

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Quest for Identity in Anand's *Untouchable*

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By

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Quest for Identity in Anand's *Untouchable*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Jagannath Padhya, has been approved by the undersigned member of the research committee.

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Abstract

My study in Anand's *Untouchable* is to show the quest for identity of the main protagonist Bakha. In quest of establishing a new identity he has faced many ups and downs. In the novel, Bakha has been victimized by the high caste Hindus. The prevailing caste system and social discrimination has become a great challenge in the sense of brotherhood. People discriminate people in the name of caste and bring unnecessary division among them. So a sense of humanity is lost and feelings of fragmentation and alienation arise. The lower class people have to endure untold sufferings in their life. They have to face severe punishment if they break the law made by the upper caste people. They are biased in many sectors. In this sense, they think that their identity is lost. This very fact is well realized by Bakha. That's why he wants to preserve his identity. His different efforts show this very fact. His rebellious nature of challenging the traditional rules by entering the temples proves his internal desire to establish his new identity. Further, he imitates the fashion of the Tommies to be like a sahib. He thinks sahib is a superior man in the society and by becoming a sahib he will garner respect. In another context he wants to change his profession because he thinks his present profession is the main cause of social discrimination and hatred. Observing all such activities of Bakha, we can say that he has trouble accepting the identity allotted to him at birth. He is desperately trying to escape the connotation of the title of the novel asserts over his identity. Rather, he is in quest for a new identity.

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I. Anand's Subaltern Concern

Mulk Raj Anand is regarded as the most prolific, widely read and widely traveled Indian writer in English. He is one of the founding fathers of Indo-English novels along with R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Born in 1905 in Peshawar in a family of coppersmith, he graduated from the University of Punjab, Amritsar in 1924. Although his father did not encourage and assist him, he went to England for further education with the support of his mother. When he went there, he realized the lack of appropriate base for the higher education in India. He attended University college and Cambridge University in England, where he studied English literature and forged friendship with members of the Bloomsbury Group. Under the guidance of G. Dwas Hicks, the famous Kantian scholar and co-editor of the *Hibbert* journal, he received his PhD in Philosophy from London University in 1929. After getting his doctoral degree, he did not return to India promptly but remained in England for few more years. He lectured at the 'League of Nations' School of Intellectual Cooperation in Geneva and between 1932 to 1945, with the Workers' Educational Association in London. He also worked for BBC Eastern Service from 1941 to 1944 as a broadcaster and script writer. During in England, he was very much influenced by the Marxist progressive movement as he had read Marx's *Das Capital*. From England too, he kept himself apprised of India through *New York Herald Tribune*. While in India, Anand had seen his country entering its most intense phase of freedom movement after Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915. He had been jailed in 1921 for his participation in the Civil Disobedience Campaign against the British Government. He had even taken part in 1926 coal miner's strike. In the same way in 1935 he went to Spain to express his commitment and support against Civil War. After the Second

World War, he returned from England and fully engaged in writing for the rest of his life.

Anand started writing at an early age. He wrote his first prose in reaction to the trauma of the suicide of his aunt who had been excommunicated for dining with a Muslim woman. He began his career as a writer in England by publishing short notes on books in T.S. Eliot's magazine *Criterion*. Among his friends were such-authors as E.M. Forster, Herbert Read, Henry Miller and George Orwell. The most influence upon Anand was Gandhi, who shaped his social conscience. Anand's first novel, *Untouchable* was published in 1935 and included a preface by Forster. He held several teaching positions, including the first Tagore professorship of Fine Arts at the University of Punjab from 1963 to 1966 and even served as an editor of the Indian quarterly arts magazine *Marg* since 1946. He is recognized with the number of awards including the Sahitya Academy Award in 1947, the World Peace Council Prize in 1952 and Padma Bhushan Award in 1968.

Anand's greatness as a novelist lies on realizing and exposing the suffering, poverty, misery and injustice perpetrated on the subaltern people of Indian society such as peasants, coolies, workers, untouchables, and so on though he does not belong to that group. In his book *Apology for Heroism*, Anand reveals that his realization about the problems of subalterns is a secondary humiliation: "I could not, of course, sense the suffering of the poor directly because I had always been comparatively better off. No, mine was a secondary humiliation, the humiliation of seeing other people suffer" (116-117).

About Anand's empathy with common people's destiny and his subaltern concern, Penguin Books India makes a publisher's note on behalf of the publication while publishing Anand's first novel *Untouchable* as:

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

He believes in struggle and suggests those who are being exploited. As Anand himself acknowledges in the preface written in *Apology for Heroism*: "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" (25).

Through the novels like *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, Anand has shown the deep feeling for the deprived. Walsh William in *Indian Literature in English* generalizes:

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 Wells of the personal sufferings induced by economic injustices. (64)

The development of Mulk Raj Anand as a novelist follows a definite pattern. His earlier novels show a sense of horror and disgust against social and economic ills. The novels of middle period show a great concern for and with the human heart and the later novels show the passion for social justice and they sound greater emotional depth. Before 1932, Anand's view of literature and arts was mainly concerned with religion and philosophy but after 1932, his literary perspectives changed substantially.

Anand is a committed writer with a social purpose. He primarily deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for better life. He has always been conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies, and other suppressed members of human society. In the words of Saros Cowasjee:

Anand is deeply concerned with social problems and that he is committed to the eradication of the evils which infest modern society. Is this a deplorable aim of an artist? '*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. (21)

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

Untouchable, Anand's first novel narrates a day in the life of Bakha, who suffers a number of humiliations in the course of his life. It is based on an incident in his own life. Injured by a stone, the young boy was carried home by the lower caste Bakha, who was abused by the boy's mother for polluting her son. *Untouchable* conveys all of these facts and it is a chilling expose of the day to day life of a member of Indian untouchable caste. His second novel *Coolie* is centered on Munoo, an orphan boy who dies of tuberculosis brought by malnutrition. Here, Munoo is not an untouchable but he is just as much victim of the unfairness of Indian society as he finds himself at the mercy of his various employers. *Two Leaves and a Bud* is a story of Gangu which shows the misery of Indian workers in the hand of colonizers. In *The Road*, Anand dramatizes the destiny of an untouchable called Bhikhu who is new Bakha in a changed situation.

Anand, as a cultural critic, vehemently exposes all evils in human society which militate against culture. He thinks that literature aims at promoting culture which implies enlightenment, rational thinking and the recognition of the dignity of man. His novels are suffused with cultural consciousness. He envisions an era of cultural renaissance in India in which myopic considerations of caste, community, religion, provincialism etc. would have no place. The dignity of man as man would be accepted. Some of his novels like *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), *Gauri* (1960), *Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts* (1939), *Death of a Hero* (1963) etc. cover the entire cultural perspectives of India.

The Sword and the Sickle (1942), *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953), *Death of a Hero* (1963) etc also have vividly depicted contemporary political situation of India.

His autobiographical novels narrate the novelist's varied experiences, ideologies, love affairs and the cross currents in contemporary age and society. His four autobiographical novels - *Seven Summers* (1951), *Morning Face* (1968), *Confession of a Lover* (1976) and *The Bubble* (1984) form four volumes of his ambitious autobiographical work *The Seven Ages of Men* which was intended to be written in seven volumes.

Apart from these works, he has also written several short stories such as the *Lost Child and Other Stories* (1934), *The Barber's Trade Union and Other Stories* (1942), *The Power of Darkness and Other Stories* (1959) etc. Besides the book specified above, he has also written numerous articles including *How I Become a Writer and What Shakespeare Means to Me*.

He died in the Jehangir hospital Pune, on September 3, 2004 due to his old age complication.

Anand stands unrivalled as a humanist in Indo-English novel. Man is the centre of his novels right from *Untouchable* to *The Bubble*. All his novels are novels of responsibility, of involvement, of creative tension and its resolution, of profound humanism and moral values. Anand's prime aim is to reveal an ideal humanistic vision of life. He writes with the single aim to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies etc. His novels show happy blend of idealism, revolutionary socialism and a comprehensive historical humanism which is rare in contemporary novel.

Sympathy towards Downtroddens

As a novelist and short story writer, Anand has clear and well-defined views on art and literature. Anand believes that art reveals the dignity of human life and personality. The highest art interprets life for us and emboldens us to face the trials of life manfully. In this sense, he believes novel is an appropriate medium to express a writer's concern for humanism. It effectively deals with the human situation and presents the problem of life of man in a comprehensive and convincing manner. Though a committed novelist, Anand does not believe in sacrificing the formal values of fiction. He perceives that novel is a literary form which has its own integral technique. He has always written to glorify the essential dignity of man and to inspire compassion in the hearts of men for the oppressed and the downtrodden. Anand pointed out that the modern writer has to play a great constructive role in the deconstruction of human society.

Anand is a novelist with a vision. To him, technique is a powerful medium for the expression of his humanistic vision. For him, novel is only "a literary form". Plot, characters, setting, style, and language in his novels function together to reveal his vision of man and society. His plots are realistic. In the plots of his novels he has taken within his purview the whole gamut of human relationship in their totality. His plots reveal his extra ordinary power of imaginative realism. When we talk about Anand's narrative technique, his vision of humanism suffused in his plots in unfolded by his narrative devices. The most popular narrative device which Anand employs in his novels is the direct method in which the novelist is a historian narrating from the outside. Likewise, all his characters as Bakha in *Untouchable*, Gauri in *Gauri*, Munoo in *Coolie* etc. are remarkable for intimate touches of realism. He has written about the suffering and tragedy of the downtrodden and the poor whom he had actually seen and known in his childhood and youth. Anand's characters are both types and individuals. They are round characters who grow and develop. Similarly, setting which implies manners, customs, and ways of life forms an integral element in his fictional technique. His settings are realistic and reveal his vision of humanism and sympathy for the underdog. The settings in most of his novels are related with poverty, exploitation, social and economic disparities in convention ridden Indian society.

Although realism and social purpose are presented in all the novels and shorts stories of Anand, yet from the view point of technique he covered mainly four themes– social, cultural, political and autobiographical. As a committed writer with a social purpose, Anand primarily deals with social evils like exploitation, poverty, caste system, misery and wretchedness of the poor and their attempt to get a better life. In this case, Anand always supports the minorities. Among his social novels,

Untouchable is the best one where Bakha, an outcaste sweeper, is depicted as struggling to establish his identity in the traditional Hindu society.

In *Untouchable*, Anand creates a character Bakha, who is in search of his own identity. The conflict within him is shown repeatedly throughout the text, yet it is in the opening pages of the novel that the reader identifies with Bakha's search for an identity. We also know that he does not want to accept the identity allotted to him at birth. He has a strong desire to be like the Tommies he sees throughout his village. Being attracted by the Tommies, Bakha attempts to adopt the outward fashion so that he will garner respect. He proceeds through his day wearing the trousers of one of the Tommies, but this assertion of identity fails to produce the desired result. All the failures of Bakha's attempt to establish his identity is because of the religious orthodoxies of the society. In such societies, lower caste people are treated as non human. Minorities like, untouchables, peasants, serfs, coolies and the suppressed members have no place in their own society. Besides they are deprived of social, political, educational and religious opportunities. In the same way, outcastes are victimized by the so-called higher class people as depicted in *Untouchable*. They are not allowed to enter the house of upper caste, temples and wells. Such unjust treatment creates a fragmentation in the society. A sense of humanism is lost and a feeling of alienation is arisen. The same case is happened to the protagonist of the novel, Bakha. To sum up, we can say social factor is the only factor that compels the untouchables to seek out their own identity so that they could establish themselves as human beings with equal rights and opportunities in the society.

Novel gains a wide currency in English literature in India with the emergence of Anand. His main contribution to literature has been his realistic depiction of Indian life in his major works. He shows in his novels a real suffering, poverty, misery and

injustice of common people of Indian society. He not only express his burning anger at all the evils of society but also shows his deep sympathy for the exploited group.

Anand's novels *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) and *Gauri* (1960) reveals his concern for the downtrodden and underprivileged in India. In fact, Anand gave the novel in Indian English its true Indian character in style, structure and content. Bakha, for example, the protagonist of *Untouchable* represents Anand's deep concern for the subalterns. Bakha is presented as an outcaste cruelly victimized by the high caste Hindus. Along with outcastes the sweepers, the peasants, the plantation labours, the city drudge, the sepoy all emerge alive from his novels. The story of most of his novels is really the story of a changing India.

The Themes of Indian English novels are many and varied like portrayal of widespread social evils and tensions; examinations of the survivals of the past; exploration of the hybrid culture, of the dislocations and conflicts in a tradition-ridden society under the impact of an incipient, half-hearted industrialization, conflict between tradition and modernity etc. This writing has been enriched by such internationally recognized figures as Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Tagore, Jawaharlar, Aurobindo Ghosh, Mahatma Gandhi etc and a number of eminent Indians such as R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand continue to write in English and Indian English literature continues to grow and flourish and attain higher and higher peaks of excellence. It has indeed a bright future.

At present, the most significant feature of the modern Indian literature in English is a respect of emergence of the underdogs as a major literary force. It is the movement for the upliftment of untouchables. This movement criticizes the Brahminical orthodoxies in its robustness. It gained the momentum around 1920 with the leadership of B.A. Ambedkar. Since then the continuous efforts have been made

through writings to remove the social evils like caste system. Now, the new kind of literature has introduced a new world of expression and potentiality of the language of downtrodden people. The writings speaking for the oppressed marginalized and under-privileged have produced the issues of casteism and subalternity.

II. Power, Domination and Resistance

Anand raises the issues of caste discrimination in his novel *Untouchable*.

Caste system has been used as a tool to discriminate and dominate the lower caste people by the high caste Hindus. High class people always try to dominate and exploit the low class people. This concept has the basic relationship with Foucault's theory of "Discourse as Power" and Said's writing on "*Orientalism*". Foucault's principal interest is that the truth is itself a product of relation to power whereas Said's concern is with Orientalism as a way of thinking based on a binary distinction between the inferior and the superior in the context of East-West encounter.

Discourse and Power

Post colonial theories foreground the theories of "Discourse as Power" propagated by Michel Foucault. Foucault propounded the theory that discourse is involved in power. Each discursive practice in the society is the result of power structure operating in the society. It means the power in the society is exercised with discourse. Foucault's view is that the social and political power operate through discourse.

Foucault's theory of discourse foregrounds the philosophy of "Will to Power" propounded by German philosopher Nietzsche. Nietzsche argues that all knowledge is an expression of will to power and that the producer fills the discourse with the fact that suits his aim. The discourse, therefore, is inseparable from power because discourse is ordering force that governs every institution. The discursive formations have enabled institutions to wield power dominating and creating the sub-ordinate class. The Foucauldian power theory "exposes false hierarchies and artificial borders, unwanted claims to knowledge, and illegitimate usurpations of power" (Bertens 147)

as done by the high caste Hindus and temple priests in Hindu society. This means that the institutions that produce the discourses fill it with certain set of standards and 'logos' which are imposed on society, that in turn, raise the institution in the level power.

This is to say that discourse is always inseparable from power because it is discourse through which certain criteria of 'Truth' is prescribed by the governing institutions that have authority to speak. Gupto in his book *Healing Thought on Tender Theory* writes:

Thus what is truth is what is said or made statement about a thing. That means truth is determined by the power, the institution like patriarchy exercises over the female (just as example here). To exercise power one needs knowledge. Or to see it differently what is power is what truth is and that is ultimately knowledge. All of them are intertwined.
(117)

Foucault is in the opinion that 'Truth' and 'Power' is interrelated. The knowledge of religious books gives the high caste Brahmins and temple priests in the caste system the authority to exercise the power by means of religious discourse as Foucault in his essay "Truth and Power" describes. He says, "Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produces and sustains it [. . .] it indicates and which extends it. A 'regime of truth'" (1145). This is to say that discourses are embodiment of power, and it is the discourse through which speaks the power of ruling class. The power to govern and control:

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions

would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirit, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints. And it induces regular effects of power. (Foucault 1144)

Similar to the Foucauldian notion, religious discourses are also the product of religious power. Temple is the power point in Hindu religion. Temple priests are the rule makers and they make the rules and laws to dominate the lower caste people with the help of religious discourses. These rules and laws are supposed to be the 'Truth' opined by supremely God. Thus temple is involved in power formation by means of religious discourses. There are refined rules and regulations to support and continue the existing caste system which, in reality, are created by Brahminical thoughts.

Domination and Subordination

In his novel *Untouchable*, Anand has divided the Hindu society into two main groups, touchables and untouchables with many sub-groups within them. Touchables, as being superiors, naturally try to dominate and subordinate the untouchables but untouchables try to revolt and resist against the caste Hindus' domination and exploitation. Thus, Anand's concept seems to be similar to Said's concept of Orientalism and Spivak's subaltern resistance.

Edward Said, the follower of Michel Foucault, extended the theory of discourse and linked the theory of discourse with the real social struggle. Its notion of discourse is wielded with power. He propagated that the discourses are the result of the real power struggle in the society. Said studies and analyses the relations between West and East, and the role of Orientalism as a governing force in their relationship.

Orientalism designates the long term images, stereotypes and general ideology about the Orient as 'the others'. "It also refers to [. . .] the Occident (the outsiders) looking in/on/at the Orient-in fact 'watching' the East and endeavouring to explain and interpret it" (Cuddon 618). According to Said, Orientalism is a huge body of texts that construct certain stereotype images of the Orient. These stereotypes, however, are accepted as self-evident truths and facts. Orientalism is also the Western projection of will to govern over the Orient. The Orient is dominated and governed by the discourses produced by the Orientalists because the discourses make possible Orient as 'subject class'. Orientalist's discourses fashion their modes of thought and working style by developing confidence in them, which in turn, increases their power and authority over the Orient.

As the Orientalists' discourses, Brahminical discourses also try to prove the superiority of their own caste in comparison with the outcaste people. The untouchables are studied on the basis of 'knowledge' produced by the Hindu elites, which is based on stereotype images of the caste Hindus.

Caste Hindus' notion of untouchables is a discursive reality in which the actual untouchable is absent and rather is presented by the caste Hindu Brahmins. The untouchables become the Brahminical construction. This discourse creates impressions and representations of collective whole. It creates dialogue utilizing binary oppositions such as we/they and us/them as Said in his book *Orientalism* writes about the dominating views of Orientalists:

[. . .] Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching

it, setting it, rulling over it: in short Orietnalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (3)

Thus the distinctions of superiors and inferiors are made because of the power formation. The religious and political power and institutional support perpetuate myth that the superiors can represent the inferiors without any resistance. It is caused because of the tradition. Moreover, in Hindu religion casteism is a more general pattern of relationship between binary opposition of the touchables and the untouchables.

Foucault's perspective is related within the network of power, and for Said, the West represents the East. Said's theory works within the framework of a conscious and determined effort at sub-ordination. For Said, Orientalism has traditionally served with hegemonic purposes. Hegemony, In Antonio Gramsci's thought, is a method of domination by consent. This is the way the ruling class succeeds oppressing class to make ruling class values and interests central in the society. The other classes become complicit in their own oppression and the result is a kind of velvet domination. For Said this theory of representation has always been a part of the damaging discourse.

Subaltern Resistance

Subaltern theories are focused on resistance. Center to these interests are issues of race, ethnicity, language, gender, identity, class and above all power. Their enterprise is of neo-classical relation between oppressors and oppressed. The theories of power and domination and subaltern resistance are applied not only for the colonizer and colonized but with the relation between oppressors and oppressed class at large.

What all these theorists and critiques agree on is that they are all engaged in a reassessment of the traditional relationship between oppressors and oppressed class. It can be done by the radical deconstruction of the traditional lines of the imperialist perspective. "This does not mean a rejection of Western categories but signals the beginning of a new and autonomous relations to them" (Das, Veena 310).

The subaltern was unheard and could not get any place to be heard. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak for the first time feels the voice of subaltern in her inner sense and raises the question of subalternity. In her essay "Can Subaltern Speak?" she writes, "Let us now move to consider the margins (one can just as well say the silent, silenced centre) of the circuit marked out by this epistemic violence, men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribal, the lowest strata of the urban sub-proletariat" (78). This view of Spivak is similar with the view of Anand. His fiction means "a new awareness about the neglected and ignored sections of the mass" (Machwe, *Modernity* 172).

Spivak has turned her attention towards the large majority that has left no marks upon history. The majority was not allowed to make their voice audible or they could not make their voice heard by themselves. "Millions and millions have come and gone under the colonial dispensation without living a trace: men, but even more so women" (Bertens 211). Thus, critiques and theorists move forward with the issues of subaltern people with a new concept which is known as "Subaltern Studies" that deal with the emancipation of the subaltern groups.

The first emancipatory act that the *Subaltern Studies* project is to restore the tribes, castes or other such groups as the historical beings. The subaltern should not be treated as passive beings in history. Instead, they should be portrayed as active as the modern relations in which they try to defy the domination imposed upon them. The

critiques, like Veena Das, oppose the view of the subaltern history on the basis of British official records. She comments:

Reserving common on the supposed 'inaccessibility' of non official records, I would agree with Pandey's sensitive statement that what made an event in colonial history was focused around the question of 'law and order', its consolidation and breakdown. Thus, to construct the moment of defiance is also to construct the form of legal-rational domination. (314)

Spivak represents the voice of different among the recent theorists. She, however, tries to be attentive to the difference or heterogeneity. She employs her theories linking with the marginalized group of the society. And she is conscious about the people with the lower status such as outcastes, the labourers and women who are invisible and doubly marginalized; first from the politicians and second from the dominant groups. She means to speak against the domination of the higher class people that are similar with the views of Anand. He wrote *Untouchable* with the same purpose as Spivak's subaltern theories. Anand and Spivak both are motivated by the desire to save the subaltern from the misrepresentation and misinterpretation and above all they want not establish subaltern as the historical beings.

Anand's *Untouchable* shows the construction of the untouchable through the imaginative representation of the high caste Hindus. It is the false discrimination emerged from the power formation. The knowledge which the castes Hindus have is a constructed knowledge. The fact is that they have created a loose system of statements which are supposed to be the real. Caste system is the theory of the high caste elites to dominate the lower castes. It has been traditionally served as the hegemonic purposes.

The presentation of the untouchables as the dirt, impure, uncouth, unclean, who eat lowly things, drink alcohol and live in a dirty place, is a form of caste Hindus' image. Such allegories given to the untouchables are supposed valid. Such allegories are mainly developed just to prove them inferiors. The narrator's description proves that all the allegories projected to blame Bakha are false images:

'What a dexterous workman!' The onlooker would have said. And though his job was dirty he remained comparatively clean. he didn't even soil his sleeves, handling the commodes, sweeping and scrubbing them. 'A bit superior to his job', they always said, 'not the kind of man who ought to be doing this.' For he looked intelligent, even sensitive, with a short of dignity that does not belong to the ordinary scavenger, who is as a rule uncouth and unclean. (*Untouchable* 8)

The untouchables are created by the high caste Hindus. They have given various identical characters. In short, casteism is a body of knowledge in which untouchable is a kind of high caste Hindus' projection and will to govern over the outcastes.

Writing on Hinduism, Kancha Ilaiah states:

All the Gods and Goddess and institutionalized, modified and contextualized in a most brazen anti-Dalit bahujan mode. All Hindu Gods were opposed to Dalit bahujans. The religion, from its very inception, has a fascist nature. To suppress the revolts of Dalit bahujans, the Brahminical forces instigated their Gods. (qtd. in Sastry)

Untouchables have not seriously been understood or studied. Rather they have been created as a necessity of imagination. The relation between touchables and

untouchables is a relation of power and domination and of varying degree of what Gramsci calls 'a complex hegemony.'

This has been the structure of caste system and untouchables have been created as the lowest among them in nothing more than a structure of lies and myths. Casteism is the product of myth, legend, assumption and theory. It is as if the magnetism of the untouchables inspired caste Hindus to create and recreate an outcaste to be uncouth, unclean, dirt and impure and perhaps more than this, immoral. But, ironically, the pundits or the priests of the temple themselves are dirt and immoral. The narrator in *Untouchable* writes:

And he recalled the familiar sight of all those naked Hindu men and women who could be seen squatting in the open, outside the city, every morning. 'So shameless,' he thought; 'They don't seem to care who looks at them, sitting there like that. It is an account of that the goras white men call them kala log zamin par hagne walla (Blackman, you who relieve yourself on the ground). Why don't they come here?' (11)

The priests themselves are immoral. Pundit Kali Nath tries to molest Sohini in the store house while she is cleaning the store. Bakha and his sister Sohini follow conversation after the priest has tried to molest Sohini:

'Tell me Sohini,' he said, turning fiercely to his sister, 'how far did he go?'

She sobbed and didn't reply.

'Tell me! Tell me ! I will kill him if [. . .]' he shouted.

'He-e-e just teased me,' she at least yielded. 'And then when I was bending down to work, he came and held me by my breasts.'

(*Untouchable* 54)

But nobody could try to punish the high caste Hindu priest because of his position which is held high in the society. All the members in the society believe that the priests is a moral person and they support the priests. "'Polluted, polluted, polluted!' shouted the Brahmin below. The crowd above him took the cue and shouted after him, waving their hands, some in fear, and others in anger, but all in a terrible orgy of excitement. One of the crowds struck out an individual note" (*Untouchable* 53).

"[. . .] *Subaltern Studies* make an important point in establishing the centrality of historical moment of rebellion in understanding the subaltern as subject of their own histories" (Das, Veena 312). In this sense, Anand's *Untouchable* is an effort to create the history of lower caste people. In *Untouchable*, the society is divided into two classes, the oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressors always try to exploit the oppressed class. But the oppressed class has dual nature in their characteristics; defiance and submissiveness. Submissiveness is the theological nature which reflects submission to the authority whereas the defiance is the endeavour to create their own history. The protagonist in *Untouchable* acts to create the history of his own kind. He crosses the boundary created by the high caste people and breaks the rules and laws of caste system imposed on him.

Thus, Bakha leaves the records to the history. This is the first rebellious task Bakha performs for his emancipation. Bakha defies the imaginative construction created by the caste Hindus that untouchables are dirt. He disagrees with the view that untouchables should not touch the caste Hindus. Bakha is not a passive fellow to construct the history of subaltern group. He constructs the moment of defiance. Bakha

could construct the moment of defiance because he had potentialities to do so from his childhood. The narrator in *Untouchable* writes:

He fell back to a memory of the adventures he had had here in his childhood. He remembered the time in his early days when he used to come to the heath with all the other boys, to fight battles for imaginary fort they had built by fixing a flag on the top of the hill. [. . .] How enthusiastic all the boys used to feel about him then! They had made him their *jernel* (general). (84)

The traces of rebellious zeal are, thus, embodied in the form of records in *Untouchable*.

Submissiveness is not only the voluntary sacrifice in favour of rich and high caste people. It is also a means of revolt against them. Lekha, for instance, is an example of the character of this kind.

Lakha is the father of Bakha. It is an interesting event that Lakha manages the medicine to his son Bakha when he is a small child. Lakha goes to the house of Hakim Bhagawan Das in his very town to call him for Bakha's treatment. Lakha can not enter into the Hakims house as he is an outcaste. He requests many passers-by but nobody hears him. Here the narrator in *Untouchable* further states the Lakha's own word:

So I ran back to the Hakim's house. Your mother shouted and said: "What is the good of now?" But I ran and ran. When I got to the Hakim's house I just lifted the curtain and went straight in. I caught the Hakims's feet and said: 'Still there is a little breath left in my child's

body, Hakim ji, I shall be your slave all my life. *The meaning of my life is my child*. Hakimji, take pity. God will be kind to you. (72)

What is here significance is that if Lakha does not cross the boundary to call Hakim Ji, it will be impossible to save Bakha's life and if Hakim ji does not treat Bakha, he will show himself as a mean person in the elites' history. Thus, Lakha makes Hakim ji to treat Bakha breaking the existing social system. What Gautam Bhadra says in his essay "The Mentality of Subalternity" is rightly applied here. He says that "from recent researcher it can be shown that, time and again, the subordinate classes have risen in rebellion because of their faith in some moral order, out of an urge to restore justice" (90). Bhadra further concludes, "Thus collaboration and resistance, the two elements in the mentality of subalternity, merge and coalesce to make up a complex and contradictory consciousnesses. How this consciousness overcomes and transcends its contradictions is another question" (91).

III. Quest for Identity in Anand's *Untouchable*

Plight of Untouchability

In *Untouchable*, Bakha is presented as an innocent outcaste who is cruelly victimized by the higher caste people in the traditional Hindu society. In such traditional society, the caste system is prevailed. In this system, lower caste people are treated as non-human. They can't touch the higher caste people. They even are not allowed to enter the temples, wells and houses of higher caste people. This is the strict rule and regulation of the society. Higher caste people are economically, academically and socially powerful. So whatever is said by them, becomes the rule and regulation of a traditional society. It is acceptable for all the people of society. Such rule and regulation is to be followed by the outcastes like Bakha. Bakha, here in the novel, feels alienated because of unjust treatments of the society. He is economically, religiously and academically excluded. So he represents pain, torture, and loss of self-identity of poverty stricken and low caste people. He reflects the problem of contemporary Indian society.

On the other hand, Bakha the protagonist of the novel is in search of his own identity. He does not want to accept the identity given to him at his birth. He sometimes expresses his anger and disgust towards the higher caste people who have behaved him as a lower caste and sometimes he shows his desire to be like the Tommies he sees throughout his village. All his activities guide him towards the quest for his identity.

We like to see that the very beginning of the novel has shown the glimpse of identification of the outcastes in the society. The real miserable living condition of the

outcastes is portrayed where live the scavengers, the leather workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and others. Anand writes:

The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in the two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside the 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)

These above mentioned lines vividly show the real living status of outcastes. It is, in another sense, true and real reflection of traditional Hindu society where caste system is prevailed. Groups of different backgrounds and castes are divided and live separately. In this novel also the so-called untouchables are living separately. Their living place is termed as 'colony'. It is, in a sense, their identity. This means the society makes their identity and they accept it without any question. Anand's *Untouchable* reflects this fact.

Anand is a reformist novelist. He wants to make the society run smoothly. Reformation, brotherness, fraternity, equality and reconciliation are his main objects which are presented significantly through his protagonists. Anand's dream of classless society is seen in Bakha too. That's why Bakha tries to be free from the chain of caste system. He wants to go beyond the injustice of the society so that he can find out his own identity. Anyway Bakha's all efforts are somehow a mission to establish his own distinct identity and to remove all the evils of the society. Bakha is in unnerved condition by the misbehaviour of the so-called higher caste. All is done in the name of religion. It is stated in *Untouchable* as:

He was completely unnerved. His eyes were covered with darkness. He could not see anything. His tongue and throat were parched. He wanted to utter a cry, a cry of fear, but his voice failed him. He opened his mouth wide to speak. It was no use. Beads of sweat covered his forehead. He tried to raise himself from the awkward attitude of prostration, but his limbs had no strength left in them. (52)

The society itself has made the untouchables inferior. It has given them a kind of lost identity. They are known and identified as second class. Such a lost identity makes them weak in their own society. As a result, they can not react and raise voices against the tyranny of higher caste people.

Bakha feels insulted in due course of time. Being an untouchable he is treated as nonhuman. Everywhere he feels alienated. In temple also he is excluded from getting chance of worshipping the God. When he goes to the temple the priest shouts: "Polluted, Polluted" (53). This incident is presented as:

The distance, the distance! A temple can be polluted according to the Holy Books by a low class man coming within sixty-nine yards of it, and here he was actually on the steps, at the door. We are ruined. We will need to have a sacrificial fire in order to purify ourselves and our shrine. (53)

Religion has become the means of domination. Lower castes are dominated in the name of religion. It is all made by higher class people only. No religion says to dominate other. Every man is equal in the eyes of God. But here people interprets religion in their own way. Here power plays dominant role and whatever the higher caste says becomes the truth in the society.

Now Bakha has realized his real identity and position in the locality. He has known well that his status is like that of a dog. He is every much humiliated in the eyes of the people. He thinks:

They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's way I came here. It is only the Hindus, who are not sweepers. For them I am a sweeper, sweeper—untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word!

Untouchable! I am an Untouchable. (43)

This is how the feeling of inferiority occurs in Bakha's mind. He thinks he has lost his social position. Being an untouchable is the main cause of such feeling. He has realized his real degraded and pitiable condition inside his mind and outside in the society. He is always severely abused and sometimes beaten cruelly. All rights are suspended and made victim. Such a realization brings a new light in his mind. Realization of his real position in the society forces him to find out his new identity.

Efforts to Acquire New Identity

In the course of searching his self-identity, Bakha first expresses his disgust and disagreement towards the society where lies discrimination, inequalities, mistrust, caste system etc. He is shocked and begin to feel hatred towards himself and the society. He thinks, it is all because of the society. The narrator says in the novel *Untouchable* that:

His feelings would rise like spurts of smoke of a half-smothered fire, in fitful, unbalanced jerks when the recollection of some abuse or rebuke he had suffered kindled a spark in the ashes of remorse inside him.

And in the smoky atmosphere of his mind arose dim ghosts of forms

peopling the scene he had been through. The picture of the touched man stood in the forefront, among several indistinct 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. 'Why was all this?' He asked himself in the soundless speech of cells receiving and transmitting emotions, which was his usual way of communicating with himself. 'Why was all this fuss? Why was I so humble? I could have struck him!' (42-43)

These above lines show the inability of Bakha to do something against the people who torture him. He can do nothing because he has been entangled in the caste system. So he tolerates anything unjust done to him and his family, because he is a lower caste and suppressed by the untouchability.

Bakha, as a modern child of India, now is not ready to endure the evils of discrimination as his ancestors used to endure it. The tyrannical society itself made him revolutionary. Now he makes efforts to give way out to his resentments and disagreements. Although the society stops untouchables to enter to the temple, he has challenged such norms. He has shown his revolutionary attitudes towards the so-called higher class. He wants to establish himself as a human being in his locality because until then he has been treated as a non human.

Bakha wants to be free from all kinds of bonds. To get respect and prestige in the society, he wants to change his profession so that he can find freedom, "He came of Peasant stock, his ancestors having come down in the social scale by their change of profession. The blood of his peasant ancestors, free to live their own life even though they have been slaves" (49).

Anand is much concerned about creating a new awareness among the neglected and ignored sections of the mass, the subalterns. He has a sympathy towards low class people who live a miserable life even after hard labour. He has always written to glorify the essential dignity of men and to inspire compassion in the hearts of men for the oppressed and the downtrodden. His pattern of writing generally is that, when his protagonists are born in economically poor, underprivileged, downtrodden family, they start realizing the contemporary exploitative situation. They search for a favourable situation because they disagree with the prevailing norms and values of the society. Finally, either they defy or alienate or die and their alienation or death creates a sympathy towards them and makes the general people aware.

In one context when Sohini, Bakha's sister, is seduced by Priest Kalinath, Bakha is ready to attack that priest. He says that he could show this power over the priest. The narrator says:

He felt he could kill them all. He looked ruthless, a deadly pale and livid with anger and rage. A similar incident he had heard about, rose to his mind in a flash. A young rustic had teased a friend's sister as she was coming home through the fields after collecting fuel. Her brother had gone straight to the fields with an axe in his hand and murdered the fellow. 'Such an insult!' he thought. 'That he should attack a young and innocent girl. And then the hypocrisy of it! This man, a Brahmin, he lies and accuses me of polluting him, after-father of fathers, I hope he didn't violate my sister'. (54)

Such an anger towards the corrupted priest shows Bakha's rebellious nature. His rebellious nature indicates that he no longer can remain an obedient and tolerant boy. It seems he has changed his views towards the people. Such an attacking nature

clearly shows that he wants to change himself into a new Bakha. He wants to find out new identity of himself so that people will think twice before doing wrong with him.

Bakha differs from the general run of sweepers in that he is clean, is a champion at all games and has principles with a sense of duty. But in his physical inability to revolt, his submission, his habitual subservience to superiors who either insult or patronize him, he is one with the vast majority of the outcastes. After heredity and two thousand years of oppression have done their work on him, there are few resources left in him. He goes about his job wearing the smile of humility customary among his kind. The sepoy Charat Singh's promise to give him a hockey stick brings forth that trait of servility which he has inherited from his forefathers:

He was grateful, grateful, haltingly grateful, falteringly grateful, stumblingly grateful, so grateful that he did not know how he could walk the ten yards to the corner to be out of the sight of his benevolent and generous host. The whole atmosphere was changed with embarrassment. He felt uncomfortable as he walked away. "Strange! strange! wonderful! kind man! I did not know he was so kind. I should have known. He always has such a humorous way about-him! Kind good man! He gave me a new stick, a brand-new stick!" (124)

In the novel, Charat Singh is the only character who is generous to Bakha. Having a sense of humanity, Mr. Singh also provides him a hockey stick and makes him think that there may be somebody in the society who accept the existence of the outcastes.

When Bakha comes in contact with Tommies, his intensive desire to search his identity comes in a new mode. Tommies' treatment of Bakha makes him happy and feel superior among his fellow outcastes. The narrator says:

The Tommies had treated him as a human being and he had learnt to think of himself as superior to his fellow-outcastes. Otherwise, the rest of the outcastes, with the possible exception of 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 Bakhain turn, were content with their lot. (2)

This shows that Bakha feels superior among his friends. Treated well and kindly by the Tommies, a kind of humanistic awareness is seen in Bakha. He feels his identity is distinct from others. It surely encourages him to go ahead with a new vision.

Bakha's admiration of the Tommies is used to other good purposes as well. It enables him to establish his identity and to escape temporarily from his present and real existence. He has copied everything done by the Tommies. He thinks that the Tommies are superiors in the society. So everything done by them will be acceptable to all. So to gain respect, innocent Bakha imitates Tommies 'life style i.e. called 'fashun'. Tommies' life style and fashion have greatly affected his mind. The narrator mentions:

[. . .] When he first went to live at the British regimental barracks with his uncle. He had had glimpses, during his sojourn there, of the life the Tommies lived, sleeping on strange, low canvas beds covered tightly

with blankets, eating eggs, drinking tea and wine in tin mugs, going to parade and then walking down to the bazaar with cigarettes in the mouth and small silver-mounted canes in their hands. And he had soon become possessed with an overwhelming desire to live their life. He had been told they were sahibs, superior people. He had felt that to put on their clothes made one a sahib too. (3)

Such a strong desire to become superior Bakha wants to adopt the false life style of the British Tommies. But there is something laughable about a sweeper who forgoes his few homely comforts for what he calls "fashun" and who says to himself: "I will look like a sahib . . . And I shall walk like them. Just as they do, in twos, with Chota as my companion. But I have no money to buy things" (3). It is pathetic too, when the fantasy breaks down and he realizes that "except for his English clothes there was nothing English in his life" (4).

Bakha does all such imitations to cover his real identity. He is eager to create a new identity which is ultimately false. He falsely thinks the outward fashion of Tommies will make him sahib. But his thought is wrong because the cloth never covers the identity of somebody given to him biologically and socially. Rather what can we say is that he wants to jump from one identity to another. The narrator says:

He had begged one Tommy for the gift of a pair of trousers. The man had given him a pair of breeches which he had to spare. A Hindu sepoy, for the good of his own soul, had been kind enough to make an endowment of a pair of boots and puttees. For the other items he had gone down to the rag-seller's shop in the town. (3)

Bakha naively assumes that the mere adoption of the outward fashion of a sahib will collect him respect and prestige in the society. By doing such, he thinks, his identity will be changed. That means he is on the way of searching a new identity. He proceeds through his day wearing the trousers of one of the Tommies, but this assertion of identity fails to produce the desired result. Instead, Bakha looks silly-a mere amusement for others to utter their petty jokes and insult: "His father had been angry at this extravagance, and the boys of the outcastes' colony, even Chota and Ram Charan, cut jokes with him on account of his new rig-out, calling him 'Pilpali sahib' (imitation sahib)" (4).

C.D Narasimhaiah's *The Swan and the Eagle* maintains that Bakha is desperately trying to escape the connotation the title of the novel asserts over his identity. Bakha's desire to imitate the Tommies is important because "he can preserve his identity only to the extent that he can be conscious of his superiority" (112). Anand quickly dispels Bakha's consciousness of superiority when Bakha comes to the realization that though he wears English cloth, he is not English. Narasimhaiah further says that "in the numerous episodes which he puts his character through, the novelist tries to give him his identity in the very act of our witnessing the world deny it to him or to those around us" (113). The importance Anand places on Bakha's quest for identity leaves the reader questioning the viability of Bakha as the most appropriate figure to challenge the abuses of untouchability.

The awareness Bakha generates and the feeling of protest and rebellion he develops against the social oppression in the novel symbolizes the awareness among untouchables in the community and the entire social emancipation in the days to come.

The hero of the novel *Untouchable* is in quest for identity and meaning in life. He is tortured by the so-called upper class, their main aim is to oppress when dealing with the lower class. Searching for identity, Bakha goes everywhere but he is disillusioned by the rhetoric solution given by different people and institutions.

Significantly, Bakha is transported to a higher level of awareness of his identity as a human being when he happens to join a large gathering of people listening to Mahatma Gandhi. Though Gandhi's exhortations do not help him to achieve a break-through to a new identity structure, they bring home to him an intensified sense of the significance of work. His participation in Mahatma Gandhi's speech shows that he is introspective to solve the problems imposed on untouchables.

If Bakha is to be seen as a representative of his class, his inability even to articulate the words of Gandhi, for example, puts him at an immediate disadvantage. In fairness to Anand, the portrayal of Bakha is complex, and he certainly allows Bakha to be rebellious. This rebellion, however, is always internal and uttered with a silent voice. Choosing the path of least resistance, Anand makes his protagonist search his new identity.

Though Gandhi's words are significant to bring an awareness of identity in Bakha, they are rhetorical which is confusing to him. Gandhi mainly talks about religion. He regards untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism and asserts that it is satanic to assume anyone in Hinduism is born polluted. Gandhi also criticizes the untouchables by saying that they have to "cultivate habits of cleanliness" that they must get rid of their "evil habits" such as "drinking liquor, gambling and eating carrion". They must, as Gandhi says, "cease to accept leavings from the plates of higher caste, however clean they may be represented to be" (139). In essence, he advocates emancipation by purification. Yet there is an inherent dichotomy in

Gandhi's rhetoric because the existing system doesnot allow for the untouchables to become purified primarily because their fundamental existence is rooted in the profession of filth.

Thus Bakha finds confusion in Gandhi's rhetorical solution of untouchability. Gandhi's words are full of elements of oppression to him. That's why Gandhi can't truely address the actual plight and identity of the outcastes. His speech is like only the glass without tea.

Christian Missionary Colonel Hutchinson is the next person who seems to advocate in favour of the untouchables. But he can neither articulate Christian belief nor persuade Bakha of the benefits of conversion. Instead, the Colonel breaks into biblical song, only further confusing Bakha. He is unable to grasp the concept of original sin and so responds by reflecting, "he didn't like the idea of being called a sinner. Further, the colonel persuades Bakha to change his religion. But Bakha comes to believe that the religion doesn't change one's identity rather replacing one faith with another will complicate the matter. It never solves the problem of untouchability and identical crisis.

Towards the end of the novel, Anand proceeds to offer his last possible solution to the alleviation of the problem of untouchability. Through the poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar Anand wants to destroy caste, inequalities and unalterable vocations. It will certainly establish the identity of the outcastes. The poet further says:

Well, we must destroy caste, we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognise an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone. The Mahatma didn't say so, but the legal and sociological basis of caste having been broken down

by the British-Indian penal code, which recognizes the rights of every man before court, caste is now mainly governed by profession. When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain Untouchables. And they can do that soon, for the first thing we will do when we accept the machine, will be to introduce the machine which clear dung without anyone having to handle it- the flush system. Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society. (145-146)

He advocates that a change in profession will free the untouchables from the bond of social rules and that they can live freely with their own identity and the way to achieve this change is through the implementation of a flush system. This solution is somehow good in comparison to political Gandhi and Christian religion.

Gandhi, the Christian missionary and the poet, all of them try to solve the problem of the untouchables but ultimately fail to present appropriate solutions. Gandhi wants to solve this problem by blaming untouchables that they are cleaning Hindu society. He suggests untouchables to get rid of their bad habits like gambling, drinking etc. He gives emphasis on 'emancipation by purification' which makes confused to Bakha. On the other hand Colonel Hutchinson persuades Bakha to change his religion which is not ultimate solution. He is surprised, when the Christian missionary says that we are all born sinner. He is sure that he have never done any wrongs in his life. So the Christian opinions makes him unhappy. But the solution given by the poet is a little satisfactory to him. Changing in profession, destroying caste and using flush system can play a positive role in establishing a new existence in the life of the untouchables.

Observing all the incidents and activities of the protagonist of the novel *Untouchable* we can point out that Bakha is searching a new identity in the society. He is dissatisfied with the rule and regulation of the society. He wants to live freely with equal rights and opportunities. That's why he sometimes falsely immitates the outward fashion of Tommies and sometimes challenges the religious rules by entering into temples. All his activities are guided directly and indirectly, towards the searching of new existence. But we know that everywhere he gets only failure, torture, and unhappiness. The social caste system which is created by the higher caste is to be followed by all. It is the ultimate truth of a traditional Hindu society, which is clearly presented in this novel. Anyway the victimized hero Bakha is a sympathetic character and all our sympathy goes to him.

IV. Conclusion

Anand's *Untouchable* draws the attention of the society on predicaments faced by outcaste people like Bakha; It also presents the conflicts and contradictions with the Indian Hindu society. Society is constructed with the base of religions. So religious orthodoxies are found everywhere. Caste system is one of the major orthodoxies deeply rooted in the society. Such system creates fragmentation and alienation among the people. People suppress people in the name of caste, so sense of humanity is lost. Such tyranny is bearable to some extent. But if it crosses the boundary, voices begin to raise against it. Then a new identity comes into existence and the old one disappears. These facts are presented vividly through the medium of the protagonist called Bakha who is outcaste himself.

Bakha, in *Untouchable*, represents pain and torture, loss of self-identity of poverty stricken people. He reflects the problem of contemporary Indian society. Through the protagonist Anand tries to reveal all the misdeeds of traditional Hindu society. How a innocent boy is cruelly victimized, is pathetically presented in *Untouchable*. Anand makes his protagonist revolutionary with the aim of removing all the evils of society. Bakha tries his best to reform the society. He rejects all the traditional things which is unfavourable to him, which makes his identity lost. So he works hard to remove all evils of society and establish his own identity so that he can live without any obstacles in the same society.

Social discrimination is the prime thing depicted in *Untouchable*. Society is divided into two main groups-the higher class and the lower class. Higher caste people belong to higher group and outcastes untouchables belong to the lower one. This division of society has been existed from the ancient time. People are treated according to their caste. Lower caste people are treated badly. They are regarded as

non human. They are thought as dirt. Even they are not allowed to enter the temple, wells and houses of higher caste people. If they do such things even by chance, they are punished severely. Such a inhuman behaviour is to be tolerated. There is no any way to them. Nobody speaks on the favour of them. Rather they get abuse and scold. All these bitter experiences is experienced by Bakha. This is his reward for his service to the society where he lives. He is academically, religiously and socially biased.

In *Untouchable*, Anand depicts social system as a dominant factor that compels the untouchables to seek out their own identity. Untouchables feel that their identity is lost. They can do nothing freely. They have to do whatever the society wants. That means the society itself runs them not they run the society. Having no position in the society they feel fragmented and alienated. Because of such alienation and humiliation Bakha makes effort to change his identity. He wants to be like a sahib to escape discrimination. So he imitates everything from Tommies-their lifestyle and fashion. He falsely thinks that the mere adoption of the outward fashion of a sahib will garner him respect. He begs one Tommy for the gift of a pair of trousers and proceeds through his day wearing the trousers of the Tommy. Though the Tommy gives him trousers, he has no money to buy other things. In such a condition of poverty also Bakha has strong desire to be like a sahib who, he thinks, is a superior man. Bakha thinks, by becoming a sahib, he will change his identity. But poor boy never thinks English fashion does not make one English. He clearly has trouble accepting the identity allotted to him at birth. He is desperately trying to escape the connotation the title of the novel asserts over his identity.

In the novel, Bakha wants to change his profession because he thinks his present profession is the main cause of discrimination and misbehaviour. There is no freedom in his profession. Anywhere and anytime he has to be ready for his job.

Cleaning the latrines is his job which narrows his personality. So he wants to be free from all social bonds by changing his job. This is the very job that makes him untouchable from the ancient time.

In course of time Bakha meets Gandhi, Christian Missionary and a poet. But their rhetorical solutions don't solve the problem of untouchability rather it confuses him. His desire of finding a new mode of ideology which will help him to live a proper life, from the great persons comes to an end. Christian Missionary only tries to persuade him to become Christian. He assures that we all are born sinner. But Bakha doesn't like the idea of confessing as a sinner because he had never done any wrongs in his life. Gandhi's idea of blaming the untouchables is full of oppression to Bakha. But the poet's solution of changing the profession is a little bit satisfactory to him. He thinks change in profession will change his identity. It is the ultimate solution, he thinks, on the path of quest for identity.

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