



Poverty, Hunger, and Exploitation in the Selected Novels of Mulk Raj Anand

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Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand's novels deeply depict poverty, hunger, and exploitation in India, often focusing on the experiences of marginalized communities like the untouchables and labourers. His works, deeply rooted in social realism, explore the harsh realities of caste discrimination, class conflict, and the dehumanizing impact of colonialism on the poor. Anand's protagonists, drawn from the lower strata of society, face a constant struggle for dignity and survival against systemic oppression. *Untouchable*, Mulk Raj Anand's first novel, is a highly charged intellectual discourse on the karmic illusion of work and untouchability. *Coolie* is a humanist talk about human work, a heartbreaking story of human suffering. *Munoo* represents these countless children whose childhood is lost through endless physical work. Love, care, and money are strange words to him. Mulk Raj Anand keeps revisiting the topic of human suffering. The third novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, is dedicated to the evils of the British class system and exploitation.

Keywords: poverty, hunger, exploitation, marginalisation, caste discrimination, and class conflict.

Mulk Raj Anand, a socially committed novelist has produced a good deal of literature. He has written more than a dozen novels and about seventy short stories. He focused his attention on the sufferings, misery and wretches of the poor as a result of the exploitation of the downtrodden classes of the Indian society. His themes mainly deal with the poverty, society hunger and exploitation. In addition to being a

prolific writer, Mulk Raj Anand is also socially conscious. He focused his attention on the anguish, misery, and suffering that the poor experience as a result of the exploitation of the oppressed segments of Indian society. His main topics are society and poverty, hunger and exploitation.

Anand's strong support for the weak and disenfranchised is evident in his book

Untouchable, against the oppression, persecution and humiliation they have endured for so long. A writer, the prince of the pen, is the genuine voice of the populace, particularly the helpless and untouchable victims by tyranny and unjust oppression since the dawn of time. And as a result, Mulk Raj Anand has described the poor in a horrible way.

The events of Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* occur between 1930 and 1940. Slavery, poverty and the brutal exploitation of the people were all commonplace. Within this book, the characters belong to the disadvantaged group in society. This demonstrates how hunger, poverty, and low-class society are accepted by high-class society.

Therefore, the author used themes of poverty, hunger, social status and personal abuse. The concepts of exploitation are best represented by the character of Sohini, Bakha's sister in *Untouchable*. She is a perfect illustration of caste and sex exploitation. Gulabo would naturally despise those who were among the outcasts. She becomes the victim of being sexually exploited because of her poverty and caste.

Mulk Raj Anand described his childhood experiences in *Untouchable*. Anand's character is based on a friend from his early years who was degraded by his own mother, whom Anand loved as a hero, for being a sweeper. Anand loved his mother as a hero because she had a sweeper kid. Anand would always remember his own family made fun of and insulted that sweeper boy. He gave a speak out against the abuse of a sweeper boy by using Bakha's character in his first book, *Untouchable*. Bakha suffers as untouchable even though he hasn't done anything wrong.

When the high-caste Brahmin slaps him for touching him inappropriately, it makes him aware of who he was. He soon finds himself in another embarrassing situation at the steps of the temple that makes him even angrier inside. But the priest's abuse of his sister makes him

respond violently to him. Saros Cowasjee writes in his book, "So Many Freedoms" says it rightly. But because of the rules his bosses have set, he is safe behind bars like a tiger in a cage to protect themselves from the anger of those they take advantage of.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie* looks at the harsh truth of exploitation, malnutrition and poverty in Munoo, the main character, tells us about India before it became independent. The book gives criticisms about the colonial rule and social systems that keep these situations going, stressing the pain of poor and working-class people.

Munoo's trips from his small village to many towns and cities show how common poverty is that puts him and other people in danger. The story shows how there are no need, for things like food, shelter and medical care, which left people defenceless and fighting for their lives. Munoo's time as a coolie, which means a porter or labourer, shows how hard it can be to make ends meet. People who are poor don't have many chances. A common theme is the main characters' constant fight for food, which often leads to famine and hunger. Munoo's experiences with hunger and the things he does to get food draw attention to the hopelessness that comes from not having enough food and being poor. The book shows how different things are when there is no fault by the poor compared to the relative wealth of the rich, further pointing out the wrongs of the past. *Coolie* shows different kinds of exploitation.

This includes social exploitation based on caste and class, as well as economic exploitation by employers. Munoo's employers take advantage of him because he is weak and doesn't have property. The book also criticizes the colonial system, which encouraged people to take advantage of others. The caste system is another social structure that is still in place. People like these are sometimes said to be

prejudiced and in trouble because of exploitation.

Coolie uses Munoo's story to show how social and economic injustices that were common in colonial India, showing how bad they were for the people who are on the outside hurt by exploitation, hunger and poverty. The analysis of the book, *Coolie* has brought up a lot of different themes about hunger.

Some of these are race relations, class consciousness and poverty. This book focuses on the problems that workers face in both sectors and highlights domestic workers in mills that make clothes. Munoo, an orphan from the Kangra hills, goes on a look for work to support his family, as a houseboy in Sham Nagar.

One of his many jobs is to keep the house of a middle-class family in the city clean. He worked at Daulatapur bazaar, as a worker in Bombay's cotton industry and as a rickshaw puller in an Anglo-Indian home in Simla that were very hard job that make people eat away quickly and lead to death. Greed, selfishness and violence have all worked together to make this society disaster. Munoo is one of many people who go through hunger, starvation, humiliation and pain. People all over the world know him and these problems are making his life very hard.

Starvation is a common theme in Anglo-Indian literature. The author's works have scrutinized accompanied anguish. The brave fight of Munoo, the main character, becomes a hero by overcoming hunger and poverty. *Coolie* is one of the most interesting books from the 1930s, showing the life of Munoo, the main character, who is poor. Anand's main focus was on subjects related to the East and West, the condition of women, poverty, oppression, discrimination and exploitation, hunger, superstitions and other important problems that can help a society in need. India got a lot of fans who spoke English and they thought he was one of the best of the most famous Indo-Anglian writers. *Coolie* is a sign of discrimination,

oppression, poverty, suffering and the parts of class conflict, starvation, child slavery,

The consequences of discrimination between the affluent and the impoverished, along with social injustice, are shown. Munoo is poor and is forced to move around. *Coolie* is a real-life example of how poor and miserable people can be in society. Munoo, a 14-year-old student in Bilaspur, which is in the Kangra hills near the banks of a river, Beas a small river. But the poor people's poverty is more interesting to us than the beautiful setting. After Munoo's father died, his mother had to take care of the house. The landlords who took out mortgages on their properties stole their land. Munoo moves in with his uncle after his mother's death as because he had no one to shelter him. Next, he has a social unfairness when he sees Prabha on the train. Prabha took Munoo, who didn't have any parents, to a worker at a pickle factory. His wife treats him well and with kindness. But Prabha's partner Munoo leaves because Ganapati is a threat. He goes to a train station to work as a coolie.

They were coolies, but they drove me away. Anand shows the real world of the lowest men in society. His plan for dealing with social injustice is very real. It looks like he gets angry about how this young orphan was treated badly and unfairly. Munoo, by showing how uncaring the high caste is by using a mahout to train to get food. Everyone in Society is to blame for the terrible things that happen in Munoo's life because he becomes a victim of the way our society is set up.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud* shows how poor, hungry, and exploited the labourers in the Assam tea plantations were under British colonial rule. British colonial rule took advantage of Assamese tea plantation workers. The Gangu is the main character in the book. He leaves his home country in search of a better life, but he finds himself stuck in a horrible life full of sickness, not having enough basic needs and being cruel how his British

masters treated him. The book talks a lot about the horrible conditions and the uncontrolled greed and power.

The psychological impact of colonial dominance on workers-

Gangu and other workers have to deal with low pay and bad working conditions, leading to widespread poverty and cruelty from their British bosses. The book, *Two Leaves and a Bud* shows how there is no clean water or good sanitation and food, which made workers sick and made their lives worse. The book shows how women's bodies are used for sexual exploitation at work. Being treated like goods by British owners, employees are subjected to physical violence.

The said book shows how people are made less human workers, whom the colonial government sees as less than human. Gangu's death came too soon while protecting his daughter from sexual assault emphasizes the end of the exploitation and the workers' need for money. Through Gangu's experiences, Anand criticizes the British class system, the terrible effects of colonial tyranny, and the British class system. The third book, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, talks about the bad things of the British class system and mistreatment. The book talks about how hard life is for tea plantation workers in Assam. This means the never-ending worry of tea plantation workers who work for British owners who are very selfish and treat the male group of workers as slaves and their wives and daughters as sexual objects for their satisfaction. Gangu, the main character in the book, loses his family's land and is taken advantage of by lenders who want to make money. He was interested in the British tea plantation in Sardar Buta, the collector, in Assam. Gangu hopes to do better in this field in the future. He won't have to wait long to realize that he is in a real hell. The property has no water supply and clean bathrooms. Coolies are always at risk of getting horrible infections.

He goes to Assam in an effort to start over, but he dies. The workers are not allowed basic freedom and are ruled by a cruel military government. They are cruel overworked and abused.

At the end of Anand's *Untouchable*, Bakha meets someone who gives him hope for change and he is Mahatma Gandhi from whom he learns about the message of social change. The book serves as a powerful call for equality and justice for everyone and a condemnation of the caste system. The *Coolie* shows the need for compassion, kindness and empathy toward the oppressed and marginalized groups within the culture while showing the sad truth about the people in this country who are being oppressed to the light of day. Anand suggests in this book that we need a little more kindness and understanding.

What society did could have made Munoo happy and stopped his bad end. Anand has made a tableau that shows the rich and poor in Indian society. He has spoken out against tyrants, exploiters and bad people. He has also acted like a true fan of realism and people, a supporter of human rights also, *Coolie* lights the human intelligence and make people aware of the suffering of the poor and took advantage of Indian social classes.

Conclusion

Anand's *Untouchable* concludes with a sense of hope for change, as Bakha encounters Mahatma Gandhi and learns about his message of social reform. The novel serves as a powerful indictment of the caste system and a call for justice and equality for all. The novel, *Coolie* depicts the need of compassion, concern and mercy of the down-trodden and under-yoke sections of the society while bringing the harsh realities of the subjugated people of this country to the limelight. Anand through this novel suggests that a little more empathy and tender heartedness on the part of the society could have turned Munoo into a happy individual and averted his tragic end. By bringing attention to

the terrible effects of hunger, poverty and exploitation under British colonial rule, especially over tea estates in Assam. The book stresses the dehumanizing situations and the mental effects of colonial rule, with a focus on the workers' harsh reality and the beautiful surroundings are very different. Gangu, the main character, is taken advantage of the system, which leads to his death keeping his daughter safe.

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