

CHAPTER - II

Caste, Class and Race

1. Caste

1.1.1 Indian Social Context :

Attempting a discussion of the caste system, one is usually confronted at the very outset with the persistent query: what is a caste? A caste can not be defined as if it existed in social isolation, because it is in fact an inseparable element of the society. The social relationships of any caste interpenetrate the social matrix of the caste system and the caste system constitutes a type of society - the structure and substance of a society.

Emile Senart defines caste as 'a corporate group, exclusive and in theory at least, rigorously hereditary : She further elaborates, "It possesses a certain traditional and independent organization a chief and a council and as occasion demands it meets in assemblies endowed with more or less full authority. Often united in the celebration of certain festivals, it is further bound together by a common profession and by the practice of common customs which bear more especially upon marriage food and various cases or impurity. Finally, it is armed, in order to assure its authority with a jurisdiction of fairly wide extent. Capable by the infliction of certain penalties especially of banishment, either absolute or revocable of enforcing the power of the community."¹

H.H.Risley says : "A caste may be defined as collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine professing to follow the same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. The name generally denotes or is associated with a specific occupation? Then he elaborates "A caste is almost invariably endogamous in the sense that a member of the large circle denoted by the common name may not marry outside of that circle, but within the circle, there are usually a number of smaller circles each of which is also endogamous."²

Writing about the caste, C.Bougle has remarked : "Repulsion hierarchy and hereditary specialization-caste includes these three elements. It is necessary to consider all three if one is to have a complete definition of the caste system. We say that a society is characterized by such a system if it is divided into a large number of hereditarily specialized groups, hierarchically superposed and mutually opposed, if it does not tolerate the principle of rising in status, of group mixture of changing occupation, if it is opposed altogether to the mixture of blood to advancement in social status, and to a change of vocation."³

Korebar rightly remarks : "A caste may be defined as an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank of social esteem in comparison with other such subdivision."⁴ G.H. Mess to a caste system consists of a number of subdivisions or castes which are exclusively endogamous, which show a strong tendency to be socially exclusive, which perpetuate themselves hereditarily which are hierarchically superposed on a basis of standard supposedly cultural and which by the working of these four tendencies within the social field of their own delimitations may split up into more and more castes indefinitely."⁵

The caste system provides for the ordering of groups in society once and for all time. Regarding the caste system, W.Crooke, remarks : "The main result of the caste system is to stereotype existing conditions, to repress the desire of the individual to advance his own interest at the expense of, or in opposition to, those of the community in which he is included."⁶ Although there is a cultural presumption of fixity of social position within the caste system, some movement is not only possible but also inheritable. The caste system rests upon cultural and not physical variates, two or more castes may fuse, or one caste may divide without threatening the stability of the system. It has been repeatedly emphasized that the caste system constitutes a hierarchy of social status ranks. This hierarchy

ing and graduated all the way from top to bottom.

In this regard, Emile Senart observed : "Each caste has its particular rank defined by tradition and public opinion and each one maintains it at all costs or strives to advance itself."⁷ Thus we may think of the caste system as a number of cultural unities invidiously juxtaposed and the greater the struggle for position, the more secure the structure as a whole. The shape of the caste hierarchy is unpredictable. It is more accurate to think of the caste system as constituting a multiplicity of hierarchies determined by custom within various geographical areas of organization. In this connection, John C. Nesfield says : "The Maha-Brahman for eg. is particularly inferior."⁸

Social inequality is a keynote of the caste system, it is the theme of the social etiquette of the Hindus. The superiority of one caste over the other does not necessarily mean domination of one caste by the other. Brahmins do not struggle to maintain their position, they are superior. On this point Dubois observes : "The Brahmin's superiority is inherent in himself, and it remains intact, no matter what his condition in life may be. Rich or poor, Unfortunate or prosperous, he always goes on the principle engraved in him that he is the most noble, the most excellent of all created beings, that all the rest of mankind are infinitely beneath him and that there is nothing in

the world so sublime or so admirable as his customs and practices."⁹ The early Hindu literature is particularly insistent on the superiority of Brahmins.

Inferiority must necessarily be as much a social fact as superiority. Inferiority is inherent and accepted with equanimity. As a matter of fact, these low caste people are not seeking a liberator, they are always able to find group lower than themselves and their preoccupation becomes that of making the latter feel its position of even greater inferiority. Thus the attitudes of social inequality are not only strongly impressed upon the culture but they are also binding upon the least privileged Hindus.

The relationship of one caste to another is not similar to that which exists between master and slave. Slavery implies domination and force. Slaves are not the lowest class in a society; they are 'Out-classed', i.e. they are completely without class status. Moreover, slaves are neither the lowest caste nor out castes. Yet, the caste system is a cultural phenomenon and as such capable of and subject to change. The leaders of social change are moved by different degrees of enthusiasm. As Dolbeer says : "We find progressive opinion taking two distinct positions - first, there are those who consider --- First, there are those who consider --- caste an evil which must be overthrown and a better social order substituted --- To this class belong the Brahmo Samajists and a few leaders of promi-

nence --- The other position is held by those who would retain caste as a system believing it to be an essential part of Hindu culture, but who would abolish the practice of 'Untouchability'

---- They hold that Hinduism as a system is simply caste, and that in abolishing caste they would also be destroying Hinduism

---- To the orthodox Hindu, Caste is religion."¹⁰

The inferior - superior relationship of a caste, may be stated in terms of its purity. In this context, Ketkar remarks : "A caste is pure or impure according to its hierarchical position."¹¹ Untouchability is a deed-seated cultural trait of Hinduism. Ghurye thinks that : "It is the characteristic fact of Hindu society."¹² It is merely a heightened manifestation of the larger attitude of impurity or social distance. We may conclude that untouchability is not a unique phenomenon, it is part of a general attitude which serves to limit association between caste and caste, it is not a conflict attitude.

As Mahatma Gandhi remarks : "If untouchability was a part of the Hindu creed, I should decline to call myself a Hindu and most decidedly embrace some other faith if it, satisfied my honest aspirations Gandhi further states : "Fortunately for me, I hold that untouchability is not a part of Hinduism."¹³

The caste system constitutes the structure of Hinduism. Hinduism as a religion is a system of beliefs and doctrines developed about the basic principles of Karma and Samsara,

judgment after live. As Bougle remarks : "Caste is the very core of Hindu religion."¹⁴ The codes of conduct are in the interest of caste.

Marriage is an indispensable consideration among castes. The caste prevents intermarriage so that it may isolate itself and not vice versa. I.A.Gait conclude that : "Marriage is the most prominent factor in the caste system."¹⁵ From the same point of view, marriage is the most prominent factor in the social class system or the race system or any other system of group isolation. In Brahmanic India, the marriage contract is a religious one and the bride and groom have no part in its negotiation. In India, early marriage is prescribed particularly for females. Marriage itself constitutes a social condition of extreme importance. Dr. G.H.Mees says : "Caste or class differences in East and west equally were at first based on merit and social usefulness and later tended to become hereditary and economic."¹⁶

Caste is such an obtrusive factor of Indian social organization. During the British rule, the untouchables were really unapproachable. Ideas of purity, whether occupational or ceremonial which are found to have been a factor in the genesis of caste, are the very soil of the idea and practice of untouchability. The social and cultural systems of caste thus segment the total society in a region into many Jati groups committed to

particular britti's (caste vocation) and styles of life, arranged in a social hierarchy defined in terms of the cultural value of the purity and impurity of these occupations and styles of life.

1.1.2 Untouchability :

'Untouchability' is a unique Hindu social institution which emerged in the remote past the so-called 'untouchables' have been suffering the stigma of untouchability followed by servitude, illiteracy and grinding poverty. Eventually the founding fathers of the constitution of India who visualized a society based on justice, liberty, equality and Fraternity provided inter alia, for the abolition of untouchability¹ in the constitution which came into force on 26th January 1950. It is stated categorically in the constitution under Article 17, that "Untouchability" is abolished. The directly in contrast with the constitutional ideal divides our society into the touchables and the untouchables. The CI has also made it an 'offense' punishable by law. The parliament has passed "the protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955" to prescribe punishment for various offences of untouchability. The custom of untouchability was bad in its "origin" itself as such it law at all. The inhuman practice of untouchability had deprived them of all the fundamental rights and reduced them to mere chattels. It was being a 'permanent

stain', there was no chance for upward mobility to the untouchables. All the problems like poverty, illiteracy and a number of others are incidental to or connected with untouchability, as it was the origin of all the problems. Even the caste Hindus were not benefited by the institution of untouchability.

Mahatma Gandhi who realised the danger of untouchability has rightly said that : "Untouchability is a curse that is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, and I often feel that unless we take due precaution and remove this from our midst, Hinduism itself is in danger of destruction."²

Untouchability is a disgrace and disadvantageous to almost all the Indians, particularly to the ex-untouchables who form approximately one fifth of the total population of our country. Thus it is not the problem of a few persons, but of a large humanity. The problem is becoming complex and serious causing disharmony in the society.

Maharshi V.R.Shinde says : "Untouchability means a nation-wide institution indicating three features of often observing pollution, asking to live outside of village and not giving equal legal protection of law."³

Mahatma Gandhi says : "Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular state of family."⁴

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar remarks : "Untouchability is the notion of defilement pollution, contamination and the ways and means of getting rid of that defilement. It is a case of permanent hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse."⁵

Prof. More Galanter says : "In its broadest sense Untouchability might include all instances in which one person treated another as ritually unclean and a source of pollution."⁶

The Committee on Untouchability etc. Headed by L. Elayaperumal remarks that : "Untouchability is a basic and unique feature of the Hindu Social System and order --- But the simple fact is forgotten that while economic issues are present in all other countries, Untouchability is a unique problem confronted in this country only --- Untouchability is not a separate institution by itself, it is a corollary of the institutions of the caste system of Hindu society. It is an attitude on the part of a whole group of people. It is spirit of social aggression that underlines this attitude."⁷ According to C. Parvathamma Untouchability is part and parcel of Hindu religion and caste system."⁸ According to V. S. Nargolkar, "Untouchability is largely an out-growth of the system of caste and caste in its turn is the illegitimate child of the concept of Varna."⁹

On the basis of these definition, it can be said with G. S. Ghurye that the main features of caste system are :

- 1) Segmented division of society

- 2) based on hierarchy
- 3) restriction on feeding and social inter course
- 4) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections.
- 5) lack of unrestricted choice of occupation and
- 6) restriction on marriage¹⁰

Caste system generates the feeling of "superiority" or "inferiority" in the minds of caste-based society. Untouchability caste system has consolidated the institution of Untouchability by enforcement of several disabilities and restrictions under the fictitious belief of 'purity'. Untouchability is a unique feature of Hinduism. Bhagwan Das say: "Untouchability is an integral part of Hinduism. This is the first lesson a Hindu learns from his mother in his cradle & tries faithfully to follow till his last day on this earth."¹¹

According to C.Parvattama "Untouchability is part and parcel of Hindu religion and caste system."¹² Swami Vivekanand said that :

"We are orthodox Hindus, but we refuse entirely to identify ourselves, with Don't Touchism' that is not Hinduism, it is in none of our books, it is an orthodox superstition which has interfered with national efficiency all along the line."¹³

According to Gandhi, "Untouchability is a phenomenon which is peculiar to Hinduism only and it has got no warrant either in reason or in shastras, or in Shastras."¹⁴ In this sense untouch-

ability is a feature of it.

Untouchability is described as a sin, blot, curse and stain imposed on a group of people by another group of people. It has sustained a number of jolts but it is unhampered. It is deeply rooted in the minds of the caste Hindus that Untouchability is but a religious act. The orthodox caste Hindus think that it is but a 'permanent stain' on the part of the untouchables, remaining unaffected either by educational or cultural development.

Untouchability is an aggravated form of Untouchability. If a Brahman did not see or know about the arrival of an untouchable the latter had to say loudly 'Payse of Parayase' (keep distance) in the streets. This indicates unapproachability and unseeability are the corollaries of 'Untouchability'.

Slavery is a status of the slave who is "a creature without any rights or any status whatsoever; who is or may become the property of another as a mere chattel --- legal authority."¹⁵ Slavery is quite ancient whereas Untouchability is a later invention. Slavery is universal but Untouchability is a special feature of Indian society only. Untouchability was a permanent stain but slavery was not so. Slavery is undoubtedly different from Untouchability but the untouchables were also used as slaves in the 18th century. Thus slavery and Untouchability are treated as two separate offences.

Untouchability is coincided with the notion of defilement, pollution or impurity. Impurity based on birth, death, occupation, character, sex, mixed marriages, conversion. The scope of Untouchability is observed for all the times and for all the purposes. Impurity is observed only at the time of Sharaddha or sacrifices in respect of acceptance of food and in case of recitation of Vedas and in respect and inheritance.

Untouchability is observed not only against an individual or few individuals, but it is observed against or group of individuals 'chuffed' up as untouchables. A group of so called high caste people observes Untouchability against all the fictitious low caste people.

There are several categories of offences, e.g. offences against human body, property, the state etc. The offence of Untouchability may rightly be categorised as an offence against human values and humanity. Untouchability reduces persons to mere slave, who have no civil personality or importance.

The word 'untouchables' appears at the first in the census report, 1911, where in the Hindu population was divided into three categories. i.e. 1) Hindus 2) Animists 3) Tribals and the depressed classes or untouchables. The untouchables are known as out castes depressed classes, scheduled castes etc.

Untouchability is a relational phenomenon. It necessarily indicates the relations between the caste Hindus at one

hand and the so-called untouchables on the other. Untouchability as a relational phenomenon implies the strained relations between these two groups of touchables and untouchables. The touchables look down upon the untouchables with hatred attitude. These strained relations reflect in the attitude of 'touch-me-notism!

It is said that Untouchability is but virulent form of poverty and illiteracy. Eventhough poverty and illiteracy made the problem of Untouchability more severe and complicated.

Untouchability is a set of certain forms and practices. Physical and notional Untouchability is based on religious misbelief, superstitions and contempt for the untouchables. The contextual and relative forms and practices of Untouchability are primarily based on ceremonial purity, benefits and the fear of apathy by their fellowman. Then Exploitative and oppressive forms of untouchability are based on fraudulent and criminal intentions discriminative attitudes.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Untouchability is a snake with a thousand mouths through each of which it shows its poisonous fangs. It defies definition."⁶

The social structure of our society is based on caste and class inequalities ignorance and illiteracy , Untouchability and superstitions. Untouchability is rooted in the attitude of hatred for a section of humanity as such it should be eradicated

completely and not partially. The constitution under Article'7 states, "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any that Untouchability is abolished only at public places.

1.2 Mulk Raj Anand

1.2.1 Untouchable :

Anand's Untouchable was published in 1935. Untouchable presents a set of adolescent characters — Bakha, Rakha, Sohini, Ramchandran, Leather worker's son Chota, the sons of Babu, Bakha is a central character.

Anand observes, "The book poured out like hot lava from the volcano of my crazed imagination, during a long week end --- I kept on dreaming about several strains in the central character of Bakha, almost as though I was moulding his personality and transmuting it from actuality into the hero of a nightmare. What was the causality which made this uprush possible? superficially, it seems that a rare human being. Whom I had known from my childhood and adored as a hero because he was physically like a god, played all the games superbly and could recite whole cantos from the epic poem Heer Ranjah of Waris Shah, was knocking at the gates of my awareness ----- I was aware of his tragedy. That this otherwise near perfect human being was sweeper who was always being humiliated by most of our elders on account of his low caste, was not allowed to go to

school even if his father had sent him, flawed his excellence, for no fault of his. And though patronised because he was a good worker and obedient, he was suspected of leading all the young people astray and therefore vigilantly watched and kept at bay. The contradiction between the inborn qualities of this youth and the down and out status to which he was condemned, may certainly have been the obvious cause for my broodings about him."¹

This observation shows that Anand's actual adolescent years in his ^{own} life have played ^{an} important role in shaping the character of the young boy Bakha.

The novel narrates a series of insults ^{inflicted?} imposed on a young sensitive boy. The incidents of 'touching' repeated in varying circumstances in the novel, keep up the rhythm of the novel. The insults and humiliations Bakha suffers reach their climax when he realizes that improper suggestions have been made to his sister, ^{the} Sohini, by priest who seeing him cries out 'defiled, defiled'. Bakha comes back home and declares to his father : ^{they} they think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt."²

The heart of Untouchable however is not in its manifest social plea for the abolition of Untouchability. It lies, rather in the kind of person Bakha is. It lies in his trusting-
 9. ness in his naivete, and in his still Untouchable wonder at life. The caste and class of Bakha's family is important in

Bakha's growing up. Bakha is a victim of the present caste and class system. The novel Untouchable shows that Bakha is representative of Untouchable. But that does not mean Bakha has not his own identity. E.M.Forster rightly pointed out, "Bakha is a real individual, lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak, and thoroughly Indian."³

Bakha is a young boy who wants to grow up. Anand introduces Bakha in these words : "Bhaka, a young man of eighteen, strong and able-bodied..."⁴ But Bakha gradually loses his innocence. The day begins with abuses from his father and loud shouts from the sepoys reminding him of his duty. His father awakes Bakha : 'Are you up? Get up, you illegally begotten.' After finishing his morning round, he went to the town. Bakha bought jalebis. He put a piece in the mouth. It was wonderful to walk while munching the jalebis. But then he forgot to announce his arrival. He touched a caste Hindu. The mob watched him. Bakha tried to explain his position. But the man slapped him. Bakha's turban fell off and the jalebis were scattered in the dust. Bakha's natural reaction to this incident is like this:

"Why was all this fuss? Why was so humble? I could have struck him--- That man. That he should have bit me my poor jalebis. I should have eaten them. But why could not I say something? Couldn't I have joined my hand to him and then gone away? The slap on my face. The coward. How he ran away, like a

dog with the tail between his legs.."5

But in the same mood, he recognises his place in the society. "For them I am sweeper, sweeper Untouchable, Untouchable, Untouchable; That's the word Untouchable. I am an Untouchable.."6

Later a caste woman abuses him while offering the food. He tries to have a close look at the Gods in the temple. But the people ~~shot~~ that he has polluted the temple. *Shouted* 7

Bakha, has a sister named Sohini. As she approaches the well, she has to face the abuses and recriminations thrown on her by those belonging to the higher castes. Kalinath, the priest is impressed by her arresting attentions and when she comes to clear the courtyard, he makes improper suggestions to her. But at her denial he starts shouting 'Polluted, Polluted', and soon several high caste people gather there. Bakha comes to know of it and feels it an insult added to the injury. He spoke to himself :

"I could have given him a bit of my mind.."7

Later in the course of a 'hockey game' when a boy is injured, Bakha tries to lift him up. But the boy's mother feels that he is 'polluted'.

Dr. Iyengar rightly remarks, "Life in the town and cantonment the colors and the smells, the chants and the noises, the fifth and the cruelty the kindness and the humanity

the shifting scenes in the temple, the market place, the playground, the quiet of the hill side, the stir at public meetings: all are evoked with an uncanny accuracy so that 'Untouchable', strikes us as the picture of a place, of a society, and of certain persons not easily to be forgotten : a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy.."8

The religion, family are not safe places for this young boy. Right from the morning Bakha suffers a series of insults at the hands of the caste Hindus. He sets out for work even before dawn at the rude command of his father. Cigarettes are flung at him as a bone is flung at an insistent sniffing dog. Jilebis are thrown at him like a cricket ball, and the papery chapatis fly down to him from the third floor.

C.D.Narasimhaiah puts it rightly 'The choice of Bakha, a sprightly sweeper boy, as the hero of Untouchable marks Anand's revolutionary departure' from the tradition of fiction writing in India the title gives "published information."9 and as the title does not have an article, Bakha seems to be a representative Untouchable exemplifying the predicament of not only the so-called Hindu Untouchable but also of dispossessed men everywhere."

Bakha considers the Muslims as good persons because they were also out castes to the Hindus. Bakha, is a victim of

religion and the contemporary caste and class structure of Indian society. But, in fact, him. He is a good player, workman, he is admirably clean. He respects the upper classes. But all his good qualifications are of no use. Because he belongs to lowest of the low caste - the sweeper.

"They think we are mere dirt, because we clean their dirt."¹⁰ L.S.S.O. Malley remarks that :-

'The term 'out caste' is a misnomer because the Untouchables have their own gradation of a caste honour which they are punctilious in maintaining." Gulabo who claims a high place among the low castes, looks down upon sohini who belongs to the lowest among the sub castes. This is termed 'Untouchability within Untouchability'.

As K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar observes that : "there are degrees of caste among the 'low-caste' people, there being none low without one being lower still !"¹²

Bakha's love for modernity is his attempt to protect himself against the evil caste and class system. Bakha wants to wear the sahibs clothes and speak his language. This love for modern English life is his illusion which allow him to forget the reality for him. According to Lakha religion itself has prescribed Untouchability which again is an emanation of ignorance.



Saros Cowasjee remarks that "The Hindu religion is responsible for this fiendish segregation of humanity."¹³ At the temple, the pandit tried to molest Sohini. After this incident, the narrator reflects :

He (Bakha) could not think of her being brutalised by anyone, even by a husband married to her according to the rites of religion --- But there seemed no difference to his naked mind between his own feeling for her and what might be a husband's love."⁴⁶

Bakha was thinking of everything he had heard, thoughly he could not understand it all.

S.C.Harrex concludes, "He is a Gandhi disciple without knowing it."⁴⁷ Bakha comes to a tentative decision : "I should go and tell father all the Gandhi said about us, he whispered to himself, and what that clever poet said. Perhaps I can find the poet. On the way and ask him about his machine."⁴⁸

Bakha's brother, Rakha is the true child of outcastes colony. Bakha is a Nictim of traditional caste system.

In Untouchable it is the 'touch' scene which suddenly brings home to Bakha his real position in social order, it is a moment of self-revelation for him : "-----for them I am a sweeper, sweeper Untouchable : Untouchable ! Untouchable ! That's the word Untouchable? I am an Untouchable!" ----- Everything that had happened to him traced its course up to this light and got

the answer; the contempt of those who came to the latrines daily and complained that there weren't any latrines clean, the sneers of the people in the out castes' colony, the abuse of the crowd which had gathered round him this morning. It was all explicable now⁴⁹.

The realization of his ignoble position in the social order throws him into a dreary sense of isolation and poisons everything that happens subsequently. When after picking up the loaf of bread thrown to him by the woman of the big house, he has second thoughts on it, he regrets his action :

"I shouldn't have picked up that bread from the pavement, he said, and he sighed."⁵⁰

Lakha's reaction, when Bakha reports to him about the pundit's attempt to molest Sohini, shows how far the son has advanced ahead of the father :

"You didn't abuse or hit back did you? he (Lakha) asked --- No, but I was sorry afterwards that I didn't, replied Bakha. I could have given them a bit of my mind".

'No, no, my son, no', said Lakha, ' we can't do that. They are our superiors. One word of theirs is sufficient against all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us. Some of them are kind."⁵¹

Bakha hopes for a change. The evening offers three distinct possibilities for change. Christianity, Gandhism and Modernisation. He is not impressed by Colonel Hutchinson's persuasions about the solace Christianity can offer, but he is thrilled by Gandhi's compassion for the outcasts and is greatly attracted to what the poet says about the water closet. He returns home with a tentative decision'.

"I shall go and tell father all that Gandhi said about us; he whispered to himself, 'and all that the poet said perhaps I can find the poet on the way and ask him about his machine. And he proceeded homewards.'"52"

When Bakha accidentally touches a caste Hindu, a group of street urchins join the crowd which is abusing - "Ohe, son of a dog! Now tell us how you feel. You used to beat us."53"

His sister, Sohini, is also dexterous, after her fashion :

'How a round base can be adjusted on a round top, how a sphere can rest on a sphere is a problem which may be of interest to those who think like Euclid or Archimedes. It never occurred to Sohini to ask herself anything like this as she balanced her pitcher on her head and went to and from her one roomed home to the steps of the caste-well where she counted on the chance of some gentleman taking pity on her and giving her the water she needed.'"54"

Sohini approaches the well, and is involved in inter-caste abuses and recriminations for there are degrees of caste among the low-caste people, there being none low without one being lower still !

In the afternoon, Bakha attends the marriage of his friend Ram Chanran's sister - the girl of a higher caste whom he couldn't marry. Ram Charan the washermans son, Chota the leather worker's son and Bakha forget for the nonce the minutiae of sub-low-caste differences, and share the sugar-plums and plan to play hockey in the evening. At Havildar Charat Sing's again caste is forgotten: the Havildar treats Bakha affectionately and gives him a new hockey stick. Playing hockey against the 31st Punjabis, Bakha sends a goal, which starts a pre fight. A little boy is injured and trying to lift him up, Bakha. Pollutes him according to the boy's mother. When he returns home at last, his father roundly rates him for idling away all the afternoon, and drives him out of the house. Bakha's cup of frustration and misery is full.

The Untouchable was really the harijan 'man of God'. It was satanic to think that anybody was polluted or could Pollute another. Bakha heard the public speech of Mahatma Gandhi : "I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduisism."³⁵ and of the speech of poet, Iqbal Nath Sarshar :

"Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the digrity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society, "Bakha is duly impressed and returns to his house to tell his father about the Gandhi and about the machine, that will "clear dung without one having to handle it."⁵⁷" But E.M.Roster rightly says : "It is the necessary climax, and it has mounted up with triple effect. Bakha returns to his father and his wretched bed, thinking now of the mahatma, now of the machine. His Indian day is over and next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not in the depths of the sky, a change is at hand."⁵⁸

1.2.2 Coolie :

Anand published his second novel, Collie in 1936. The novel narrates the life story of a young hill-boy, Munoo. Basically Collie is a character novel, Munoo is the major character. Anand introduces him: "Munoo was a genius at climbing trees. He would hop on to the trunk, like a monkey, climb the bigger branches on all fours, swing himself to the thinner off shoots as if he were dancing on a trapeze and then, diving dangerously into spaces, he would jump from one tree to another."⁵⁹

Like Bakha, he also uses flow of abusive words like, you of the evil start, 'ominous orphan bringer of disgrace illequally begotten, liar, vulgar, Brute, stupid hill boy: etc.

By caste, he belong to the second highest caste-Kshatriya in Hindu Society. Life in Babu's house is the routine of domestic slavery. Anand says : "The wild bird of his heart fulltend every now and then with the desire for happiness."⁶⁰

All we coolies look alike."⁶¹ His poverty forces him to leave his village. He tries to seek his place and position in society but the society denies him this place. Saros Cowasjee remarks, "He took for his hereo his childhood playmate, Munoo, who was consigned to labour In a pickle factory and who accepted his lot with a fatalism peculiar to the Indian peasantry."⁶²

The society gives him economic insecurity. His slithe, supple body with a small delicate face and with a pair of sensitive eyes comes to the tragic end due to social forces. But on mental level, he like Bakha is a passive character. It seems that mere survival is the assertion of personality for these caste and class untouchables. Munoo's upper caste gives him free access in all the classes of society.

As Premila Paul remarks, "In Coolie we see that caste does not play so prominent a role in society. Unmindful of their caste distinctions, the Hindus, Sikh and Muslim coolies Chit-Chat and share their hubble-bubble, Even the sweeper has to be bribed if he should allow the people to use a clean latrine. The sweeper is not a Bakha at the beck and call of the caste Hindus."⁶³

Mainwaring's parents are too conscious of their blue-blooded upper middle class Englishness to accept may as their daughter-in-law. As Mohan points out, the British have, '--- a caste system more rigid than ours. Any Anagrezl woman whose husband earns twelve hundred rupees a month will not leave cards at the house of a woman whose husband earns five hundred. And the woman whose husband earns five hundred looks down upon the woman whose husband earns three hundred. The rich don't really want to mix with each other."64"

When Munoo insulted at the Bombay shop, seeks solace in the fact that, after all, he belongs to the Kshatriya caste. In the same way, reflecting on the plight of Hari, he faus into self pitying. "Am I really ominous? he asked him. If I am ominously, why don't I die? My death would rid the world of an unlucky person. I would like to die."65"

The Russian critic Y.Tupikova rightly remarks that:

In Coolie Anand underrates the conscious factor in the workers' movement in 1928-29, often does not see where the smuggle must lead, and presents his revolutionary characters in rather a sketchy manner."66"

K.R.Srinivas Iyenagar rightly remarks : "Coolie is verity a cross-section of India, the visible India, that mixture of the horrible and the boy, the inhuman and the humane, the sordid and the beautiful."67"

1.2.3 : Other Works :

1. M.R.Anand's another novel The Road, which was published in 1961, deals the theme of Untouchability. In this novel, Bhikhu, the protagonist, is a road-worker and not 'a knight of the broom', Bhiku's condition is no different from Bakha's condition. Bhiku is very defiant by nature. The selection again of an untouchable, a member of those that are looked down upon by almost all as the scum of the earth, as the hero of The Road reaffirms Anand's inalienable faith in the essential dignity of man, whatever be his caste and position in society. Caste is the chief target of Anand's criticism in The Road. In this novel, we find that, caste-consciousness on the part of the orthodox Hindus results in a number of obstacles in the path of the progress of the poor out castes of the village. Thakur Singh, the landlord, sees to it that the caste-Hindus do not help to build the road, the untouchables are trying to build though they need it as much as the others do. In the end, Bikhu runs to Delhi to escape untouchability. The road here is a symbol of prosperity and progress. The problem here has been treated as a sociological one. In this novel, Anand Narrates the story of Bikhu and his Harijan friends who build a road for the Government and come in conflict with caste Hindus who do not want to touch the stones defiled by the so-called Chammars.

Anand's next novel The Big Heart figures as a signif-

icant theme of untouchability. The Big Heart projects "Casteism" not in its rigidity but in its insidiousness since caste phobia does bedevil human relations. Unlike Untouchable and The Road, The Big Heart does not concern itself with the relations between the untouchables and the high castes but with those of the high caste themselves whose sense of caste superiority impedes the ordering of their interpersonal relations on the basis of equality. But The Big Heart dwells on an aspect of casteism that has not received any serious attention.

In Anand's short story collection, The Barber's Trade Union and other Stories, the title story of Barber's Trade Union, very well illustrates Anand's insistence on the dignity of man, irrespective of caste, class and profession. Chandu is an outcaste, subjected to the contempt and tyranny of the high caste Hindus.

Again in Hangman's Strike, which is a short story in the collection of short stories titled, Reflections on the Golden Bed and other Stories, Anand pleads for the rights of the under privileged : Despite the fact that Buta is a very ordinary man, he refuses to be cowed down by the imperious authorities of the jail, strikes work and attains the status of a hero, under compelling circumstance, Anand's another short story. A Clock-and-Bull story (reflections on the Golden Bed and other stories) is an effective satire on the evil effects of the caste-system.

2. Class

2.1 Indian Social Context :

The system of Caste is an evil of such enormous magnitude that it has condemned a large section of Indians (who happen to belong for no fault of theirs to the so-loved inferior castes) to a subhuman existence of insufferable sadness. The ideology of the social-class society is the system of beliefs and social theories which support our present social order. Plato rightly remarks : "Any city, however small, is in fact divided into two; one, the city of the poor, the other; of the rich, these are at war with one another". Plato further states : "The class struggle is divided into two main groups - Bourgeoisie and proletariat." 1

Class conflict is consciously developed between the classes. W.Sombart gives the stages in the development of class struggle - "First, a difference of class, then class interests, then class opposition, finally class strife." 2. The common people were practically convinced to the manors. That is to say, they lived a comparatively sedentary life in villages owned by landlords and they cultivated the adjoining lands on some customary agreement for dividing the produce. However, commercial towns developed rapidly. In this connection Henri Pirenne remarks : "Landless men, the younger sons of large tenant families

and the crowd of vagabonds who roamed though the country, going from abbey to abbey taking their share of alms reserved for the poor, were among the first to seek opportunities and fortune in the commercial life of the towns."3

Although it is customary to speak of the bourgeoisie as one of the estates. They finally became a class with social norms fairly distinct from those of the agricultural community, at the head of which was the nobility. As Pirenne says : "The bourgeoisie formed a privileged class in the midst of the rest of the population." 4 Karl Marx himself says : "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word; oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large - - - society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great battle camps, into two great classes directly facing each other. Bourgeoisie and proletariat." 5.

The political class is probably always motivated by some socio-economic interest. The class aims primarily at controlling the policies of production and distribution of wealth. The political class may become "class-conscious". Social classes cannot be. Class consciousness is a political-class attribute;

however with reference to a social class system, persons may be status conscious. Political classes have almost never been able to attain their ends without violence. Violence is a necessary consequence of political class action. In political class conflict the ruling class will always be intolerant. Speech is never free to be used as a threat to the reign of a political class. Democracy, is the great social movement against which the bourgeoisie have been constantly struggling.

Regarding the class system, A.L.Kroeber says :
 "Castes - - - are a special form of social classes which in tendency at least are present in every society. Classes differ from social classes, however, in that they have emerged into social consciousness to the point that custom and law attempt their rigid & permanent separation from one another." 6.

The class is not a form of social organization, that is to say, it is not organized in the sense that a caste is. We may think of classification of all the castes in Brahmanic India under the following headings : high, low-high, middle, low and lowest. The class system in reality has no inherently verifiable social classes. so, in our own society we have a broad, workable idea of what is meant by the upper, middle and lower class.

Class has certainly proved more divisive than caste in Indian society because it is able to affect every section of the society at the economic, social and cultural and political

levels. It is an unfortunate because India is one of the world's largest democracies, but it's a fact that our society is divided sharply into two classes - the rich and the poor. Thus it doesn't surprise us when we find that M.R.Anand is engaged in highlighting the cancerous effects of this class system in more than one novel. The problem of class is a universal phenomenon. The Indian society seems particularly conditioned by values inherited from its colonial past and those ushered in by forces such as scientific materialism and commercialism.

Class membership depends upon the individual's position in the socio-economic scale, more particularly on whether he is an employer or a worker.

2.2 Mulk Raj Anand

2.2.1 Coolie :

M.R.Anand published his second novel, Coolie in 1936. The novel narrates the life story of a young hill-boy Munoo. He is forced to leave the village, Bilaspur. Arriving in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram at Sham Nagar, he faces the tyranny of house wife. Then he finds himself in a primitive pickle factory in the feudal town of Daulatpur. His master Prabha bankrupts himself and Munoo is on the street again. He becomes a Coolie. With the help of an elephant driver, Munoo reaches Bombay. In Bombay, he becomes a worker in a cotton mill. Hari and Ratan help him. He

is knocked down by the car of an Anglo Indian Woman who takes him to Simla of her servant. Here, he dies of tuberculosis. This is the brief story of the novel.

Coolie, portrays in artistic terms the yawning hiatus between the haves and the have-nots, the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled. Munoo is 'Kshatriya' by birth. Yet his genteel birth fails to lift him from misery. For they both belong to the wealthless class.

As Saros Cowasjee remarks : "Coolie perspectivises a class ridden society based on cash nexus which probes to be "a more complicated and devious world."⁷⁴" than the one governed by casteism.

His uncle beats him. He quarrels with another domestic servant. Mrs. Nathoo Ram gives him less food and more abuses to eat. Life in Babu's house is the routine of domestic slavery. Anand says : "The Wild bird of his heart fluttered every now and then with the desire for happiness."⁷⁵

At Sham Nagar, Daya Ram makes muriod's position as a servant in Babu Nathoo Ram's house clear to him in the beginning itself : "You are their servant and they are big people."⁷⁶

Scrubbing the vessels, sweeping the floor preparing beds and laying the table and of course, getting abused-these chores constitute his monotonous daily routine. Bibi Uttam Kaur hates him for nothing. For no fault of his he is made the victim

of ceaseless suffering and horrid humiliation. But the simple reason for all this is that he is poor. Munoo confirms his identity in these words :

There seemed to be only two kinds of people in the world. Caste did not matter. 'I am a Kshatriya and I am poor, and Varma, a Brahmin, is a servant boy a menial because he is poor. No, caste does not matter. The babus are like the sahibs, and all servants look alike : there must only be two kinds of people in the world : the rich and the poor : 59

When he is kicked with the 'shining black boots', the possession of which had been his cherished dream snaps. He expects wonderful life in Daulatpur. Prabha and his wife. After him parental love. But Daulatpur is more confusing to him. The life in pickle factory is dark and evil. Prabha's partner cheated him. Bankrupt and ill prabha left the city. At that time Ganpat says to Munoo : "I am through with such scum as you. You are not my class. You belong to the 'street and there you shall go. I spit on you."78"

Munoo becomes a Coolie. He accepts his lot : "All we Coolies look alike."79" Munoo becomes painfully aware of the truth of the elephant driver's statement :

"The bigger a city is, the more cruel it is to the sons of Adam --- you have to pay even for the breath that you breathe."80"

To his horrors Munoo kirds Bombay to be :

A land of cruel contrasts where the hybrid pomp of the rich mingled with the smell of sizzling grease in black frying pans, Bombay, land of luxury and lazzaroni where all the pretenses of decency ended in dirt and drudgery, where the lies of benevolent patrons were shown up in the sores and deformities of the poor---."81"

The Collies toil with their sweat and blood while the oppressors discuss the weather over a cup of tea. What is revolting is that their employers like Mr. Little should think that," They should all be put up against a wall and shot, the whole darned lot of them."82"

Money is the root of all evil and not merely at that of class-consciousness. It can make masters and monsters of men. The Nathoo Rams are conscious that they pay Munoo more money than the servant has even seen in life. The poor are given no right to bargain for their rights. Munoo realises the true value of money. He doesn't dare waste his master's hardearned money on 'a' silly show of Tara Bai's circus feats. Anand says; 'Coolie covers all the classes of society from the landless peasant to the aristocratic Anglo-Indian and British and it has the varied spectacle of human nature ranging from the malevolent to the saintly."83"

Munoo asks himself questions about his own identify, a moment of self-realization from which the struggle for the discovery of freedom becomes consistent. Life at Babu Nathoo Ram's house throws up these questions before him :

"What am I Munoo ? He asked himself as he lay wrapped in his blanket, early one morning.

"I am Munoo, Babu Nathoo Ram's Servant', the answer came to his mind."⁸⁴ The reality of his position in the social order with its inevitability flashes upon his mind : "If did not occur to him to ask himself what he was apart from being a servant. His identity he took for granted and relationship of Babu Nathoo Ram, who wore black boots, with himself, Munoo who went about barefoot was to him like sunshine and sunset, inevitable."⁸⁵

His level of consciousness is so low in the beginning that he takes the servant master relationship to be final and irrevocable : "And so, thoroughly convinced of his inferiority, he accepted his position as a salve. And he promised himself again that he would be a good servant, a perfect model of a servant."⁸⁶

In Sham Nagar, Munoo is quickly installed as a servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram at five Rupees a month - 'more money, in fact, than you mother and father ever saw; the

housewife reminds him. His parents died of starvation. His life of drudgery from morning to night is equalled only try the most violent invectiveness and insults hurled at him. His mistress beats him :

Jay, Shameless, Shameless, Vulgar, stupid bill boy! May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! may you die! --- what will the sahibs think who pass by our doors every morning and afternoon. The Babuji has his prestige to keep with the sahibs. Hai! What a horrible, horrible mess he has made out-side my door!

Nathoo Ram's daughter, Sheila, pushes Munoo away when he prances on all Pours like a monkey to entertain her. She tells him : "You are a servant, you must not play with us."⁸⁸ Thus the barriers between the high and the low is not to be easily discouraged.

One day, Munoo gnashes his faith and bites Shaila on the cheek. It is done in innocence, but Nathoo Ram and his wife judge the act in the light of their own depraved consciences. Bibiji bursts out into an avalanche of abuse : " May you never rest in peace neither you nor your antecedents! That you should attack the honour of my child! Only a little child, too! --- What is your status that you should mix with the children of your superiors."⁸⁹

Poverty is the root cause of Munoo's tragedy. His life is severely circumscribed by the adverse circumstances wherever he goes and whatever be his occupation. His own career is varied; almost a domestic slave at Shamnagar, a boy worker in a pickle factory at Daulatpur, a labourer at the New George Cotton Mills, a labourer at lastly a rickshaw coolie and Page to Mrs. Mainwaring in Simla. He is exploited all the time by one person or other.

Dr. Iyenagar says : "It is varily a cross-section of India, the visible India, the inhuman and the human, the sordid and the beautiful."⁹⁰

Munoo is discovered under the bunk of a third class train compartment by Seth Prabho Dayal, who along with his Partner, Ganpat, has come to own a pickle and jam factory. Prabha himself once a Coolie, understands the boy's plight, and he and his wife, Parbati, consider adopting him as their son. ~~Quite~~ unlike the way he was received at the house of Nathoo Ram, Munoo is fed well on arrival and the author remarks ironically : "It was the most sumptuous meal he had eaten since the feast on the death anniversary of his father and mother, which left the hills."⁹¹

Philip Henderson correctly observes that : "Collie takes up into a world in which the very poorest people. With

nothing to hope for their common humanity is all they possess."92"

Ganpat and the Todarmals are sketched with severely here. But he is able to carry on the business successfully after ruining his partner. Anand give example that is a night watchman asks the Coolies to move on as they try to find a place to rest for the night : "Go away, away from the precincts of this shop, Lalla Jota Ran does not allow any Coolie to lie about near here. There is a cash-box in the shop."93"

Here Anand introduces that there is no goodness in the rich merchants. They don't show sympathy about the poor.

Through the kindness of an elephant driver, Munoo has a free ride in a special circus train from Daulatpur to Bombay. Munoo asks himself : "Why are some men so good and theirs bad some like prabha and the Elephant driver, others like Ganpat and the policeman who beat me at the railway station?"94"

When Hari, along with his family and Manoo, reach a clearing which surprisingly has not been occupied. As hari stand conten. Plating whether they should occupy it, a 'half-naked woman who sat nursing her head in her hands', speaks between smothered sobs : "My husband died there last night". He has attained release 'said Hari. "We will rest in his place."95"

C.D.Narsimhaih says, "I see in these simple sentences, the wisdom of an old living culture which has sustained

our peasantry through centuries of misery and manifesting itself now in an uprooted peasant in search of a factory job. Death has ceased to frighten the poor-they are past all fright; it is life that is a threat, and death is a release as Hari puts it."⁹⁶

The poor are wilked only when they have absolutely nothing, given even half a bread, they are eager to share it with those who have none. Munoo accepts everything objectly and without a protest. He doesnot really know why the rich are superior. He is even content to be a slave, a good servant Munoo is forled to become a sort of a purposeless vagabond with apparently no control on his destiny.

Anand gives a touching description of the Coolis : "There were only corpses lying around, some on their sides, others on their backs, still others facing downwards all contracting their limbs to occupy the smallest place, and bound up like 'knots of anguish', whose every breath seemed to ask. The elements for the gift of sleep."⁹⁷

In this novel we find the inklings of most of the problems Mr.Kurmanadhan rightly says : "Every one of Anand's other novels is but a kaledoscopic turn of one please or other : an event or a chapter, a character or a situation, in isolation, or in juxtaposition appears shown under a mognifying lens. In other words, it is the microcosm of the macrocosm of Anand's world of fiction."⁹⁸

The Capitalists treat the coolies as if they were to mere cattle. The sahibs feel that they have raised the status of the coolies by increasing the pittance of their income tenfold.

In Coolie caste dosnot play so prominent a role in society. The pronounced class consciousness of the British expresses itself not only in their dealings with the natives but even in their relations with one another main-waring's parents are too conscious of their blue-blooded upper middle class Englishness to accept may as their daughter in-law. As Mohan points out, the British have : "--a Caste System more rigid than ours. Any Angrezi woman whose husband earns twelve handred ruppes a month will not leave cards at the house of a woman whose husband earns five hundred. And the woman shose husband earns five hundred looks down upon the woman whose husband earns three hundred. The rich don't reavy want to mix with each other"⁹⁹."

For the white women, India is a land where they can lord it over 'a veritable poradise' where they have servants to command and plenty of time to waste : "India was the one place in the world where servants still were servants ---- India was the one place in the world where one could come in to dress and leave the discarded garments in a heap on the floor, to be collected and folded away by the servants ---- here were all the

Luxuries and amenities of the west at the knockdown prices of the East."100"

Anand's novel emphasises the pitilessness and soullessness of the exploiters who include ironically enough both the whites and the natives. If Anand portrays a Jionmie, Thomas, he requires us an Indian counterpart in Ganpat. If he caricatures W.P.England, he is least hesitant to expose the voluptuousness of the Indian priest. The cruelty of the Indian officials and the vanity of the chaprasi Daya Ram.

Class system slowly emerges out of mechanised society. M.K.Naik says "M.R.Anand is over anxious to present his here in the aristocratic set-up too to compete his social picture."101"

The last chapter of Coolie presents the plight of the coolies in a different light. Rickshaw pulling is an art that needs a lot of skill. It often leads to sterility and premature death. The exploiters just take the coolies for granted. Even a kind hearted mistress like Mrs. Mainwaring is unmindful of the difficulties involved in rickshaw pulling. M.K.Naik says : "Coolie covers all the classes of society from the landless peasant to the aristocratic Anglo-Indian and British, and it has the varied spectacle of human nature ranging from the malevolent to the saintly."102"

In Coolie we see that caste, monopoly has given place to money values superficially, the foreign exploiters and the masses of the exploited (the coolies) make the main pattern of tension in the novel. But quite a few of the Indians - the Sardars, the mistris, the babus, the Warders - are exploiters too, and between them create an atmosphere of twisting and turning for the coolies. On the other hand there are also the 'good' idealistic Britishers people like Dr. John de la Havre, whose, consciousness is seeped with the agonizing memories of yesterday and the stinging woes of today. He asks himself impatiently : "why not let the natives run their own show? It is their country. And we have ready no right to it".

Munoo as a servant is oppressed by his master, the Sub-Accountant of the Bank, and his wife who do not understand Munoo's feelings because they belong to a different class-the middle class - while Munoo belongs to the working class. Munoo doesn't have any sympathy from his uncle since he, too, as an employee of the Bank has merged with the middle class when he is employed in the pickle factory, Prabha Dayal loves him sincerely and Ganpat hates him as a coolie. It is again due to this class difference. Prabha has 'risen from Cooliedom to be the petit bourgeois' as the novelist himself writes and as such he can't hate the coolie boy, Munoo. But Ganpat is a thorough bourgeois,

a son of a rich man of a town, and as such he can never feel any sympathy per a coolie - a working class man. The rupture between Prabha Dayal and Ganapat is the result of the class conflict - conflict between the petit bourgeois and the big bourgeois.

As munoo finds himself employed in the cotton mill owned by some British capitalist, he is again a victim to the big bourgeois. Since the difference of his class and the class of his employer is more distinct here, the exploitation and oppression are also more ruthless and cruel. At last, in his last employment, under Mrs. Mainwaring, he is happier than in his earlier employment because the lady is again a petit bourgeois. But even under other employment and loving care, Munoo can't be happy and he who is a working class boy longs for the love and company of his own class.

2.2.2 Untouchable

M.R.Anand published his novel Untouchable in 1935, which throws light on the life of the untouchables. Bakha is an untouchable - the street sweepers and latrine cleaners. At the very beginning of the novel, Anand gives us a vivid picture of the outcastes 'colony' which provides more than what a background or a setting can, since it is in the positive sense a place for arguments - an empirical affirmation of what the concept of untouchability connotes. The colony is a dark place. The mud-

walled houses clustered together in two rows are utterly ill-fitted for human habitation. Anand says : "There lived the scavengers, the leather workers, the washermen, the barbers the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society."¹⁰³ As K.R.S. Iyengar observes : "There are degrees of caste among the low-caste people, there being none low without one being lower still."¹⁰⁴

Bakha doesnot belong to the hostile society he lives in. In fact, Bakha's day dawns to the harsh tune of his father's abuses intended to whip him up to work. But after all Bakha doesnot dislike work. He is an adept at the job of cleaning rows latrines more than twice a day. He does his work willingly and neatly. But society insults him. After the completion of Bakha's daily round at the latrines, Anand comments : "His black eyes shed fire and his big, broad face was slightly contracted with the fatigue."¹⁰⁵ Bakha, Rakha and Sohini are motherless children. Their father Lakha abuses them. He awakes Bakha : "Get up ohe you Bakhya, ohe son of pig! Get up and attend to the latrines or the sepoys will be angry."¹⁰⁶ This reference show the enviornment around the hero, Bakha. The caste and class of Bakha family is important in his growing up. Bakha is a victim of the present class system. Bakha's day beings with abuses from his father and loud shouts from the sepoys reminding him of his duty.

When his sister Sohini is molested by Pundit Kalinath, he reacts instinctively, but behind his rage and fury there is the new awareness he has acquired about the hypocrisy and brutality of the caste Hindus : "--- and he searched for the figure of the priest in the crowd--- the sweeper advance frighteningly toward the temple--- his fist was clenched."¹⁰⁷ Later, after picking up the loaf of bread thrown to him by the women of the big house, he has second thoughts on it, he regrets his action : "I shouldn't have picked up that bread from the pavement, he said and he sighed."¹⁰⁸ When Bakha reports to Lakha about the pundit's attempt to molest Sohini, Lakha shows his reaction : you didn't abuse or hit back, did you? he (Lakha) asked--- No, but I was sorry after-wards that I didn't replied Bakha. I could have given them a bit of my mind". But Lakha said: "We can't do that. They are our superiors. One word of theirs is sufficient against all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us."¹⁰⁹

In fact, Bakha has number of good traits in him. He is a victim of religion and the contemporary class and caste structure of Indian society. He respects upper classes. But all his good qualification are of no use. Because he belongs to lowest of the low caste, the sweeper. Bakha identifies his caste, his lower life : "They think we are mere dirt, because we

clean their dirt."¹¹⁰ His love modernity is his attempt to protect himself against the evil caste and class system. He is a devotee of fashion. He wants look and walk like white Sahib. The forks, buttons, old books are the things of attraction for him. But, because of his poorness he was unable to failure these needs Anand says : "He did not like his home, his street, his town because he had been to work at the --- he had grown out of his native shoes into the --- and with this and other fashionable items of dress, he had built up a new world, which was his heaven---."¹¹¹

Bakha is deprived of formal education. Bakha reflects about his school going. "How nice it must be to be about to read and write. One could read the papers after having been to school. One could talk to the Sahibs--- He had often felt like reading Waris Shah's Heer Ranza.--- While he was in British barracks to speak the tish-mish, tish-mish which the Tommies spoke."¹¹²

2.3 : Other Works :

M.R.Anand's another novel, Two leaves and a Bud, portray in artistic terms the yawning hiatus between the haves and the have-nots, the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled. In this novel, we find that Buta is a barber by birth, but the plebeian abjectness traditionally attached to his

low caste is seldom apparent, only because he is a sardar in position, and so he ranks higher in the labour force than is warranted by his caste origins. Gangu, a peasant, is lured by sardar Butta to work in tea-plantation. But the tea-plantation turns out to be hell of exploitation. The Coolies were treated like beasts and any complaints and opposition were crushed down. Two Leaves and Bud, boldly tackles the condition of labourers in tea-plantations where not only are they the bond slaves but also are their wives and daughters for the easily excited just of the white masters. It is a story of crushed humanity, of sighs and tears. The planters treat their labourers most brutally and mercilessly.

Anand denounces the evil of poverty and cruelty in this novel also. It is Gangu's poverty which is mainly responsible for pushing him into the hell of the estate. Here, Anand portrays the sharp contrast between the docile collies and the crude capitalists.

Anand's next novel The Village, presents a clear picture of a typical Indian father, Nihal Singh, who represents all the reactionary villagers too deeply orthodox and superstitions to escape the exploitative and victimising forces ground them - unscrupulous landlords, greedy money-lenders, which compel the poor peasants to waste money an meaningless full of

dirt and poverty, misery and squalor. Apart from the men like Gughi and Jhandu who are the very pictures of poverty Nihal Singh himself is becoming poorer and poorer, due to failing prices and thuggery of the money-lenders and also the government.

Anand's short story A Confession, (Barber's Trade Union and other stories) also growing awareness among coolies of their right to exist respectfully. Anand shows it very subtly that the coolie, here as a man no longer ready to submit himself to the bullying and injustice indulged in by Babus like Latif. In A Kashmir Idyll (Barber's Trade Union and other stores), Anand brings out the crude behaviour of a nawab by describing his insolent and callous treatment of a poor man who is condemned to do forced labour.

Another story in the same book, A pair of mustachios, Anand shows how the vanity of feudal lords dies hard, even when they are reduced to impossible poverty.

Anand's another short stories, like old Bapu and Things have a way of working-out (From The Power of Darkness and other stories) and also A Rumour (from The Barber's Trade Union and other stories) shows the miserable existence of coolies.

3 : RACE

3.1: Indian Social Context:

It is evident that the term race relation may include all situations of contact between peoples in different races and for all time. There is no universally accepted definition of race. The biologist and physical anthropologist may have considerable difficulty with this, but for the sociologist a race may be thought of as simply any group of people that is generally believed to be and generally accepted as, a race in any given area of ethnic competition. Since here the sociologist is interested in social interaction. Moreover, by race relations we do not mean all social contacts between persons of different races. But only those contacts the social characteristics of which are determined by a consciousness of racial difference. In the study of race relations it is of major importance to realize that their significant manifestations could not possibly have been known among the ancients.

The racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labour, regardless of the colour of the laborer. Hence, racial antagonism is essentially political class conflict. The capitalist exploiter, being opportunistic and practical will utilize any convenience to keep his labour and other resources freely exploitable. It may be empha-

sized that the white people who went out from Europe to 'civilize' and exploit the resources of the coloured peoples, were mainly capitalists, urban-dwellers, business people, from the beginning. Thus the coloured people had to be suppressed if the urgent purpose of the white opportunists was not to go unanswered. In this connection Max Weber asserts: "A man does not 'by nature' wish to earn more and more money but simply to live as he is accustomed, to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labour by increasing its intensity, it has encountered an immensely stubborn resistance of this leading trait of pre-capitalistic labour. And today it encounters it the more, the more backward (from a capitalistic point of view) the labouring forces are with which it has to deal." 1

Although race relations and the struggle of the white proletariat with the bourgeoisie are parts of a single social phenomenon; the existence of capitalism is the necessary preliminary condition of the proletariat. Race relations involve a significant variation. Caste prejudice is an aspect of culture-prejudices, while race-prejudice-as distinguished from culture prejudice is colour and physique prejudice. The structure of caste and race relationship is incommensurable.

The original contact situation is not so much a type as a stage in the process of developing a more or less stable pattern of race relations. The slavery situation is probably the purest form of established race relations. The slave derives his social status not particularly from any attribute of his own, but from the social status and power of his master. In this situation sex relation between slave men and white women are very rare. Marriage couldn't be sanctioned. A pregnancy of this kind is a social calamity of the first order. To bear a child for a "beast of the field", a slave is to 'dishonor God' and abuse one's self most shamefully. In the ruling-class situation, the inter-racial conflicts are particularly unknown. Coloured men may marry white women with impunity, and laws are never opening biased, in favour of whites. In the ruling class situation, there are coloured 'ladies' in the upper social classes. The while ruling class encourages cultural refinement among the coloured people. The cultural approachment of the ruling class whites and the upper class coloured people facilitates the use of the latter as a cultural cushion and an instrument of exploitation of the masses. In the situation, under discussion, however, the whites carefully suppress such attitudes. (For example in the south, the Negro who speaks good English to a typical southern white man insults him, such person is characterized a

'cocky nigger'). There seem to be two principal situations in which the coloured person may be distressed or tormented for his colour :

1) among other persons of lighter colour and

2) among whites. In the ruling class situation discrimination is based upon smaller differences in shades of colour, but it doesn't culminate in serious violence.

In analysis of race relations, the common practice is to assume that race prejudice and intolerance are identical social facts. In this connection, Ellsworth Faris says : "The conflict between Jews everywhere and those among whom they live is a racial conflict. That the Jews belong to a separate biological race is doubtful and perhaps not true. Nevertheless, the conflict is sociologically racial, for they are regarded as a separate race, are treated as a separate race and hold themselves together as if they were a separate race."² Race prejudice developed gradually in western society as capitalism and nationalism. The racial antagonism is not determined by biological, innate cultural incapacity or inferiority of the subordinate group is demonstrated by this racial situation. The crucial symbol of race relations is physical identifiability. A caste i.e. to say the endogamous group is an organization, a race is not ordinarily an organization. In the south, the white caste is

in a super-ordinate position and the Negro caste in a subordinate social position. The problem of racial exploitation, then will most probably be settled as part of the world proletarian struggle for democracy, every advance of the masses will be an actual or potential advance for the coloured people.

In India, it is sometimes said that the British formed a ruling caste. But the British were in fact, a ruling race. A caste is an assimilated dependent segment of a system. Consequently it cant be set off against the system. One of the sources of conflict in India is that the white rulers refuse to be so recognized. Racial antagonism tends to divide the society vertically. The situation may be further illustrated by considering the relationship between Mohammedans and Hindus. Mohammedans stand in religion opposed to the Hindus.

Race, of course, has no intrinsic significance except to a racist. To a social scientist, race acquires meaning only through its social definition in a given society. Race relations share the characteristics of other stratification systems, and race indeed often operates simultaneously with other criteria of invidious status differentiation. Even, as an extreme case, race is not unique. Race relations are an especially strategic vantage point for sociological analysis.

3.2 Mulk Raj Anand

Mulk Raj

(M.R.) Anand's novel Two leaves and a Bud (1937) also

throws light on the East - west relationship, as the capitalist planters are all British Sahibs. Their inhumanity to the Indian Coolies is not such a surprise because, as de la Harve in the novel points out, the workers in Vilayat too receive no better treatment. Anand clearly shows that the British planters and their families have not been able to achieve harmonious relations with the natives. The planters are essentially cowards by nature and they make it a point to keep the coolies at a safe distance. It is said that their polo ground, tennis courts and gardens are duly protected against the intrusion of wild animals, cows, hungry goats, black men etc. This reveals the place, the white men give to the natives and the inward fear they have of them. Croft-cooke considers the life of the planter a risky one because he is under the constant threat of the coolies, thigers, floods, labour riots and political trouble. At the slightest trace of resentment on the part of the coolies, the club is turned into a veritable fortress. They frequently boost their racial pride by repeating the slogan, " Britons --- never, never shall be slaves" (P-107). The planters treat their laboureres most brutally. The coolies are Indian, and they have no chance of getting justice at the hands of the British. This

is proved by the fact that Reggie is acquitted, not because he is not guilty, but because the jury is composed mostly of white men, the murderer's compatriots. Anand here shows how the imperialist Britain's thirst for profit and power resulted in subjecting millions of Indian coolies in British - owned establishments to subhuman living conditions, gradually grinding them down to death.

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