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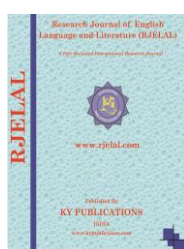
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REPRESENTATION OF DALIT IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S "UNTOUCHABLE"

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ABSTRACT

This paper presentation deals with the representation of Dalit in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. An introduction part is about the history and writers of Dalit literature. Features of Dalit literature is about the features and characteristics of Dalit literature. Representation of Dalit in Mulk Raj Anand's *untouchable* explains about Mulk Raj Anand views on Dalit literature and representation of Dalit in the novel *Untouchable*. The Conclusion sums up the things of Dalit literature in Mulk Raj Anand novels.

INTRODUCTION

Dalit is a term used to address a person belonging to the lowest caste. This caste system has a history of more than 3000 years in India. Ridden on this system, many were forbidden to exercise their rights in the name of purity and impurity. Dalit literature is literature written by the Dalits about their lives. Dalit literature emerged in the 1960's, starting with the Marathi language, and soon appeared in hindi, kannada, telugu, bangla and tamil languages, through narratives such as poems, short stories, and, most autobiographies which stood out due to their stark portrayal of reality and the Dalit political science.

Arjun Dangle has defined Dalit literature as: "Dalit literature is one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India.... It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary."

Most of the marginalized groups all over the world have a similar system of oppression, but the titles are different as per the class and class divide. Dalits were always on the marginalized other side of the Indian society. So when they started

voicing after centuries of silence, about themselves, we have the literature depicting assertion of human rights, self-pride, revolt against social injustice, chronicles of personal and collective suffering, and hopes and aspirations for a new society devoid of discrimination. Dalit (oppressed or broken) is not a new word. It was used in the 1930's as a hindi and Marathi translation of 'depressed classes', a term the british used for what are now called the scheduled castes. In 1970s the 'Dalit panthers' exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion. So Dalit is not a caste. It is a symbol of change and revolution. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits, the struggle against casteist tradition has a long history. Some of the important writers whose writings will find a place are: mahasweta devi, namdeo hasal, dayapawar, Arjun dangle, sachin autray, rabisingh, basudevsunani, bam, abhimani, poomani, imayam, marku, mangalrathod, neeravepatel, perumalmarugan, palamalai, sudhakar, D. Gopi and others.

Sharankumarlimbale has stated, "Dalit literature is precisely that literature which artistically portrays the sorrows, tribulations, slavery, degradation, ridicule and poverty endured by Dalits. This literature is but a lofty image of grief." This

trend started in 1873 when Jyotirao Phule, a Marathi Dalit (then known as an untouchable), published his book *Gulamgiri* (slavery) and dedicated the treatise to the then negroes in America as a 'token of admiration for their sublime disinterestedness and self sacrificing devotion in the cause of negro slavery'.

In the year 1992, Indian literature virtually started a new chapter, with the publication of Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread*, which was the first ever attempt to anthologize Dalit writings in English. He involved all the genre available in Marathi Dalit literature- poetry, short stories, essays, autobiographical excerpts and public speeches. As a result, today we have several collections of Dalit writings coming out in both Indian languages and English. Following are some of the most widely read writers of Dalit literature that are available in English translation-Bamu'skarukku and sangati, Dr. Narendra Jadhav's *Untouchables: my family's triumphant journey out of the caste system in modern India*, Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outside: akkarmashi*, Joseph Macwan's *The Stepchild*, Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan: a Dalit's life*, Baby Kamble's *Our Existence and Iyambate's Burden*, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*. Some of the prominent Dalit writers are Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Baburao Bagul, Rabi Singh, Namdeo Hasal, Dutta Bhagat, Lakshman Mane. There are number of other writers writing Dalit literature but do not share the Dalit writers category as the latter are not Dalit by birth as the other Dalit writers by birth. Maheswadevi, Sara Joseph, Kumaranasan, Mulk Raj Anand and Premchand are some of the well known names writing in diverse Indian languages.

FEATURES OF DALIT LITERATURE

Dalit literature is characterized by its fundamental criticism of the caste system and all kinds of discrimination and by its call for destroying social hierarchies. It is the literature of social and political commitment that challenges the status quo. It is the literature of questioning the exclusion from the mainstream of society and culture. It is the literature that promotes equality and human dignity. Most Dalit writers also believe that the

principal purpose of writing literature is to bring about social change rather than recreation or mere intellectual sophistry. As Baburao Bagul wrote, "Dalitsahitya is not a literature of vengeance. Dalitsahitya is not a literature which spreads hatred. Dalit sahitya first promotes man's greatness and man's freedom and for that reason it is an historic necessity.....anguish, waiting, pronouncements of sorrow alone do not define Dalitsahitya. We need literature heroically full of life to create a new society." By its very nature, Dalit literature remains at the margin as it challenges mainstream. This literature is more realistic than romantic and is unified in by the portrayal of discrimination and exploitation. Dalit writers are severely critical of the silence of the mainstream literature about surrounding social realities and their romanticisation of Indian society and its hierarchies. Even when higher caste writers have voiced concerns about Dalit communities, they are seen as condescending in nature and aimed at blunting Dalit resistance and amalgamating Dalits in mainstream society. Hence, writers like Mulk Raj Anand, sane guruji, or sivashankar pillai who wrote works dominantly highlighting Dalit anguish were not considered representative of genuine Dalit consciousness and purpose. Dalit writers have used such language and slang expressions that are generally considered unacceptable and colloquial by the mainstream writers. Dalit writers have also begun to theorize and evolve ideas of criticism of literature from Dalit perspectives. Dalit literature reflects both Marxist and Ambedkarite ideological influences in its content.

REPRESENTATION OF DALIT IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE

Mulk Raj Anand was an Indian writer in English, notable for his depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. One of the pioneers of Indo- Anglican fiction, he, together with R.K.Narayanan, was one of the first India-based writers in English to gain an international readership. His first main novel, *Untouchable*, published in 1935, was a chilling expose of the day-to-day life of a member of India's untouchable caste. He is the progressive writer for whom the novel takes the form of crusade against the evils of the

society. He has his sympathies with the depressed and underdog.

Untouchable follows a day in the life of bakha, and 18 year old bhagi boy. The fictional story set in the outcaste's colony outside of an unnamed town during the british occupation. The story is narrated by bakha who is a hard working boy, who never disobeys his father despite his repugnance for his and his life style. baktha had worked in the barracks of a british regiment and, "had been caught by the glamour of the 'white man's life". Bakha to imitate the tommies was through fusion, education and he becomes disgusted with the filth of his brother.

Bhangies are the lowest of the low caste and they are given the job of cleaning the latrines and sweeping the streets. The dirty nature of the bhangi's work fathers the view of them as impure. However they all unable to maintain good hygiene, because they are not allowed to access the local well, as there use would render it impure. Untouchables are not allowed to see the inside of the temple for purity reasons. While bakha was peering through the window he was interrupted by the priest shouting, "polluted! polluted!.. soon a crowd had gathered and they all berated bakha saying they would need to perform a purification ceremony now. "get off the steps you scavenger! Off with you! Have defiled our whole service!" shouted the priest. Bakha ran down to the country yard where his sister was waiting. Here he got a shock as the priest claimed, "I have been defiled by contact. This is an example of the hypocrisy of the other castes in their attitude towards the untouchables. The higher castes view them as impure and make them do all the menial labor, yet they all not adverse to sexual relations with them. It seems the idea of impurity is only there to when it suits the higher castes desires. Bakha searches for a salve to the tragedy of the destiny into which he was born, talking with a Christian missionary, listening to a speech about untouchability by mahatma Gandhi and a subsequent conversation by two educated Indians, but by the end of the book Anand suggests that it is technology, in the form of the newly introduced flush toilet that may be his savior by eliminating the need for a caste of toilet cleaners.

Bakha is the able bodied son of lakha, the jamadar of all the sweepers in the town of bulandshahr. He is made to represent the untouchable section of the society; he is no ordinary scavenger who is rude, uncouth and unclean. Bakha is representative of the oppressed untouchable caste. We have sympathy for his suffering as he meets with unjust treatment at the hands of the upper caste. He has strong desire to get education. He cannot seek admission in a school, because untouchables are not admitted there. So he pays one among per lesson to two upper caste boys to teach him. It is for his suffering that he is attracted to mahatma Gandhi and Christ. The fact that sahibs and mohammedans treat him like a human being but only the upper caste hindus have contempt for him rankles in his mind.

They think we are mere dirt,

Because we clean their dirt,

It is the word of bakha. The aspect in which bakha is presented offer an elucidating comment on the relations between the self and the society considered in terms of untouchability. The colony is a dark, damp, uncongenial place. The thatched mud houses clustered together in two rows are utterly ill-fitted for human habitation. It looks as though the scavengers, leather workers, washer man, barker, water-carriers and grass-cutters- all these inhabitants of the colony are subhuman non-entities huddled up together. They should be content to live in the gutter like worms only to be crushed by the superior cast people.

Bakha represents a part of the social history of India. He is a victim of social superstition of untouchability. He feels strongly against in human injustice meted out to him. Like the character of bakha, only through the education Dalits can improve their life style or change their awareness about their capacity.

CONCLUSION

Dalit is a distinction for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable. Dalits are a mixed population, consisting of numerous castes from all over the world. Mulk Raj Anand's another novel coolie is also representing the Dalits clearly. In

this novel coolie munnu is a Dalit character apart from the bakha in untouchable. Coolie perspectives a class-ridden society based on cash nexus which proves to be "a more complicated and devious world" than that one governed by asterism. In this world the underdog, the coolie in this case, though apparently free, is subjected to more rigidity and deprivation unlike the sweeper who is assured of this 'place' in the society because of the indispensability of his work. The coolie ruthlessly exploited and eternally indebted, has no such assurance certitude and likes under the perpetual threat of it is no wonder therefore that munoo in coolie drifting from place to place for himself in society. What is brought out is a disturbing picture of a harassed underdog, a helpless victim of oppressive forces and a sport of a quixotic distinct. He symbolizes the disinherited and the dispossessed of the earth whose tragic life indicates man's inhumanity to man. It is same in the case of Dalit people the exploiters that change they are the elect class and wealthy people the exploited remains the Dalit.

MulkRaj Anand is unique in his perspective of social justice and liberation in the context of a national situation marked by systematic oppression of an overwhelming majority of the people by colonial powers or forces within that are exploitive. He is committed to the emergence of a new society free from external intrusion, domination, exploitation, social and political marginalization. MulkRaj Anand is a novelist of the "underdog" media. MulkRaj Anand ,in terms of his subjects, aim and fictional methods may help to evolve new paradigms.

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