

Identifying Subaltern Group(S) or Individual(S) in the Works of Mulk Raj Anand

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Abstract - In his works, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand accurately and sensitively depicts the subaltern class of India at the time. Anand rose to prominence as an advocate for underrepresented populations. His writings include books, short stories, and cultural essays. The writings of Anand, the first Indian author to write in English, depict the oppressed Indian people's actual struggles. Mulk Raj Anand is a writer who is passionate about social justice and has written a number of books on it. The growth of Indian writing in English has been strongly affected by the works of renowned author Mulk Raj Anand.

Keywords - Subaltern, Works, Mulk Raj Anand, Writings and India

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INTRODUCTION

Since it was originally used in 1982, the term "subaltern" has acquired new meaning. Women, people of color, former colonial subjects, refugees, young laborers, and the ignorant are among the groups that are more oppressed. The most disadvantaged communities in the globe have long been a priority for postcolonial writers. They will be able to emerge from the shadows and into the light with this newfound understanding. Throughout the Indian subcontinent, subalternity is a contentious issue, but it is utilized primarily in India to resist oppression of lower-caste and subaltern people and to promote their rights. Hinduism is where the issue of untouchability first emerged, and it has since extended across India's whole cultural history. Religion served as the justification for the upper-class Brahmins' support of a strict social structure that kept the impoverished at arm's length.

The caste system is a kind of social stratification in which a person's professional rank is determined by their place in society and established at birth. The subaltern rank only applies to those from the lowest ranks and castes. They lack the political or economic clout to pose a challenge to the affluent. They submit to authority and turn into typical modern-day victims. Because they lack the resources to do so, they are unable to let the world know about their situation. The word "subalternity" refers to the remainder of the underprivileged and oppressed populace as well as the untouchables. They are less likely to change their situation in society since the upper class has removed chances for these subalterns, such as equal rights, education, and awareness. Literature is the only tool we have to protect them and broaden minds. Indian

writers who write in English have successfully highlighted such issues.

A major focus of the study of subalternity is the degree to which subaltern social groups and individuals have experienced their historical activity being repressed, disregarded, misunderstood, or 'on the peripheral' of hegemonic histories, discourses, and social structures. The fundamental concept that unites the several linked intellectual initiatives that have offered numerous viewpoints on the issue is subalternity, in particular. With the release of Antonio Gramsci's jail notebooks, in which he wrote down his ideas on subalternity while spending his last years in an Italian fascist prison, it was first extensively read in the 1930s. It has evolved throughout the last 85 years, with the most recent additions coming from postcolonial and subaltern studies, particularly Gayatri Spivak's publications.

The plain narrative of a day in the life of Bakha, an outcaste who is now eighteen years old, may be found in Mulk Raj Anand's book *Untouchable*. His suffering is eloquently conveyed, as is the depth of his humiliation. Thanks in large part to this book, Mulk Raj Anand rose to prominence among the greats of Indian English literature. Due to the defects in the Indian social structure, which are strongly shown in this book, a large number of our brothers and sisters have been given the "untouchable" title.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alam, Md. (2015). In *Untouchable*, the author depicts Bakha as being prone to breakdown owing to the totalitarian philosophy of the chauvinistic society in which he is by no means able to deal, particularly with those who belong to the upper strata. The

inevitable struggle between the individual and society is what makes Bakha's existence cursed. His utter estrangement and identity crises are a consequence of society's relentless denigration of him and frequent reminders of his lowest origins. Bakha is then rendered unnatural and alien to his family, society, and even himself. This essay is an effort to evaluate Bakha's personality in light of the realities that underlie the struggle between the individual and society.

Bijral, Quleen Kaur. (2015). In the annals of Indian history, the Indian past of the Great War is a subaltern record that has either not been studied or has been ignored and unacknowledged. The purpose of the study is to integrate Indian history of the Great War into the historiography of India's independence fight in order to deconstruct the polemics of this deliberate or unintentional historical gap. In her article *Can the Subaltern Speak*, Gayatri Spivak tried to give the subaltern a sense of historical agency. It is a crucial idea that seeks to address the contradictions, inconsistencies, and apparent gaps in Indian history.

Mahto, Mohan & Artium, Ars. (2021). A group of Anglo-Indian fiction authors known as the three includes Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Raja Rao. Anand, the oldest of the three and a creative writing enthusiast, is a prolific writer. *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, *The Sword and the Sickle*, and other well-known books by him are all in print. In addition, he is the author of over seven volumes of short tales. Being a devoted humanitarian, he depicts the plight of society's downtrodden in both his novels and short tales. The article examines the realistic portrayal of the underprivileged and untouchable characters in his short stories—people who experience ongoing pain and suffering in our society—as well as his worries and empathy for them. The short tales "Old Bapu," "The Barber's Trade Union," and "Lajwanti" are among those covered in this research.

Tantary, Aashiq. (2019). The paper discusses subalternity and marginalization, which are hotly debated topics throughout the Indian Subcontinent, especially in the Union of India, not only because of the country's rigid economic and religious laws but also because of its oppression of lower caste members in both traditional and contemporary Indian society. *Untouchable* offers a great entry point for the Indian-English author to explore the subaltern realm. It expresses optimism for both untouchable Hindus and India, introducing Gandhi's ideology of raising awareness in an attempt to abolish the caste system and the hierarchical structure of Indian culture. They are frequent victims and oppressive because they lack the resources and influence to challenge the dominance of the higher classes. They are unable to find the words to publicly describe their situation and who they are. These lower-class people have very little opportunities to better their lot in life since they are judged by the higher class, which eliminates opportunities for them to advance their position via education, awareness, and equal rights.

THE SUBALTERN WRITINGS IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW OF DALIT LITERATURE

The term "subaltern" comes from the Latin word "Subalternus," which also has the meanings of "below captain," "especially a second lieutenant," and "inferior," with the last meaning being particularly pertinent to literature. The general public, the disadvantaged, and the ignored are all included in the word's clear topic matter range. The term "subaltern" seems to have been commonplace throughout the postcolonial era. Ranjeet Guha has worked on a project with the working title *Subaltern Studies*; however his study focuses on post-colonial history.

The word's distinctive literary importance was established by Gayatri Spivak's controversial piece *Can the Subaltern Speak*. But practically all of the subalterns she talks about in her essays are female. Not only women are included in the concept of "subaltern," but also anybody who does not have access to the fundamental human rights of freedom, equality, fraternity, and justice. Dalit literature is written by members of the oppressed Dalit community in India. Dalit literature is often seen as an act of resistance against the existing order and a quest for social justice since Dalits are denied fundamental human rights. As noted by renowned Dalit author and activist Arjun Dangle, this was beautifully put.

One critic asserts that "Dalit literature is marked by revolt and negativism, since it is closely associated with the hopes for freedom by a group of people who, as untouchables, are victims of social, economic, and cultural inequality." Dalit literature is renowned for being both distinctive and divisive. The language, experience, and hero of dalit literature are different from those of mainstream literature. In contrast to popular culture, Dalit literature depicts the tragic realities of Dalit life.

The main character, a Dalit, experiences unfair sufferings and fights for social justice and his birthright to life. Sharankumar Limbale rejects the hollow idealism of literature designed for upper-caste readers. The Satyam Shivam Sundram aesthetic idea is nonsensical. All beauty and truth in the cosmos originate from people. Addressing human rights like freedom, justice, fraternity, and equality is vital. Although this is only one of many competing hypotheses, Buddha, Saint Chaokamela, and Mahatma Phule have all been attributed as the originators of Dalit literature. Unquestionably, the Dalit Panthars movement and Mahatma Phule's social reformation effort had an impact on Dalit writing. The genre is also known as Ambedkarian literature since Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's status as the founder of Dalit writing cannot be contested. Says author Arjun Dangle

Many theories exist on the origins of Dalit literature. Buddha (6th century BC) is often cited as the

founder, followed by Chokhamela (14th century AD), Mahatma Phule (1828–90), Prof. S. M. Mate (1886–1957), and others. However, these assumptions are wholly speculative. Dr. Ambedkar is often referred to be the father of Dalit literature, even though it is true that these noteworthy individuals cared deeply about the plight of the untouchables. Idle, xi) When upper-caste publishers refused to publish the works of Dalit writers, groups like the Gangadhar Pantavne-edited Asmitadarsha and the Milind Sahitya Parishad stepped in. Translations from contemporary Marathi Dalit literature include Gangadhar Pantavne's Sahitya, Prakurti aani Prawruti (Literature: Nature and Form), and Arjun Dangle's Poisoned Bread. Anyone interested in knowing more about Dalit literature can read Dr. Sada Karhade's Dalit Sahitya Chikitsa (Dalit Literature: A Critical Study). The writings of other well-known Dalit writers may also be used to study the nature and history of Dalit literature.

Authors like Anna Bhau Sathe, Shankarrao Kharat, Baburao Bagul, Daya Pawar, Waman Nimbalkar, Namdeo Dhasal, Arjun Dangle, Yogiraj Waghmare, Manohr Jilthe, P.I. Sonkamble, Yogendra Meshram, Bhimrao Shivrale, Avinash Dolas, Yashwant Manohar, Keshav Meshram, etc. On August 1, 1920, Anna Bhau Sathe was born. She has been referred to as a "twinkle star" in the sky of Dalit literature. He wrote a broad range of literary works, including travel essays, plays, short stories, poems, powadas, and folk dramas. No well-known author could aspire to equal the quality and quantity of writing produced by Anna Bhau Sathe. He has received significant praise for novels like Fakira, Warnecha Wagh, Makdicha Maal, Sangharsha, Chitra, and Vaijanta, among others.

Readers will always recall Fakira's sword rattling and Vaijanta's jingling bells thanks to Anna Bhau Sathe's fascinating characters. The plight of today's lower castes in India has been vividly brought to life by Anna Bhau Sathe. In his best-selling novel Fakira, he imagines the life of Dalits and their determination to live honorably.

MISTREATMENT AND SUFFERING OF SUBALTERN CLASS IN THE NOVELS OF MULK RAJ ANAND'S *TWO LEAVES AND A BUD* AND *ACROSS THE BLACK WATERS*

In Indian English literature, Mulk Raj Anand is widely known for being an early pioneer and committed humanist. Despite the various labels that have been placed on his work, he has been dubbed the champion of the poor. He is a social realist who eloquently portrays the exploitation and suffering of the Dalit and Subaltern class in most of his works. They demonstrate how much he feels about the underprivileged and downtrodden. His sympathy for people and their support of the weak in both the economic and social spheres came from his peasant parents. He wrote on favor of common people who get undeserved punishment. As a socially conscious author, Dr. Anand paid great attention to the apathy and hopelessness of the suffering in his community

and never held back from openly expressing his opinions, particularly when they had to do with issues of the highest significance. He thus tried to eliminate social classes in order to address societal evils.

Exploitation and Suffering In '*Two Leaves and a Bud*':

The third novel by Anand, "Two Leaves and a Bud" (1937), describes the struggle of the Assamese working class in the backdrop of the exploitation and cruelty they suffered at the hands of British plantation owners. Anand brings up the issue of the disadvantaged once again.

The protagonist of Anand's story and the novel's primary character, Gangu, is shown here as a distinct person. He piques readers' attention as a seasoned coolie who works hard to accomplish his objectives. Gangu works hard to fulfill his responsibilities as a husband, father, and provider. He is shown by Anand as a morally upright man who can support his family. He is a true coolie because of a special combination of innocence and experience. He provides a great example of how to lead a moral life. He lost his home and his property because of the repressive laws and customs that the deplorable coolie class was subjected to. He has to pay back a debt that a relative incurred. He makes a courteous effort to honor his promises to the best of his ability. He is duped by Buta's dishonest portrayal of an overly hopeful future for him in Assam.

Gangu starts to feel sick as soon as he gets at the Assam tea farm. He is taken advantage of by every superior. Each month, his family earns a dismal amount of less than eight annas. He finally dies from malaria. His wife Sajani must be killed in order for him to be set free. His sadness is only made worse by the fact that he cannot buy a bamboo or a red cloth for a funeral. He is in complete despair when he is unable to get a loan to bury his wife. Mr. Croft Cooker, the estate manager, ejects him from his office in the cruellest manner imaginable while displaying no mercy.

As a loving father, Gangu suffers endlessly till he gives his life to save Leila's virginity. She is the object of Reggie Hunt's sexual attention. Gangu has made the decision to fight against this evilness rather than let this repulsive man to sexually assault his daughter. Reggie's demand infuriates him, and he goes over to confront him about it. Unfortunately, he passes away right away without ever saving his daughter. The awful demise of the protagonist is brought about by his tormentor.

Exploitation and Suffering In '*Across the Black Waters*':

'Across the Black Waters' by Anand (1939–1942) is the second volume of the trilogy on poor Laloo's military service during World War I. He is compelled to take part in the war effort despite not wanting to.

His force lacks the expertise and tools required for modern warfare. Those insecure Indian soldiers applaud every white person they come across. The evicted tenants are portrayed by the military as poor peasants. On barely eleven Rupees each month, they strive to free their parents from debt to a lender and a landlord. The British exploited the Indian soldiers in the same ways that they did the Indian peasants, coolies, and laborers. They are unquestionably patriots, but they are hardly warriors. Even the location of the battle and potential ambush locations are unknown to them. They were forced to follow the British commanders in charge and engage the enemy while using outdated weapons and untrained personnel. They lack the high-tech weapons and ammunition required to wage a broad offensive. Only the fact that they are surrounded by other local soldiers and in an unfamiliar location helps to calm their nerves. Gradually, Lal Sing (Lalu) loses his fellow comrades. In combat, Hwalder Lachman Sing perishes. In addition to Hanumant Sing being slain by an Indian officer for refusing to fight for the British government, Daddy Dhanoo drowns, Dhyan Sing and Kipu Ram fight bravely until they are killed, and Hanumant Dhanoo is drowned. The Germans harm Lal Singh at Festubert and imprison him.

The story illustrates how the British not only underpay the soldiers but also betray their promise to compensate them with a piece of land, exposing the exploitation and suffering. The narrative also shows how the children of destitute peasants are unable to escape the clutches of landlords who have mortgaged their property. The old fathers had hoped without hope that one day their sons would give them money so that they might become wealthy.

In this sense, Anand makes use of the narrative to accuse the British of exploitation and racial prejudice. He reveals the nasty, cruel nature of the landlords and loan sharks. Lalu suffers greatly while being held as a captive. He is shown to be among those who are willing to fall or be fallen and who are ready for any upheaval. As he observes the battle, the fire and fury of movement, and the frenzy of gunshots, he feels ashamed and horrified.

SUBALTERN VOICES APPEAR IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S NOVEL "UNTOUCHABLE"

The likelihood that someone from a lower social class or caste will be accorded subaltern status is higher. They accept their victim status and submit to persecution because they lack the means to oppose the upper class. They are unable to reveal their identities or their position to the general public. Not only the "untouchables," but everyone on the periphery of society is referred to as "subaltern." These underclass people have little options to change their position in life, including access to knowledge, education, and power, in a society dominated by the upper class. The ability to defend the rights of the downtrodden is a skill that literature provides. Similar to authors in other world literatures, writers in Indian

English have given subaltern themes considerable attention.

Just so happens that Mahatma Gandhi had a significant effect on Mulk Raj Anand's first novel, *Untouchable* (1935). The Varna system, as described in the *Laws of Manu*: the practice of untouchability, is the worst social ill in India, and it is the subject of this timeless story. The story focuses on the sad lives of outcasts who try to improve their lot by assimilating into society's mainstream. Anand exposed the inner workings and real living circumstances of the Subaltern mentality. In Indian civilization, subaltern position is based on social standing (or "caste"), gender, and sexual orientation. The caste system has done a lot of harm to the people of our nation. Nothing changed when Britain took control of the region. The caste structure in our country dates back to antiquity. The caste system led to the social evil known as untouchability. The four main castes in Hindu civilization are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vishayas, and Sudras. The near-divine position of the Brahmins made them the apex of society. Because of their reputation as warriors, the Kshatriyas served as the nation's guardians. The Vaishayas were reduced to a lower position and given the nickname "wealth generators" because they had a financial emphasis. The lowest caste of employees, the Sudras, were in charge of sweeping and cleaning. The sweepers and scavengers were despised because of their line of work. Given that they had to use their hands to remove the human waste, it was thought that a sweeper or scavenger might contaminate a Hindu high caste with only one touch. "Untouchable" gained notoriety as a protest novel in which Mulk Raj Anand exposes the wrongs of the caste system.

The book's inspiration, according to the author, "was a ballad born of the freedom I had tried to win for truth against the age-old lies of the Hindus by which they upheld discrimination." The higher castes in ancient India had some lofty notions about caste. There was a voice that could be heard throughout the Mahabharata epic saying, "Caste, caste - There is no caste!" I was filled with pity, and I want to tell the "dead souls" in the numerous Hindu hells this truth, that it may drive me to atone for my own crimes (George 19).

The low caste Hindus, known as "untouchables," fight for identity and survival in Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 first novel, "Untouchable." They are victims of societal injustice and are perpetually destitute. Their struggle for survival is never-ending. They must put up with the mental and physical violence they will get from Hindus of the higher caste. They will deal with the curse of being born into that caste their whole life. The story barely spans one day in the life of "Bakha," the protagonist of the book and the son of Lakha, the Jemadar of all the sweepers in the town of Bulashah. It's just another day in his existence

filled with hunger, hope, little pleasures, insults, and disappointment.

Untouchable: Anand's Effort to Rescue Dalits from Subalternity and Ideological Presuppositions

A literary giant in the Indo-Anglican tradition known for his sympathetic, socially aware, and accurate portrayals of the persistent difficulties of the poor and outcast, Mulk Raj Anand is a major writer in this genre. Mulk Raj Anand, a pioneer of Indian literature in English, has received praise from all around the world for the forward-thinking nature of his writing. India was enduring colonial rule and the negative impacts of imperialism when he started writing. He unavoidably captured society properly since he was a prolific producer of politically smart and socially conscious writings. The caste system, untouchability, superstition, religious hypocrisy, political turmoil, and poverty were all prominent themes in Anand's writings. Vikram Seth's debut novel, *Untouchable*, is more than simply a diatribe about the struggles faced by the underclass and other in colonial India. He also accurately portrays this sub-colonialism. Anand was a social critic who opposed pervasive forms of injustice, oppression, and inequality. Social, political, and personal considerations motivated Mulk Raj Anand to write for the proletariat and the outcaste. Untouchables were subjected to unspeakable indignities as a result of their social inferiority and lowly origins, and this work is an exact account and transcription of their sad situation.

Subaltern Studies and *Untouchable*

The early 1980s saw the emergence of the discipline known as "Subaltern Studies," whose initial aim was to give voice to the historically oppressed and underprivileged. A person who has been silenced because of their social class, race, or gender is known as the "Other" in subaltern theory. Derrida's deconstructionist framework is where this concept originates. The subordinate group, or "Other," is subject to the creation and imposition of the dominant group's values. Instead of concentrating on the histories of the elites and the Eurocentric slant of modern imperial history, scholars of the subaltern studies chose to focus on the subaltern in terms of class, caste, gender, race, and culture. They contended that while political dominance did exist, it was not hegemonic. Leading proponents of rewriting history to give oppressed populations a louder voice were Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 book *Untouchable* has been seen as a subaltern study with contradictory meanings. First and foremost, the narrative is a genuine account of the colonized and the inferior/other. Second, the book offers a critical analysis of the predicament of the outcastes, the lowest caste people in Indian culture, since it centers on their life. The main character in *Untouchable*, Bakha, is a classic untouchable who personifies the suffering, sorrow, desperation, misfortune, injustice,

insecurity, issue, circumstance, trial, and tribulation that millions of untouchables in India have to undergo.

Casteism as the Dominant Philosophy-

Despite the fact that the novel was released in 1935, when colonial rule over India was still in place, the author chose not to highlight the horrific effects of imperialism or the cruel agony that unarmed Indians endured. Instead of depicting the interplay between colonizers and colonized, he focuses on the prevalent sub-colonialist discourse, which took the form of caste prejudice. Untouchables are no longer accepted when Anand comes out against the persecution and maltreatment of them. His narrative is centered on the nationalist movement that developed before to independence and aimed to build a nation with citizens from many racial and religious origins. Despite the greatest efforts of the nationalist movement, polarizing issues like as caste injustice, gender prejudice, and religious intolerance arose as barriers to India's progress toward becoming a united nation. A kind of social stratification known as the caste system gave adherents of a certain religious group unique status.

Futility of Revolt and Retaliation: An Eternal Conflict

Bakha becomes more conscious of his superiors' exploitation, yet he still obeys them. He gives up since he was raised with his father's servile attitude and gentle humility, thus the response is no. They are just superior to us. In response to even one of the police officers' statements, nothing we say to them will be of any service. They are in charge of us. They should be listened to, and we should do what they say. Some of them really care about other people. (Anand 80)

Bakha thinks on how he may exact his own punishment and retaliation when faced with excessive harshness. But since he is forced to surrender to a higher power, his anger is subdued and his need for revenge is satisfied. Saros Cowasjee is right when he says, "But he is a tiger in a cage; securely imprisoned by the conventions his superiors have built up to protect themselves against the fury of those whom they exploit" (Anand 2). The more embarrassing sensations of fear, sadness, silence, and sorrow inhibit the overwhelming want to speak out. He is shocked when a caste Hindu slaps and criticizes him, claiming that he "polluted" him with his contact.

But within, he was raging with rage. A spark would be kindled in the ashes of guilt within him as he reflected back on the criticism or abuse, he had experienced, and his emotions would rise like spurts of smoke from a half-smothered fire. (Anand 51)

The Brahmin priest who had attempted to assault Bakha's sister Sohini was referred to as "the son of a pig" by Bakha as he erupted in rage. I'm going to go

kill him!" (Anand 63). But after a period of gazing at the temple, his fury suddenly passes:

A cold returned to his every cell. He looked up and saw the amazing sculptures that extended from the doorways all the way to the ceiling. They were so big that I felt intimidated by them. He backed down in fear. A growing feeling of dread began to take hold of him... He lowered his head in shame. His vision was blurred. His formerly clinched hands dropped limp at his sides. He needed help since he was feeling feeble. (Anand 63-64)

CONCLUSION

The exploitation and misery of the Dalit and lower class are essential themes in literature. The Dalits and lower classes of India during Dr. Mulk Raj Anand's time are depicted sympathetically and realistically in his novels, with a particular emphasis on their struggle to manage their means of subsistence and the ways that the wealthy and upper-class members of society take advantage of them and deny them all opportunities. His work often addresses issues such as religious hypocrisy, the feudal system, the East-West encounter, women's position, illogical beliefs, hunger, poverty, and exploitation. The majority of the characters in "Untouchable," "Two Leaves and a Bud," and "Across the Black Waters" may be said to reflect the oppression and suffering of the underclass. Because of his compassionate portrayals of Dalits and Subalterns in his books, Anand has earned his reputation as a proletarian novelist.

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