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Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable : A Study in Gandhian Views on Eradication of Untouchability

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The year 1920 is crucial year in the history of India and world. It was year of social upheaval, the first cause is the world war first ended and beginning of Gandhian era in Indian socio-political life. Literature is not separate from society but it is part of society. Indian society is always under the dominance of the great philosopher like Mahavir, Buddha, Kabir and Saints like Tukaram Eknath. In early part of 20th century Indian continent was under the power of M.K Gandhi. He enters in politics in 1920 because his teacher Gopal Krishna Gokhale advised him to understand the various issues of Indian society. In those days untouchability was blot to Indian society, it was social problem and major hurdle in the progress of nation. Gandhiji tried his level best to eradicate the untouchability from the Indian society, he also appeals to writers to show the pathetic condition of Dalits in India. Mulk Raj Anand is one of the writer who was under the impression of Gandhiji's philosophy and teachings. He published his outstanding and epoch making novel in 1935. It is claimed that the present novel is historical document on Dalit plight and solution of M.K.Gandhi on untouchability. Gandhiji's impression on Indian masses is long lasting. Writers are not exception for that. Mulk Raj Anand and his period were totally under the magic power of M.K.Gandhi. Before writing this novel Anand met to Gandhiji and discussed with him regarding his writings. And as per guidelines and advice he composed this novel. When untouchable was written and published it was time of social unrest in Indian society. Most of people were interested to get freedom from the British empire. Nobody wants to eradicate the internal issue like untouchability from the Indian society. Gandhiji had taken this issue on the agenda of Congressmen. He thought that there is crucial need of eradication of casteism from Indian society and straighten the Freedom Movement ahead with the help of untouchables. It was not an easy task Gandhiji took efforts and to uplift the Dalits by giving solution to scavenging work.

The present research article is an honest attempt to show the impression of M.K.Gandhiji's teaching on Mulk Raj Anand and his creative writings. The Untouchable is the best example of Mulk Raj Anand which shows the direct impact of Gandhiji's teachings. The title itself indicates its subject matters. It is an honest effort of writer to show sympathy towards Dalit of country. Untouchables are suppressed section of society for ages, they have been under the caste based domination and discrimination. Mulk Raj Anand is impressed by the philosophy of M.K.Gandhi and under this influence he had written this novel.

The protagonist of the novel Bakha is a sweeper boy from Bhangi community. Who is victim of caste system. He reveals his suffering within day span of life. He is unable to revolt against system but feels very ashamed of upper caste people. In the last part of novel Bakha attends the rally of M.K.Gandhi and impressed by his thought of humanity. He sees the extraordinary personality of Gandhiji

Setting of the novel is a fictional Indian town of Bulashah, Untouchable is a day in the life of a young Indian sweeper called Bakha. The son of Lakha, jamadar of all of Bulashah's



sweepers, Bakha is abright but simple, shy yet ineffective. Over the progression of Bakha's day severalmain and trivialmisfortuneshappen, affecting him to matured and turn his contemplationinner. In the conclusion of the novel Mulk Raj Anand, the novelist, has finished a persuasiveoccasion for the finish of untouchability on the surroundings that is cruel, unfair system of domination. He refers Bakha and the personsoccupying the young man's world to craft his views.

Bakha's day begins with his father shouting at him to get out of bed and unsoiled the latrines. The connectionamong the father and son is stressed, in portion due to Bakha'sfascination with the British, in part because of Bakha'sidleness. Hepays no attention to his father but finally gets up to reply the burdens of a high-caste man that desires to use the toilet. This man is Charat Singh, a well-known hockey performer. At first, Singh also shouts at Bakha for ignoring his washingresponsibilities. The man has a variablecharacter, though. It isn't extended before he trainsBakha to come see him later in the day so he canskill the young sweeper with a valued hockey stick. AndelightedBakhaapproves.

From top to bottom on his worthyaffluence he rapidly completes his morning shift and rushes home, fading of thirstiness. Unluckily, there is no water in the home. His sister Sohiniideals to go fill the water vessel. At the well, Sohini must wait latenumerous other untouchables also line up. Gulabo also is awaiting for water , mother of one of Bakha's mates and aenviousfemale. She dislikesSohini and is just scarcelyimmobile from arresting the young lady. A vicar from the urbanshrinecalled Pundit Kali Nathapproaches along and supportsSohini get water. He asks her to come unsoiled the temple later in the day time. Sohiniapproves and rushes home with the water.

Back at home Lakhaimitations sickness and advices Bakha to unsoiled the city square and the shrineyard in his stead. Bakha is anintelligent to the cunningconducts of his father but cannot objection. He proceeds up his scrubbingmaterials and drives into town. His sweeping liabilitiesregularly keep him too hectic to go into town, and so he takes benefit of the condition by purchasing cigarettes and toffees.

As Bakha eats his chocklates, a high-caste man brushes up against him and thataffected man did not see Bakha because the sweeper overlooked to give the untouchable's plea. The man is frantic. His screamingdraws a large throng that joins in on Bakha's public shaming. A wandering Muslim wholesaler in a horse and buggy comes along and separates the crowd. Earlierthe affected man leaves he blowsBakha across the face for his rudeness and rushes away. A shocked Bakhashouts in the roads before meeting his belongings and rushing off to the temple. At the temple, a service is in full swing. It intrigues Bakha, who eventually musters up the courage to climb up the stairs to the temple door and peer inside. He's only stand-up there for a few moments before a loud turmoil comes from behind him. It's Sohini and Pundit Kali Nath, who is condemningSohini of adulterating him. As a mob gathers round, Bakhajerks his sister away. Dreadful, she tells him that the priest sexually attacked her. A violentBakhaattempts to go back to oppose the vicar, but an uncomfortable and humiliatedSohini forces him to consent. Bakhadrives his sister house, telling he will take over her responsibilities in city for the rest of the day.

Upsetended the day's occasions;Bakharamblesinactively before going to a set of homes to plead for his family's everyday need. No one is in house, so he locks up in visible of a house and falls asleep. A sadhu also pleading for food emanates and awakens him. The possessor of the



house Bakha slumbered in opposite of comes out with food for the sadhu. Watching Bakha, she yells at him and at first rejects to offer him food. She lastly approves to offer him some bread in interchange for him sweeping the space in opposite of her house. As Bakha sweeps, the lady tells her young son to dismiss himself in the gutter where Bakha is washing so he can sweep that up too. Aoffended Bakha flings down the brush and leaves for his house in the untouchables' cluster.

Return at home, it's only Lakha and Sohini. Rakha, Bakha's younger brother, is still out gathering food. Bakha says his father that an upper-caste man hit him in the streets. Knowing his son's fury, Lakha speaks him a story about the sympathy of upper-caste physician that once protected Bakha's existence. Bakha is intensely stimulated by the story but remains distressed. Shortly after story period, Rakha arises back with food. A greedy Bakha jumps to eat but then is revolted by the notion of eating the remains of the upper-caste persons. He hurdles up and speaks he's going to the marriage of his colleague Ram Charan's sister.

Bakha goes to Charan Singh's home in the camps, but unable to say if the man is house. Hesitant to distract him or the other residents, Bakha relaxes beneath a tree to pause. After long time Singh comes outdoor. He offers Bakha to beverage tea with him and permits the untouchable to touch his private things. Singh's contempt for Bakha's hypothetical spoiling attendances delights Bakha's sentiment. In this way he is delighted when Singh offers him a used hockey stick.

Overjoyed about this upsurge to his awful day, Bakha drives into the hockey game on passion. He slashes the first goal. The goal keeper of the opposed players is irritated over Bakha's accomplishment and smashes him. This jerks an all-out clash between the two groups that ends when a competitor's younger brother gets wounded. Bakha picks up the young boy and hurries him home, only to have the boy's mother blame him of murder her son. Worthy mood entirely ruined, Bakha hauls home, where his father shouts at him for being gone all afternoon. He exiles Bakha from home, saying his son must never come back.

Bakha goes away and takes accommodation beneath a tree far from house. The main of the native Rescue Military, a British man called Colonel Hutchinson, arises up to him. He sees Bakha's suffering and persuades the sweeper to track him to the church. Pleased by the grey man's courtesy, Bakha settles, but the Colonel's endless hymn humming quickly yawns him. Earlier the two can arrive the church the Colonel's wife comes to find him. Sickened at the scene of her partner with one more "Blackie," she initiates to shout and yell. Bakha senses her irritation intensely and goes off again.

This moment Bakha goes to city and ends up at the railway station. He listens to some public conversing the arrival of M. K Gandhi in Bulashah. He joins the current of persons to receive the Mahatma talk. Just as Bakha settle down to pay attention, Gandhi reaches and initiates his speaking. He speaks about the predicament of the dalit and how it is his life's duty to see them liberated. He finishes his talking by begging those attended to spread his note of termination of untouchability. After the Mahatma leaves a couple of educated Indian menfolk have an active dialogue about the comfortable of the speaking. One man, a solicitor called Bashir, roundly evaluates most of Gandhi's sentiments and concepts. The other, a poet called Sarshar, protects the Mahatma zealously and realistically. Considerable of what they say energies above Bakha's head, so prominent are their terminology and concepts. Though, he does comprehend when Sarshar remarks the forthcoming entrance of the flushing toilet in India, a mechanism that eliminates the requirement for humans to handle waste. This machine could mean the end of



untouchability. With this part of confidence Bakha rushes home to spread news of the Mahatma's dialogue with his father.

Following statement describes the wretched treatment to untouchable people in society;

"Keep to the side of the road, you low-caste vermin!" he suddenly heard someone shouting at him. "Why don't you call, you swine, and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, you cockeyed son of a bow-legged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself. And it was a new dhoti and shirt I put on this morning!" (p. 89)

The untouchable are considered as dirt because they remove the dirt of others. In reality all others section of society enjoy the segment of life but untouchable are barred from certain social norms. this unjust treatment to untouchables destroy the sympathy for upper caste people. Just look at the following remark of Bakha that indicates his rage and violent anger about this caste based treatment.

For them I am a sweeper, sweeper — untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable!" Bakha, (p. 100)

How Gandhiji impressed Bakha lets see with the reference to below statement? Gandhiji is like a spark that can ignite the mind of young man like Bakha. He decides to follow the path of Gandhiji.

As a spark of lighting suddenly inumines the sky, the myriad of voices leapt up the curve of the heavens before Bakha and wrote in flaming colours the cry: '*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai.*' And in a while, there was a rush of eager feet ascending the footbridge behind him shouting: The Mahatma has come! The Mahatma has come! (p.126)

"The word Mahatma was a like magical magnet to which he, like all the other people about him, rushed blindly"(p.126)

Really, Gandhiji is like mob catching man with his tongue he influences the masses and tries to convince the crowd with his impressive speech. Gandhiji work is notable for service to humanity. Untouchability is blot to Hinduism and Gandhiji agreed this fact and accepted. He appeals to the indian people to remove this dirty thought from the mind.

"He was in the midst of humanity which included him in its folds and yet debarred him from entering into a sentient, living quivering contact with it. Gandhi alone united them, in the mind, cause Gandhi was in everybody's mind, including Bakha's. Gandhi might unite them, Bakha waited for Gandhi" (p.128)

A religion of humanity never makes any kind of discrimination but in reality the untouchable face this in their day to day life situation. Gandhiji advocates the machine technology can be replaced to scavenger to remove the dirt of people. Indirectly it is the best solution for the untouchable and their suffering because of their work they are treated as animals.

Gandhi will reveal this path to the modern world, he will teach us the true religion of God love, which is the best *Swaraj*(self-government) (p.128)

Conclusion- Above discussion proved that the views of Gandhiji reflected in Mulk Raj Anand's outstanding novel *Untouchable*. Writer unable to propose a philosophy of any great man directly but with his skill and writing, he can teach the philosophy. It is really appreciable that he is successful in his objective. Bakha is a mouthpiece of lakhs of dalits and untouchable in india. He is representative of his class and caste. The researcher has explored the various aspect of the



novel and comes to the conclusion that Gandhiji's idea of swaraj and eradication of caste and untouchability.

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