

CHAPTER - I

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The word, ' Adolescence ' is derived from the Latin Verb, ' Adolescere ' meaning ' to grow up ' into maturity.¹ The psychologists have tried to interpret and clarify the term ' Adolescence '. Rolf E. Muss has given comprehensive account of theories of adolescence in his book.² Let us have a close look at some definitions of ' Adolescence '.

1. G. Stanley Hall :

Adolescence is a period of Storm and stress.³

Hall's attempt to define ' Adolescence ' is a pioneering effort in this field. But his definition puts adolescents under constant strife. But later on, the psychologists have proved this as wrong. Hall's definition serves historical importance.

2. Erikson :

Adolescence is a period of rapid change : physical, physiological, psychological, and social, a time when all sameness and continuities relied upon earlier are more or less questioned again.⁴

Erikson considers the adolescence period as a necessary developmental phenomenon. According to Erikson, the process of identification is only completed if and when the adolescent has subordinated his early identifications to a new kind of identification. This period is a kind of transformation,

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period for the adolescent. The rapid changes in their physical appearances and in their emotional make up pose a number of problems for adolescents. Most of the times, adolescents have no clear understanding of who they are and what they stand for. Erikson tries to establish the ego identify of adolescents.

• Jean Piaget :

- The adolescent, unlike the child is an individual who thinks beyond the present and forms theories about everything, delighting, especially, in consideration of that which is not. It is the age of great ideals and the beginning of theories as well as the time of simple present adaptation to reality. Adolescence is a bridge between childhood and adulthood and is a period of rapid changes in almost all developmental dimensions: of growing to sexual maturity, discovering one's real self, defining personality values and finding one's vocational and social directions. It is also a time of testing of pushing ⁵ against one's capabilities and limitations as posed by adults.

The adolescent's attempt to theorize is his search for identify. Adolescence is a transition period in the individual's life. Piaget has summarized the features of adolescence in terms of physical growth and the mental and moral development of the individual. The adolescent revolts against the norms and standards of adults. In short, Piaget defines adolescence from physical and sociological point of view.

4. Encyclopedia of Psychology :

" Adolescence is the post puberal period in which individual self-responsibility is established. The characteristics of physical maturity are already present. The psychic phenomena of puberty are gradually discarded. A search for freedom, and increasing self-confidence and self-consciousness, are characteristics of this phase of development. The age ranges conventionally associated with adolescence are 12 to 21 years for girls, and 13 to 22 years for boys.⁶

This definition points out that adolescence is different from childhood. The physical growth is followed by the awareness to emotional changes. The adolescent tries to assure his identity. His freedom is two fold. On the one hand, the adolescent frees himself from the childhood connections and on the other hand, he tests his growing confidence.

5. The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology Oxford :

Adolescence is a transitional period of life between childhood and adulthood. There is more controversy than agreement among psychologists regarding the exact beginning and end of adolescence. Various physiological changes (e.g. growth of sprus, maturation of reproductive organs, emergence of secondary sex characteristics) and psychological changes (e.g. emergence of logical thinking); increased interest in sexuality and the opposite sex, pre-occupation with issues of identity, increased peer-conformity and increased responsibility have been identified as indicators of adolescence. However, no consensus exists on which changes define adolescence and which are frequent but non-essential characteristics of adolescence.

In practice, the study of adolescence encompasses all individuals who are psycho-socially neither unambiguously children nor adults. An individual may be said to enter adolescence when he or she no longer views himself/herself as a child (nor wants or expects to be treated as such) or when others begin to expect more mature behaviour from him or her than they do from a child. It is a time of rapid physiological and psychological change, of intensive readjustment to family, school, work and social life and of preparation for adult roles.

This definition lists the indicators of adolescence. The physiological changes and the psychological changes define 'adolescence'. These changes contribute to the transformation of a child into an adolescent being. This stage paves the way for the adult life. The last part of the definition shows that 'adolescence' is a social phenomenon. The social institutions like family, school play an important role in the adolescent's life. This means that 'adolescence' is a culture-specific phenomenon.

S.S. Chauhan sums up the psychological and Sociological interpretation of the term adolescence in these words :

According to the Sociological interpretation of the word, 'adolescence', it is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood when a child moves from dependency to independency in his behaviour. As we know that during childhood, the individual is completely dependent upon parents or other adults of the family for food, cloth, shelter and emotional support necessary for his survival and growth in the world. But during the late adolescence, he is relatively self-sufficient, and independent, able to provide for most of his own needs and ready to establish himself away from the parental home, but in our country, majority of adolescents are not in a position to earn their livelihood independently because of unemployment and thus the period of transition extends for Indian adolescents.

According to the psychological interpretation, adolescent may be viewed as young person in transition between the behaviour typical of adults, between a period of rapid development as an individual and a period in which the individual learns to make adjustment to the needs of the self, others and the community.

Chauhan's sociological and psychological interpretations define ' adolescence ' in the Indian context. He compares and contrasts ' adolescence ' with ' childhood '. He wants the extension in age for the Indian adolescents. The economy of the nation controls the social behaviour of adolescents. The psychological interpretation points out the adjustment efforts of adolescents..

The above cited definitions show that the adolescence period is an important time in the life of the individual. It is a transition period. It is open to both ways. It adopts some traits from childhood. At the same time this period shows some signs of adulthood. Adolescence is a bridge between childhood and adulthood. The voice of the adolescent is different from that of the child. The adolescent strives for separate identify. Adolescents want to confirm their position in the society. In this attempt, both of them (society and adolescent) contribute to each other. The definitions in the previous pages speak about the psychological, social interpretations of the word, adolescence. Adolescence involves

not only in physical changes but also developments in intellectual capacities, interests, attitudes and adjustments. The real problems of adolescence are emotional, social, moral and economic. The adolescents try to establish satisfactory relations with age-mates. They try to test their own set of values in confrontation with the society. The problems of the adolescents change from nation to nation. The emotional and the intellectual make up of Indian adolescents is not like that of American adolescents. Their responses to the social stimuli are different. The problems of the adolescents have different dimensions in different nations. The Indian adolescent is a typical product of the Indian atmosphere. The socio-political factors and the Indian culture contribute to the value system of adolescents. The caste and the class of the Indian adolescents prepare the social behaviour of the adolescents. They are sensitive to their environment. They establish their own code of conduct. The community offers social institutions which play a very important role in shaping the personality. It controls the behaviour of young adolescents to some extent. The dreams of adolescent hint at their unfulfilled wishes and expectations.

The present dissertation aims at the study of the treatment of Indian adolescence in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand. Some events from Anand's actual adolescence have crept up into Anand's novels. Anand himself has commented.

Various studies of my novels by scholars, have, in recent years, confirmed what I tried to show in the autobiography of my ideas, Apology for Heroism, as also in the autobiographical novels, that there has always been an emergent connection between my life and my writings, throughout my creative career.⁹

Anand told P.K. Rajan,

The connection between my life and my writings is more intimate than in other novelists. I write as I live. My life is my message.¹⁰

About his personal adolescence, Anand remarked;

So I grew up in hotch-potch world of which I early began to perceive the inconsistencies.

The central character in the novel, Untouchable, Bakha emerged from one of his adolescent untouchable friends. While studying at the Khalsa College, Anand met the poet-philosopher Iqbal and wrote poetry in Urdu under his influence. This trait can be easily seen in his heroes like Lalu and Krishan. Both of them loved poetry. Anand's Urdu verses were prompted by his calf-love for Yasmin, the sister-in-law of his Muslim college friend, Noor Muhammad. His poetry came to be known in the wrong quarters. Yasmin's parents married her off to an elderly railway guard to whom she had been engaged. Anand decided to elope with Yasmin to Kashmir with the help of his friend Noor. Yasmin's husband came to know of his wife's plans. He murdered her on the day she was to flee. Anand presented

the fictionalised account of this love story in his novel, 'Confession of a Lover' Anand spent his childhood days in cantonments in Punjab. His novels present the accurate picture of this local area. Anand wrote to Saros Cowasjee,

I had meant to persuade you to come to Amritsar with me by Road, so that you could get some part of the background of my early life, from which I have written my novels.¹²

The fictionalised adolescents are different from the real characters in his life. He wrote to Cowasjee,

As always my characters are taken from my intimate experience, but are sought to be transformed- often a lamb becomes a lion and a dove becomes a jackal.¹³

Marlene Fisher praises Anand for his adolescent characters in these words :

Anand's forte as a creator of character is the adolescent, the future itself.¹⁴

Anand's actual adolescence played significant role in his treatment of the theme of adolescence. But this does not mean that only his adolescence is responsible for this treatment and his other intellectual activities and the experiences have nothing to do with it. His completion of Ph.D. in philosophy, his vast reading of the eastern and western philosophers, his love-affair in England, the Bloomsbury

group, his company with the western literary figures, his experience in psychology laboratory, his journalism, his journey, his war experience as a reporter, his visit with national leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, his return to India, his participation in literary and artistic movements, his visits to other European nations and what not. Everything contributed to his emotional and intellectual make up. This mature Anand handled the theme of adolescence. Anand remarked in his Apology,

I struggled to weigh-up the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalayas of my Indian past.¹⁵

In the following novels, Anand's protagonists are adolescent characters :

1. Untouchable (1935)
2. Coolie (1936)
3. Lalu Trilogy :
 - The Village (1939)
 - Across the black waters (1940)
 - The Sword and the sickle (1942)
4. Morning Face (1968)
5. Confession of a Lover (1976)

The years of publication of these novels show that the ' adolescence ' is the major concern of Anand for forty years. Most of the times, his adolescent characters are taken from preindependence era. Even in this later novels like Morning Face and Confession of a Lover Anand gives pen-portraits of pre-independence Indian adolescents. His adolescents belong to the lower classes of to the middle classes. Bakha in untouchable is sweeper. Lalu in Triology is a peasant lad suppressed under family loan, from Punjab. Krishan in Morning Face comes from Indian Middle class family. Krishan in Confession of a Lover is a young middle class undergraduate. This selection of adolescent heroes from the lower or middle classes shows his sympathy with the poor. Anand gives physical descriptions of his adolescent characters. He describes Bakha's physical appearance :

Bakha, a young man of eighteen, strong and able-bodied.¹⁶

Bakha had dark, broad round face. Mūhoo, the little boy has to face the vast sea of life. His lower class adolescents work hard. They are sincere in their work. Bakha is a dexterous workman. He did his work with immense concentration. Anand narrates his daily work in these words :

He worked away earnestly, quickly without loss of effort. Brisk, yet steady, his capacity for active application to the task he had in hand seemed flow like constant water from a natural spring. Each muscle of his body hard as a rock when it

came into play, seemed to shine forth like glass.¹⁷

We see Lalu working hard in his ancestral fields. Lalu works hard in the trenches also. Munoo bears the burden of tremendous work.

His adolescent characters are in conflict with their sociopolitical environment. But their reactions to the situations are different. Their caste and class play an important role in determining their reactions. Bakha is a perfect individual whose excellence is flawed by his low caste for which he is not responsible. The caste Hindus trouble him. Bakha's actions are experience-oriented. A series of insults in a day is responsible for creating an awareness in him. He comprehends his real place in a society. He was an untouchable because he cleaned their dirt. Bakha has established a kind of cell in his mind where the process of understanding his place in society continued. Munoo accepted his tragic lot without a protest. He does not know why the rich are superior. He is content to be a slave. He tries to adjust himself to everyone of his painful situations. He attempts to grow into a respectable man. But he fails. This failure is due to cruelty of circumstances. In short, Bakha and Munoo are the victims of caste and class-ridden society to certain extent. Both of them are passive sufferers. Their revolt is limited to emotional outburst. They have not the

courage to give political answer to their situation. But both the adolescents express their quest for freedom in a social system of ruthless exploitation. Bakha and Munoo have their personal dimensions and the social dimensions. Both the adolescents realize their place and position in society.

Lalu in Lalu trilogy is not a passive sufferer. He struggles against society. He moves from innocence to experience and from experience to isolation and self-awareness. Lalu of The Village is up against a society of evils, rituals and superstitions. Lalu opposes the exploitative and ritual-ridden society. The banner of protest acquires new meaning and significance in Across the black waters. Lalu joined war in which he had no interest. But his experiences in war made him a committed revolutionary in The Sword and the sickle. The enlightened Lalu tries to change the evil systems in society. The hero in Confession of a Lover and Morning face is a young undergraduate having typical middle class sensibility. He responded to the Indian freedom movement. We see this young boy in action in the freedom movement.

Anand's adolescents are up against the rituals. Anand told P.K. Rajan :

My revolt against the main faiths of India is a revolt against the cliché, the clap-trap of ritual.¹⁸

Bakha wonders about the strange behaviour of the caste Hindus. Bakha recognises his real position after the touch scene. He says :

" For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable; untouchable. untouchable. That's the word: untouchable. I am an untouchable."¹⁹

This recognition of his position is his silent weeping against ritualistic Hindu-Society. Revolt against religion is an integral part of Lahu's life. His ritualistic hair cut is his defiance of the elders and their faiths. The village panchayat blackened his face. His love affair did not materialise. Finally, he left this village. He aspires for modernity. Krishan is not interested in the religion in the traditional sense of the term religion. Krishan's participation in the freedom movement shows the concern of the young Indians about the future of their nation. Anand took part in the freedom movement. Anand participated in the 1921 Civil Disobedience Movement against the British. He was jailed for a brief spell. This experience shapes the reactions of Krishan.

Anand's adolescents are born and brought up in Indian Society. Indian Society is not as free as the European society. So the sexual responses of these adolescents are typically Indian. Of course, most of them have attained their physical growth. Bakha is eighteen year old. Bakha is proud of his sister, Sohini. But the narrator in untouchable says,

He was proud of her with a pride not altogether that of a brother for a sister.²⁰

This is the reaction of a Freudian adolescent. Lalu-Maya love affair begins in The Village and finally they marry in The Sowrd and the Sickle. Lalu and his other army friends visit a brothel in France. Lalu wondered at this kind of commercialization of sex in France. He saw that men and women were more free in France. Krishan remembered the bodily smells of different women. Anand's actual love affair with Yasmin gets fictional parallels in Confession of a Lover.

The loss of innocence is the first step in the establishment of their identity. This is particularly true in case of Bakha and Munoo. Both of them inquire about the why and how of their position. Both of them know their tragic plight. But not much is left to their own efforts. But Lalu's loss of innocence is not followed by mere acceptance of his position in society. But he is up against the evil systems in the contemporary society. He is a rebel. He is also a failure. Because he could not complete his revolution. But in his recognition of his failure, lies his success. Krishan is a middle class young undergraduate. He seeks his identity in poetry, in love affair and in active participation in Indian freedom movement. These characters try to identify themselves in society. But this process is not easy. Anand wrote to Cowasjee,

I don't think you have noticed that neither I nor my characters are able to adjust ourselves to realities. We are always filled with dissatisfaction disgust and nausea.²¹

Most of his adolescents love poetry and that may be the consolation on their part to their problems. Bakha tries to memorise the folk-poems. He had often felt like reading Waris Shah's Heer Ranja. Finally, the poet's solution to his problem impressed him. Lalu is fed on Punjabi folk-songs. The young rustic exploits this folk-tradition. Lalu-Maya affair echoes Heer Ranja episode. Krishan wrote poetry. Anand wrote to Cowasjee,

Confession of a Lover is about adolescence, poetry and love.²²

His young characters belong to a particular historical phase of our country. They are young heroes from the freedom movement or they are the tragic-victims of social forces of that time. The traditional institutions like family, school, religion, God have to face a number of questions from these adolescents. These young boys aspire for education. Bakha is ready to pay for his education. Bakha's craving for education stems from his love for all that is English. Munoo's schooling is cut short by the necessity to make a living. Bakha and Munoo have not the formal education. But the life is their teacher. It gives them informal lessons of a far

greater consequences. Lalu's' experience in France made him the ardent supporter of education. He wants co-education in our schools for the boys and the girls. Krishan got formal education. So his reactions are mature.

Sometimes, Anand uses the adolescents as his mouth-pieces. The characters speak the language which is not intelligible to the adolescents. Lalu 's talk about the revolution in The Sword and the sickel may be interpreted as Anand's own plans for the betterment of the peasants. Anand gives sensitive pen-portraits of the boy adolescents. But he is not that good in the portraits of the girl adolescents. The young characters long for modernity. Lalu wants to work on his fields according to the French models. Bakha wants the modern flush system to overcome his problem of untouchability. Krishan wants to throw the old British power. He wants the new national run by Indians. The modern machines attract Lalu and Munoo. All his adolescent heroes are born and brought in Indian context. The action of Across the black waters takes place on European Soil. But Lalu retained his Indian Snesibility Later on he tried to apply his western, informal education to the Indian problems.

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