

IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND HUMANISM IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE AND COOLIE

Dr. S. Sreeramulu
Reader in English,
VRS Degree College,
V.N. Palli,
YSR Kadapa Dist.,
Andhra Pradesh

Abstract

Much of modern western culture comes from humanistic achievements and individual freedom. But Anand's philosophy of humanism is a deep rooted enemy of Fascism. Feudalism, Imperialism, Casteism and all other similar tendencies which are great obstacles in the way of man's efforts in achieving individual freedom. In his opinion, these are the forces which divide men into faction and classes. He believes in democracy, socialism, individual freedom of man and peaceful co-existence of man in particular and co-existence of all nations in general. My paper discusses individual freedom and humanistic aspects of man in the two novels of Anand's 'Untouchable' and 'Coolie' of the characters **Bakha** and **Munoo** respectively.

Key Words: Democracy, feudalism, individual freedom, non-humanistic concept, social change and understanding of grim realities.

Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' was published in 1935. Actually it had been completed by its author in 1930 and had even been revised several times subsequently. But the author was not able to find a publisher for his book and it was actually rejected by nineteen publishers before it was eventually accepted for publication by a publishing firm in England. Even this firm agreed to publish the novel at the intervention of one of Anand's Englishwell-wishers and after a preface to it had been written by the eminent English novelist E.M. Forster. The firm which published this novel was not very hopeful of its selling. In course of time, this novel became immensely popular and was translated into as many as thirty languages. Ultimately it was described as an international best-seller. (Publication Crisis)

The novel describes the life of 18 year old boy, Bakha whose job is sweeping and cleaning latrines. The next novel coolie describes a young orphan boy, Munoo who died of tuberculosis at the age of 15 by doing odd jobs at Daulatpur, Bombay and Simla. He is exploited not by his caste but by his poorness.

The two novels present the ugly and seamy life of Bakha and Munoo. Anand believes that man is master of his destiny and he refuses to believe in fatalism which is a great malady is torturing Indian masses for centuries. He believes that fatalism weakens man's faith and

independent thinking power. So, naturally, fatalism is an essentially non-humanistic concept. According to Anand, casteism is the heinous crime and a severe blow to the concept of the dignity of man. He says education is a powerful instrument for social change. Man's highest duty is to realize of his own powers, abilities and weaknesses in achieving his ambitions.

Anand's Philosophy is the deep rooted enemy of fascism, feudalism, Imperialism and all other similar tendencies which come in the way of man's effort to achieve freedom. In his opinion, these are the main forces which divide men into faction and classes.

He believes in democracy, socialism and peaceful co-existence of all human beings by ensuring social, economic and political freedom not by encroaching upon each other's freedom. Untouchable brings to light the sufferings and sorrows that the Hindu caste systems inflict the untouchables and outcastes through a poor sweeper boy, Bakha. It also reflects Anand's understanding of the grim realities of Anand's social life. Coolie is a proletarian novel depicting the tragic plight of the millions of coolies who are landless and run away from hunger and starvation. Anand is the champion of the underdog and he always gives priority to the dignity of man to arouse compassion and love to the oppressed and downtrodden in the hearts of the readers. Through his works, he expresses his love, sympathy and compassion for all the socially inferior classes. All the novels and short stories that he has written highlighted the various social problems that Indian society is confronting today.

References:

- 1) Anand, Mulk Raj: "Coolie", New Delhi, Penguin books, 1993
- 2) Anand, Mulk Raj: "Untouchable", London, Bodley, 1970
- 3) Iyengar, KRS: "Indian writing in English", New Delhi, Sterling publishers, 1985
- 4) Naik, M.K: "History of Indian English Literature", New Delhi, Sahitya Academy, 1982.
- 5) Narasimhaiah, C.D: "The Swan and the Eagle", New Delhi, Vision books, 1999.
- 6) Rajan, P.K: "The Growth of the Novel in India", New Delhi, Abhinav publication, 1989.