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### Some Contents of English Part - IV



S.No.	Title & Author	Pagellin
12	Social Change and Mahatma Gandhi's Thoughts  Prof. Shirish Sutar	53-55
	Prof. Suresh M. Pawar	
13	Bakha: A Model for the Underdogs	56-59
	Dr. Prakash Sudhakarrao Tale	
14	Women in Buddhism and Present Scenario	60-61
	Prof. Sanjay D. Patil	
15	Social Concerns in Mulk Raj Anand's Writings	62-65
	Satish Dnyaneshwar Morey	
16	R. K. Narayan's Contribution to Indian English Fiction	66-70
	Subodh N. Chinchole	
17	Relevance of Indian Thinkers in Mahatma Gandhi	71-75
	Dr. Vilas Aghav	
18	Revelation of Social Reforms in Vijay Tendulkar's Kanyadaan	76-30
	Dr. Kiran S. Khandare	
19	The Marginalised Voices in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things'	81-86
	Dr. Pankaj D. More	
20	A Historical Impact of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Social Contribution	87-89
	Dr. Pramod Rameshwar Chavan	
21	Swami Vivekanada and his Ideas on Mysticism and Spiritualism in	90-94
	Saint Poetry	
	Prof. Sanjay T. Vite	
22	The New Renaissance in Feminism	95-99
	Dr. Varsha E. Gawande	
23	Mulk Raj Anand: A Novelist with an Urge of Social Reformation	100-104
	Dr. Narendra T. Mane	

## 15. Social Concerns in Mulk Raj Anand's Writings

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Anand's social views are sustained by his faith that an artist can contribute immensely towards social change. Of all Indian creative writers writing in English, Anand is perhaps the most concerned with the basic purpose of literature. The influence of Tolstoy, Ruskin, Morris and Gandhi counteracted upon his views on socialism. The ethics of socialism and its humanism were more convincing to him than its dialectical aspect. Thus, instead of committing himself to a programme of political action, Anand dedicated himself to the grievous cause of suffering humanity. Anand's socialism was the panacea to cure social evils, misery ugliness and inequality. His humanistic learning was strengthened. Anand resourcefully correlates nationalism, socialism and humanism in his novels. He is a popular Social novelist of contemporary society. The entire thinking of the novelist's was sarcasm, realistic novel writing. Anand's commitment for social revolution through his social ideology is remarkable. The rise of the rural novel, which is also realistic in characters, is another remarkable feature of his writing. The urban writers cared little to portray the appalling and inhuman condition of the life of villagers. The peasant's poverty and exploitation were exposed in Anand's novel. Anand employs the picaresque method in Untouchable Commenting on early character, Anand says-

"All these heroes as the other men and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me because they were the reflection of real people. I had known during my childhood and youth". As Ruskin bond enliven the characters from his novels by igniting the sense of affinity, affiliation and humanitarian concerns through his art of characterisation and in this regard Anand is the master and predecessor to Ruskin Bond. By the virtue of his art of depiction and choice of the theme and characterisation from the real life common man and woman he brings tremendous attention of his readers with full of sympathy and affinity to his writing as well as to some extent the solution for the social evils.

As M.H. Williams Says

"M.R.Anand was able to unite nationalism with socialism into one Humanitarian movement a single revolt against oppression."

His commitment to the philosophy of humanism is at the very centre of his creative enterprise. He believes firmly in "a new conception of the role of man, an emphasis on the importance of the human being as such, a profound respect for man, love for him and faith in his capacity to straighten his back and look those who effectively used to social problem of India was similar to the effort made by the bring about the changes in the minds of the people through their fictional works to call attention to the social problems of their communities. Anand was frank enough to admit that his literary efforts were directed towards a goal and that this goal was the alleviation of the suffering of fellow human beings. While Anand's commitment demanded that literary works have the power to move the world to compassion and kindness, his artistic purity can suffer no subjugation. The first malpractice Anand has attacked as a social critic is the caste system, which in the words of Raja Ram Mohan Roy is, "the supreme root of all our social evils", and it is presented through the painful experiences within a single day in the life of an untouchable boy, Bakha.

In the words of Dr.Ambedkar, "untouchability is nothing but slavery, tell the slave that he is a slave then he will revolt".

In the case of Anand, he dedicated his writing to pointing out the humiliated systems of caste and class discrimination prevailing in the contemporary Indian society. He exposes this reality of caste based society through his characters, Bhakha, Sohini etc. When the focus is shifted to class distinction we have another example in the form of Coolie. Coolie is a novel of the poor and the downtrodden. It offers a chance to the reader to really experience the unending pain, suffering and prolonged struggle of the poor and as the misery of poverty is presented through an orphan boy and it particularly evokes a deep sorrow in readers. The novel amplifies the view of Bernard Shaw that poverty is the worst crime of all and its eradication is the prime task of any socialistic society. In the words of E. M. Forster; "The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound forever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolations of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes others when he touches them. They have to purify themselves, and to rearrange their plans for the day. Thus he is a disgusting object to call out and warn them that he is coming". Thus the caste system is in any sense worse and apprehensive than the class distinction

ENGLISH PART - IV / Peer Reviewed Refereed and UGC Listed Journal No.: 40776

where the society is like the pyramid in which each caste has it's own storey and has no access to climb to upward that's the herculean task to unite the society as the whole.

Anand primarily deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for better life. He has always been conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables the peasants, the serfs, the Coolies and other suppress member of human society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the object-ness apathy and despair in which they have sunk. In the novel "untouchable" when Sohini an outcaste girl is tried to be molested by the priest an upper caste; Anand describes her sense of dignity and her extreme struggle to save her chastity from the assaulter. On the other hand Anand brings to light the hypocrisy of upper caste men. As the novel Untouchable opens with a description of the outcaste colony, Where they were living without any facilities, since thousands of years. Their colony is portrayed thus in the novel. The out caste, were the lowest stratum of Indian society, they suffer extreme economic and physical deprivation. He paints a stark picture of the condition in which these people live.

Bakha is eighteen year old son of Jamadar, Lakha who gets a pair of breeches from an English soldier. The day begins; his work of toilet-cleaning begins. He is steady and efficient in his work. Bakha's sister Sohini goes to village-well to fetch water; Kalinath, the village priest of the temple out of the special favour draws water to fill Sohini pail, and feels attracted to her beautiful body, and driving away the others suggests her to go to his house later in the day to clean the courtyard. When she goes to his house, he makes improper suggestions to her, and she starts screaming, he shouts 'polluted, polluted', and a crowd of people gather. Bakha reaches at that spot, after suffering at the village temple, and a caste Hindu whom he touched by chance, and finds Sohini standing with her face downward, attacked by caste Hindus who sided with Kalinath. Bakha, understanding the situation, black with anger but remembering the thousands-year old slavery, controlled himself. Sending away Sohini, goes to collect food from door to door. There also he meets with insult, people throw loaves of bread towards him as if he were a dog.

The incident of humiliation is when Bakha goes to temple to sweep courtyard. Driven by his curiosity to know more about the caged snake god, he mounts the temple steps leading to the holy place inside the temple. He hears a loud cry, "polluted, polluted, and polluted!" The crowd takes up the call of the priest, thinking that the presence of the untouchable has defiled the holy place. Bakha discovers that the priest is only trying to camouflage his indecency to Bakh"s sister,



64

Sohini. Sohini tells him altogether a different story. The priest not only tries to molest Bakha"s sister but also attracted the sympathy of the crowd by accusing her and her brother of having polluted him and the premises of temple. Bakha feels completely helpless and much troubled at heart. At a moment he feels a wild desire to retaliate when the thought of the pandit Kalinath"s action comes to him but realising his helplessness, he wishes that his sister were not beautiful. The third humiliation of Bakha is heart breaking. When he goes to the silversmith colony to collect food for the family a housewife becomes furious when she sees Bakha on the threshold of the house and scolds him, "perish and die" as he has defiled her house. Bakha begs his apology and asks for some food that is thrown at him as if to a street dog. The way Bakha collects his chapatti thrown by a women who belongs to upper caste Hindu society is heart-shaking. The way Anand presents the social evils prevailing in caste ridden Indian society that sensitizes heart and mind of the readers.

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