltern is oppressed and silenced by two powerful nations the traditional belief employed by upper caste bourgeoisie and the modernity on the other hand resembled by the British colonial thoughts. Bakha is socially discriminated and his identity is lost within the two antagonistic poles.

The high caste people treat the lower caste people their private property- whenever they want they can misuse for their benefits and whenever they are not needed they discard as the unwanted thing. Anand writes:

She called to Bakha while he was in the middle of his job. 'Vay Bakha, take this, here's your bread coming down'. 'And she flung it at him.... He picked it up quietly and wrapped it in a duster with the other bread'. He had received there. He was too disgusted to clean the drain after this especially as a little boy sat relieving himself before him. He threw the little broom aside and made off without saying a thank-you. (65)

Due to the lower strata, Bakha is mistreated by the upper class, but he is unable to show intense resentment. This upper caste people used to give something throwing very high and to be saved from touched.

Anand further shows the cruelty of the so-called religious custodian who mistreats Bakha for his crime for touching a pundit on the way to bazaar.

Bakha comes to contact accidentally with a hypocrite and corrupt priest, a religious custodian pundit Kali Nath. He has to pay with great humility and disgust. "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! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, you cockeyed son of a bow-legged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself. And it was new dhoti and and shirt I put on this morning. (38)

It shows the curse of caste system which creates nothing more than the social discrimination between high caste people and low caste people. The outcaste people as subaltern are tortured and discriminated in the name of god and religion. The touch of a low-caste boy pollutes pundit and he needs purification ceremony. These high caste Brahmins prefer to be the image of God but their vulgar words and immoral act makes us clear that it is religious man who leads society in the way of corruption and makes the social discrimination.

The Hindu Sati women are treated as secondary citizens in the patriarchal society. Their subjectivity and freedom is in the hand of males. In other words the sati women are socially discriminated because they cannot dare to raise voice against the bad culture. In the same way Bakha in Anand's *Untouchable* is controlled and manipulated by the supreme arrogance of the high caste exploiters. Anand creates sympathy for the low caste people who are subordinated to upper caste society.

The low caste people are assigned with the disgusting works. The sense of untouchability accompanies the low caste people like a shadow. The high class people allow the animals like bulls to rush through the streets but do not allow untouchables to walk

through the same streets. Through the scene of stinking bull, Anand highlights the inhuman treatment given to the untouchables. Bakha with great humiliation of caste base society expresses:

Not one of them spoke for me. The cruel crowd! All of them abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused? The sanitary inspector and the sahib that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines every day. That's why they don't touch us, the high-castes. (42)

Anand has described the social discrimination, in many parts of this novel. Bakha is psychologically tortured from the mistreatment to the lower dregs of society. Untouchables are abused and hated by every people. No one from high class wants to behave them well.

Anand again presents the voice of Bakha that exposes cry of untouchability. Anand arouses sympathy among the readers. "Poush, Poush, sweeper coming. The undertone, 'untouchable, untouchable, was in heart; the warning shout,' 'Poush, Poush, sweeper coming!' was in his mouth" (44).

The main agenda of this novel is to dig out the long-rooted, bad social traditions which always hamper the social integrity and harmony and push the country backward. This system of touchability and untouchability is nearly the problem of every society in the Indian subcontinent no matter how much civilized they are. The so-called elites think themselves defiled if the low caste people knowingly happen to touch them. Untouchables are also the human beings, they also have the red blood as the touchables have but only because of their low birth they are given degraded works and treated as low and polluted people in the society.

Low-caste people are deprived of the opportunities that high caste people get in the society; even they are not allowed to stay with high class people. To clarify these ideas Anand mentions the voice of Ram Charan's mother Gulabo shouting to her son. "Oh you illegally begotten! came her voice shrilly audible above all the other noises. Are you running away to play with that dirty sweeper and leather-worker on the very day of your sister's marriage? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you little dog!" (82-3).

Untouchability is the cultural aspect which is based on strong religious belief that unjustifiably assigns jobs according to the castes. There is caste discrimination even in low caste society. Gulabo belongs to the higher caste than the sweeper and the leather worker. She does not allow her children to play with Bakha a Bhangi boy and Chota, a leather worker. Likewise, the root of casteism is deeply rooted in society which seems to be very difficult to solve. The untouchables are the victim of casteism because of their own mentality regarding untouchability. Bakha is socially discriminated due to his disgusting work and inborn caste. One friend is not allowed to play with another friend from the same neighborhood. If the high caste and low caste children play together, it becomes shameful for high caste parents. It is very bad thing to judge people according to the types of job. We find these expressions as follows, "Get away, get away, you eater of your master; she shouted at him. 'May you die! Why didn't you look after your brother? Bakha handed over the child, and afraid, humble, silent as a ghost, withdrew. He felt dejected, utterly miserable" (106).

The high caste people become blind and lose their ability of judgment due to their sense of blind superiority. A child from high caste injures badly while playing but it is Bakha who rescues the baby without thinking the consequences. But the mother of the child abuses Bakha for making the pollution of her child and house without knowing the reality. Her vulgar and humiliating words make him embarrass. This incident also gives the lesson that due to the untouchability people can't get help from each other. The social discrimination causes the loss of humanity. Anand wants to give the message to his readers that there must

be unity of people to make harmonious society.

### **Social Exclusion**

Social exclusion refers to the process in which individuals or entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources. Subaltern consciousness is subject Guha advocates, the peasantry to be an essential component of modern Indian politics. And he rejects the Marxist teleological history defined by the emergence of class groups and industrialization. He explains:

To the subaltern studies project, colonialist and bourgeois-nationalist histories were problematic because they failed to recognize the agency and actions of subaltern people. Instead, the credit for India's independence and the nationalist movement that preceded it was given to either colonial policies or the altruism of the Indian elite. (*Selected Subaltern Study* 13)

The bourgeois-nationalist failed to recognize the agency and actions of non-elite groups. The subalterns are excluded from the society. The bourgeois-nationalists exercise the hegemonic power over subalterns and control through the representation. The elitists prefer themselves superior, in the culture, economics, religion, education and ignore the non-elite groups as the sub-human being of society.

Anand's novel *Untouchable* is the projection of many social issues of Indian society; one major aim is to represent the social exclusion of the lower caste people sufferings in India. *Untouchable* is the tale of domination, suppression, oppression and the exclusion. The lower caste people are not given any opportunities for better life. Anand presents these issues more realistically without any modification. Anand describes it with photographic realism and accuracy as:

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, but 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. (1)

The description of outcaste colony gives us the implication that they are detached by the society. Untouchables are behaved like the non-social beings and they are just living the life in the shadow where no one can hope for light. The history of India was in the hand of bourgeoisie nationalists who never included subaltern as the part of their nation. The subalterns are excluded from the historical era and imposed their within the name of culture, religion and faiths.

Anand presents the hypocrisy of social excluders and the pathetic life of those who are excluded from social opportunities. It is caste-based exploitation and its stubborn refusal to change the social values-that produces nothing more than the hostility in the society. The water episode is very moving and heart rending. Sohini, a scavenger girl becomes the victim of caste discrimination and she is excluded by other women of the untouchable group in the well. Sohini has to bear the ill-treatment and be abused with dirty words. One of the women uses vulgar words to pacify her sense of domination and hatred towards low-caste people. As Anand describes through one of the character, Gulabo who abuses Sohini. "Ari, Bitch! Do you take me for a buffoon? What are you laughing at slut? Aren't you ashamed of showing your teeth to me in the presence of men, prostitute" (9). There are washer women, leather worker and the sweeper from lower caste society. They are alienated from high caste society and forced to live a disgustful life. But there is no unity or sense of sympathy with each other. Both the untouchable and touchable are responsible for the crime of casteism. Gulabo, a washer woman is from higher caste than Sohini. Both of them are the victimized people of society but even among them there is sense of superiority and inferiority. Such treatment with outcaste people was common in the early decades of 20th century in India. They had no right

to speak and laugh in the society. This incident in the novel poignantly describes the sense of untouchability among the low caste people. Sohini remains silence when a woman bursts with vulgar words; her silence makes the woman more arrogant and violent.

Spivak is very keen enough that by excavating the history of deprived women, she manages to elaborate on the original demarcation of the notion of the subaltern. Spivak, through her experiences and fundamental exploration is able to demarcate the struggle of women in general either from the upper middle class or the peasantry and sub-proletariat class. She talks about the gender issues regarding the woman because she has lived through the anti colonial history. She writes:

The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labor, for both of which there is 'evidence', rather, both were used as object of colonialist historiography and as a subject of insurgency, though the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 308)

In the last two decades of twentieth century, there are diverse themes within the subaltern historiographical school. The voice of subaltern is represented by the dominant group in which the fact of marginalized class is distorted and, misinterpreted by the dominant discourse. The females are more in shadow the condition of females in the 19<sup>th</sup> century patriarchal society under imperial rule can be employed with the outcaste subaltern in Anand's *Untouchable*. The voice of subaltern is not heard by the so-called superior people because of their social, political, economical and academic background. Therefore, Spivak insists that subaltern cannot speak though they attempt to raise their voice for justice.

Bakha's psychological state is very hard to explain. Bakha's dream for good life and freedom is only limited within himself. He cannot be able to disclose his inner desire for freedom. Anand exposes the psychological look that lights up the little one's face. "The anxiety of going to school. How beautiful it felt! 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 sahib, one couldn't have to run to the scribe every time a letter came" (30). The caste ridden society deprived the untouchables from the light of education. There is no school and a teacher for outcastes. Bakha's burning desire to write and read can never be fulfilled because he is the subaltern or an outcaste. Again Bakha expresses his desire to go to school with his father. "And he wept and cried 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 sweeper" (30). Bakha's dream to be an educated man get scattered when he realizes the social limitation constructed upon the entire untouchable like him. We can see the identity crisis for all the lower caste people, and it is not easy task to speak against the age old superstitious society, that treats human beings as a non-human beings.

Anand shows another example of untouchability with the arrogant word of Pundit Kali Nath. "This dirty dog bumped right into me! So unmindfully do these sons of bitches walk in the streets! He was walking along without the slightest effort at announcing his approach, the swine!" (39). A pretentious religious man Kali Nath scolds Bakha with mean words. He uses the words like dirty dog, swine for a sweeper boy. Bakha wants to get rid from this curse of untouchability. His desire for freedom and blissful life remains unfulfilled. The priest is the most respected person, who is supposed to preach the gospel of truth, humanity and morality, but here he is the most degraded tyrant and the victimizer of the society. Even god may not forgive his crime that he did in the name of religion. Bakha has to undergo every insult that comes in his stride. But he is unable to retaliate and has to listen and bend down his head mumbling something.

Futher Anand explains the real feelings of Bakha whose voice is full of agonies because the society excludes him from every possible opportunity. Their lives are insecure with unpredictable aches. Bakha expresses his inner mental state with 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 he couldn't continue. He was possessed by an overpowering feeling of self-pity"(70). It shows the plight of Bakha. Bakha bursts out with an agony and tells the truth that happened with him in the morning, when his father asks what the matter of his anxieties is. A boy is slapped by a high caste man on the way because he happens to touch him accidentally.

In *Untouchable* Anand denounces the aspect of traditional Hindu society which deserves condemnation. Anand's condemnation of untouchability is the bitter truth for superior caste:

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

It demonstrates how the outcaste people are ignored and alienated. Water is very essential for human life but untouchables are excluded from the right to fetch water from the well. If outcastes draw water from the well, the whole water is supposed to be polluted and the water becomes impure for those high caste Hindus. This superstition prevailed in the mind of high class people. Therefore, the marginalized people have been waiting passively for an hour when the man from upper caste will come and provide them water.

Bakha is curious enough when a man completely repeat the name of Gods. He is unaware about the Hindu gods though he is also a Hindu by religion. He is not permitted to observe any temple closely. And it is the falsity of religious person who exploits unprivileged class of people misinterpreting the religious belief. As Bakha hears the repeating hymn of God, he becomes curious, his curiosity regarding God and Goddess is reflected as follows:

'OM, OM, Shanti Deva, Who was Shanti Deva? Was he in the temple? There is no chance of seeing anything if I stand here,' He mused, I shall go and look. But he hadn't the courage to go. He felt weak. He realized that an Untouchable going into a temple polluted it past purification. His father would be angry if he knew that he hadn't done any work this morning. (49)

It expresses the fact that Bakha is excluded from his right to go to temple and to worship his god and goddess. Bakha is also the Hindu by religion, his blood is also red like upper caste Hindus but he has been forbidden from going around the temple. Bakha seems very interested and curious enough to see the goddess but the hypocrite superiors people control the rights and opportunities of dominated non-elite cultural groups to worship their own gods and even to have a glimpse of them.

Likewise, Anand has pointed that the untouchables are not given opportunity of living a healthy life. When Bakha is ill enough and dying without getting proper treatment, no one is ready to cure because they think that a sweeper baby pollutes his medicines and themselves. Lakha, Bakha's father roams here and there begging for the life of his child who is nearly dying:

Bhangi! (Sweeper) Bhangi! There was uproar in the medicine house. People began to disperse hither and thither as the Hakim's feet had become defiled. He was red and pale in turn and shouted at the highest pitch of his voice. Chandal (low-caste) by whose orders have you come here? And then you join hands and hold my feet and say you will become my slave forever. You have polluted hundred of rupees worth of medicine. Will you pay for it? (73)

It portrays how untouchables are totally depended upon the touchable class. Anand opines that the subalterns have been made powerless in various issues and they are excluded from every need of life. The doctor is preferred to be the image of God, a savior but here a doctor is cruel-being who loses his sense of morality and humanity towards a poor boy. The so-called touchable man, Hakim forgets his duty to god and misuses his power and manipulates Lakha and screams out for making him polluted.

They are deprived of every opportunity of their life such as food, sanitation, education, happiness and the freedom. So, the theme of social exclusion is very appropriate for this novel. For untouchables their whole demeanor has been concentrated in humility.

### **Western Hegemony**

According to Gramsci, hegemony is particular form of domination that combines force and consent. Gramsci called consent as state and civil society, which are the complementary part of each other. In his prison writing he talks about periodization of capitalism based on the rise of civil society and the expansion of the state. The subaltern group's history in Gramsci's opinion has no evident of unity and it seems to be in its very episodic totality because of their submission to the authority of the ruling class even when they refuse the established system. This kind of non-accessibility refers that they may limit and control their own representation and consequently lack an access to the social and cultural institutions of their state. In this way hegemony is the construction and tool of the ruling classes which enable the perpetuation of power over the masses. (*The Selection from Prison Notebook* 68)

Gramsci sees the capitalist state as being made up of two overlapping spheres, a political society, which rules through force and a civil society, which rules through consent. Gramsci sees civil society as the public sphere where trade unions and political parties gain concessions from the bourgeois state and in which ideas and beliefs are shaped where bourgeois hegemony is reproduced in cultural life through media. Gramsci's theory of hegemony has a totalistic quality in which everything is connected to everything else.

Anand is very keen enough to dig out every possible issue of 1930s in which Western hegemonic power has been one of the dominant issues of that era. Hegemony is something that creates power through knowledge and representation and controls the subalterns. Anand has presented the Western power and power of Britishers to rule the whole India. 19<sup>th</sup> century is not only the high time for practice of untouchability or discrimination but also the time of British imperialism. Anand has exposed lots of events that exclude the political strategies to colonize the whole India. There is domination of the superior class to the inferior one. Superior power in *Untouchable* constitutes the group of Hindu upper castes, merchants, priests and remnant of British colonizers.

We can understand Western hegemony as the Western domination or Western power. Britishers create certain power over Indian people and pretend themselves superior in their political, cultural and economic status. They use the theory of power and knowledge, one who has the knowledge gains power over other people and can establish one's own history. The voice of people who are in power is heard and their voice is recorded in history. Anand traces the experiences and history of particular individuals and social groups that have been historically disposed and exploited by colonial practices.

Anand outlines the repressive aspects of colonial rationality that linger in the structures of pre-colonial government. It is British imperial political agenda to rule over India from cultural as well as political perspectives. British people use very vulgar and disgusting words to low class Indians. Anand writes, "They were, however, Sahibs whatever they did was 'Fushun'. But his own countrymen they were natus (natives). He felt amused as an English man might be amused to see Hindu loosen his Dhoti" (11).

It explains the Western Hegemonic power implemented upon the Indian outcaste people.

Those subalterns are in trap of British colonial mission. Whatever the English people do becomes the fashion for low caste Indians. Westerners are the God like figures in the eye of poor people. Low caste Indians such as sweepers, leather workers, etc are very much fascinated by the extravagant life of Western people and they try to become like English man, even they feel amused when an English man laughs to see Hindu in an insulting manner. The Western people treat Indians and Indian culture as inferior and their own culture superior. Bakha and his fellow friend's have desire for dressing like a Sahib and trying to appear to be something what they are not.

Guha advocates that British colonialism and Indian nationalism both came in the history which is a regressive force that distorted all development in India's social, political and economical situation of pre independence India – including those of mass poverty and religious and caste conflict could be blamed on the political, economical power of colonialism. The failure of Indian nation to hold its nationality is the critical problem of the historiography of colonial India. Thus, Guha insists to dismantle the history of India by handing it to marginalized group of India, called subalterns.

Anand outlines the repressive aspects of colonial rationality that linger in the structures of post colonial government. He suggests that the colonial state is to the anxieties about order and control that are characteristic of colonial regimes. Using the characters of modernity in India, Anand emphasizes the relation between enlightenment rationality and subaltern. The full force of post colonial rationality is seen in the state's response to insurgency and subaltern.

Anand traces the experiences and histories of particular individuals and social groups who have been historically dispossessed and exploited by resistance. In the context of political struggles for national independence or anti-colonial resistance, the use of master words like the colonized 'women, 'worker' may seem to provide a coherent political identity for disempowered individuals and groups to unite against a common oppressor. In other words, group of minorities subaltern want to empower themselves against dominant indigenous groups of foreigners' in national, regional and local levels.

The poor subalterns suffer and are continuously exploited under the British colonial regime. The youths are highly influenced by the ways of living of the British people and they follow the way of dressing and speaking of English-men. We can bring the example of Bakha from *Untouchable*. "Bakha has looked at the Tommies started with an overwhelming desire to live their life" (3). Bakha imitates the life of Tommies through fashion, by which he understands the art of wearing trousers, breeches, coat, puttees, boots, etc. Bakha tries to rise above his caste and miseries by Westernizing himself. Anand narrates the cause of Bakha's desire to imitate English man's life. 'He had been told they were Sahibs, superior people....had felt that to put on their clothes made one a Sahib too' (3). It shows that the hegemonic power of British colonizers is successful to manipulate the poor, illiterate, Indians through their culture. Anand further expresses: "Chota, the leather-worker's son, who oiled his hair profusely, and parted it like the Englishmen on one side, wore a pair of shorts at hockey and smoked cigarettes like them and of Ram Charan, the washerman's son who aped Chota and Bakha in turn were content with their lot" (2).

It is the psychological effect on the youths that new things make the room in their mind. They try to copy them intentionally and try to present themselves unique to other. They try to handle the new and present themselves totally different and hope others try to look them easily. They do not think whether they are in the wrong way or not. Bakha tries to be a handsome boy like Tommies. He cannot effort to buy such expensive clothes even in the rag's shop. He has been able to buy the jacket, the overcoat, the blanket he sleeps under, and few annas' left-over for the enjoyment of 'Red-Lamp' cigarettes. It is compulsion to Bakha giving money to his father without spending it but his intention is to be like an English man.

He wishes Chota and Ram Charan crack jokes with him an account of his new rig-out, calling him 'Pilpali Sahib', through which the Britishers are ruling over the unprivileged class.

Moreover, we can see the cultural hegemony of British people which is the important tool of British colonial mission. Bakha's resistance can be taken as the opposing force and counter-hegemony, resisting authorities especially to conquer over hegemonic power by parodying the original. Bakha's move serves for antagonism against the superior power due to the purpose of changes according to their common consent. Anand includes the Christian Missionary colonel Hutchinson, chief of the local salvation Army, tries to colonize deprived subaltern through the help of representation. But Bakha empowers the knowledge of resistance among the people of India. Colonel Hutchinson always carries a number of copies of the Hindustani translation of the Bible under his arm and overcoat with the gospel of St. Luke to thrust into the hands of any passerby no matter he is willing or not. The British imperial mission is to colonize India through their religion. He is always ready to convince the deprived Indians to change their religion into Christianity. So Hutchinson gives the sweet speech in the name of Lord Christ to Bakha as: "Life is found in Jesus, only there, is offered thee; offered without price or money, this the gift of god sent free". He died that we might be forgiven, he died to make us good, that we might go at last to heaven, saved by his precious blood (116-117).

The colonial people are trying to manipulate Bakha and psychologically pressurize to change his religion. But Bakha becomes dumb with amazement; carried away by the confusion, feeling flattered, honored by the colonial people whom he calls Sahib. Bakha becomes curious on the rhythmic speech of Sahib. Sahib concludes his speech with the words of motivation. He says, "He sacrificed himself to help us all; for the rich and the poor; for Brahmin and the Bhangi" (120).

There are so many Bakhas in India who want to be Christians due to the spell bounding speech of the missionaries because such Bhangies or sweepers are fed up of being untouchable. In this sense the desire for freedom from the hellish life of untouchability seems true for entire subaltern-outcastes. They may get rid of the caste ridden society. Changing the religion seems to be the ultimate way of getting relief for them. As missionaries insist, after being Christian, the God Christ will help them to remove their pain, suffering and problems of the life, poor people are very much fascinated from colonial appeal. And it is the ultimate goal of the imperial rule.

Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" considers the critical notion of representation in the work of Foucault and Deluza. Spivak tries to point out that the subjects are constructed through discourse and representation in which the so-called benevolent intellectual can, in fact, silence the subaltern by asserting to be able to speak for them. According to Foucault it is cultural and symbolic violence towards individual or group of subaltern in the case of representation. Because it is the language that conveys cultural value of the dominant group. Spivak in opposition to Foucault argues that subaltern cannot represent themselves. Therefore Spivak urges the intellectual people to represent subalterns ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 309).

Further, Spivak advocates that "Within the two containing versions of freedom, the constitution of the female subject in life is the place of the different. In the case of widow self-immolation, ritual is not being redefined as superstition but as crime. The gravity of Sati was that it was ideologically catheter as 'social mission' ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 74). The Sati-woman is the silenced subaltern whose voice is suppressed between modernity and tradition. She burnt herself in the pyre of her husband silently which is a crime. The British colonizers and traditional high caste Hindus possess the subjectivity of Sati women and create power and knowledge through representation. The two-contrasting versions of freedom repressed her voice of resistance. Likewise, Bakha also is repressed by the hegemonic power

of British imperialism and cruelty of superior caste people. He is trapped within two versions of power.

Subaltern arrived at its critique by engaging both Marxism and post structuralism. But the nature of these engagements is complex. If the influence of Gramsci's Marxism is palpable in the concept of the subaltern and in the treatment of such a theme as hegemony and dominance, Marxism is also subjected to the post structuralist critiques of European humanism. In this sense Spivak points out that "there is an affinity between the imperialist subject and the subject of humanism, the European critique of humanism does not provide the primary motive force for the subaltern studies project" ( *Subaltern Studies, Deconstructing Historiography* 33). Spivak argues that European humanism is not concerned with the motive of subaltern group. She insists that Marxism supports the hegemony and dominance in nature because Marx never includes India and Africa in developed analysis of imperialism.

The last declaration that she makes in her concluding part of essay makes it controversial. She talks about the impossibility of voicing the marginalized groups' resistance without representation of intellectual group of society. She insists that the dominant language or a dominant voice of society is needed to make the voice of subaltern heard. The voice of oppressed groups cannot reach the civilized society because of their linguistic, political, social and economic background. As a whole, we can conclude that the whole discourse of post colonial theory itself is to be considered as speaking for voiceless and politically marginalized groups by their intellectual representatives. In *Untouchable* the Western hegemonic power is dominant over non-existential groups of India. The poor subalterns are exploited and victimized whether the exploitators are the Hinuds or Britishers.

As a whole *Untouchable* is the manifestation of Anand's oppressed and repressed psychology in the caste-based society. Bakha as a deprived subaltern who remains silent throughout the novel; however, Anand tries to show silent level of aggression and rebellion of untouchables. Anand projects some hope for subalterns in future. Anand has used the technique of dramatic irony by juxtaposing the plight of Sohini with that of Bakha. The novelist has reinforced the representative character of the figure of the untouchables. Anand's main attempt is to expose the social exclusion and exploitation of the subaltern class of 1930s. The novelist has demarcated the extremity of social exploitation and hatred of contemporary Hindu society. This is the main issue of the research writing as well.

### Chapter 3 Bakha as the Subaltern Representative

The term subaltern refers to the predicament to those who are allotted sub or secondary space in the human society. In this sense, subaltern is the umbrella term for all marginalized and deprived people. The belief that subaltern cannot speak is highly concerned in this research paper and it is appropriated to the character Bakha. The voice of the subaltern cannot reach in the main stream of civilized society because the language of deprived class cannot ensure their voice to be heard against the centre or the opposite one.

Mulk Raj Anand is very successful enough to project the social truth of the outcastes during the colonial days in India and he has chosen his character Bakha as the representative of all the subaltern class in *Untouchable*. In this novel, Anand has succeeded in exposing the oppression, injustice, exploitation to the whole community of the outcaste in India. Bakha is very dutiful and loyal to his work. He does his duty with great labour and devotion. But, in spite of his skill and work ethic he has no chance of moving up in his life. He is forever confined to his duty due to his lower birth. In spite of his ardent desire to go to school, he is not allowed to go to school, because the parents of high castes children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of low-caste man's son. Bakha works in the barracks of a British regiment and is caught by the glamour of the white man's life. Bakha is all enthusiastic and has his own set of dreams. However his limited means and the circumstances force him to beg for the food and get humiliated in each step of the road. Anand has tried to create, in the readers, an urgent awareness of the dehumanizing, social evils, to stir the springs of tenderness in them and to activate them for the removal of these evils.

Caste system and human suffering caused by political, economical, social and cultural factors are the themes focused in *Untouchable*. He has chosen the subaltern characters within the marginalizing framework of socio-political, economical and cultural aspects of society. We can overhear the silenced cry of the subalterns through the representation of Bakha and Sohini. They are the silenced center who have been exploited, alienated and excluded from the society. But Bakha struggles with the oppressive paradigms in order to surpass both internal and external limitations.

Bakha's life is full of agonies; his inexpressible pain touches the heart of the reader. In spite of breaking domination and marginalization practices by so-called high caste Hindus, Bakha is forced to accept his fate and ready to sacrifice his life as slave. He suffers too much, psychologically as well as physically where no light of hope can be seen in his life.

Anand's main attempt is to raise awareness in abolishing such bad tradition in the society by exposing the social realities in contemporary Hindu society through writing. He has succeeded in exposing the age old tyranny of untouchability.

The British colonial forces have exercised against the innocence of marginalized people. The British colonization is also a great part to play in promoting the thinking of superior and inferior, majority and minority, upper caste and lower caste. They have used every possible way to establish their hegemonic power. Britishers have used their hegemony in India in order to fulfill their colonial mission. The deprived people are manipulated by social, economical, cultural as well as religious power. The Christian missionary has tried its best to manipulate Bakha to prove that Christianity is better than the Hinduism.

Throughout the novel Bakha faces multiple humiliations while he is on the road, at the temple or in the Bazaar. Bakha hates his job and life style but still feels pride serving the higher castes. As much as he hates the work he recognizes that it is his duty, so he works with no complain. When Bakha passes through the road, he cannot touch an upper caste Hindu. If Hindu happens to touch him, he is blamed to have touched and Bakha has to suffer the punishment. However, Bakha remains silent throughout the novel though he wants to take the

action. The internal as well as external limitation constructed by the age old casteism stops him. He suffers without expressing his pain, agonies, sophocation and aggression because there is no one to hear him.

The novel presents the story of silenced minority that deals with the heart rending truth of casteism and untouchability that causes shocking discrimination in human relationship. Anand has projected the social realism of contemporary India and tried to raise the voice from below to improve the living of deprived people. Anand has highlighted the thrust of passive *résistance*, subaltern consciousness, and the rueful lives of outcastes in his novel through the representation of Bakha. Through his novel, Anand has made obvious that untouchability is the most evil practice that prevails in Hindu society and one cannot even think of better life of the untouchables unless and until the system itself turns sympathetic towards the unjust practice over them and Hinduism introduces certain reform in it.

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