

# The Identity of Oppressed People Described Through the Novel *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand

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## Abstract

This article focuses on the unjust system of oppression through Mulkraj Anand's **Untouchable**. The novel explores the idea of domination and Casteism by protagonist Bakha due to their identity as sweepers. As a suppressed caste they faced untouchability in this universe. Humans express the purity as a shame towards these people who are alienated for survival. Mulkraj Anand reflected on their status with symbolic gesture of water, food, etc. The casteism shows class inferiority even through their personalized works. Bakha represents the marginalized as outcaste people. This paper explores the social alienation that exists in the form of casteism.

**Keywords:** *Untouchable*, casteism, Alienation, Domination, Survival, Marginalization, Outcaste.

This paper deals with one of the social issues in the society namely caste system. This novel completely explores how outcaste people suffered. This article focuses on voice of outcaste people portrayed by Mulkraj Anand in the novel **Untouchable**. The caste system in India was divided into five categories. The Brahmin were considered to be priests. Second category Kashtryia is called Warrior community, and then third category Vaisya is called as merchant and landowner community. Fourth category the Sudra include commoners, peasants, servants, The last category is called as outcaste people described as untouchables who were all called as outcaste people were described in untouchable who are all street sweeper, latrine cleaners and professionally divided as suppressed categories in the society.

The identity of oppression is revealed by suppressing outcaste people. This was the major theme which is explored in the novel *Untouchable*. Mulkraj Anand was notable for depicting the lives of the outcaste people in traditional Indian society. One of the pioneers of Indo-Anglican fiction, Anand's notable works include *Untouchable* and *Cooly*. His notable award are Padma Bhushan, Sahitya Akademi award 1971. *Untouchable* is a novel by Mulkraj Anand published in 1935. This novel was the author's main reason for her aunt's own experience when she had a meal with a Muslim woman. She was treated badly. She was an outcaste person. This was main reason

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for Anand to write the novel *Untouchable*. Mulkraj Anand though the novel explained mainly eradicating caste system in the novel. Mulkraj Anand created a fiction town of Bulashah. In this novel the protagonists Bakha is son of Lakha. His duties included cleaning latrines. Outcaste people were living in separate places and they did not mingle with others and they lived in outcaste colony. In protagonist Bakha's day-to-day he suffered. They were not educated they were outcaste people. They were not educated people. So they were called as oppressed people. Bakha day to day life duty was cleaning the latrine regularly. The Lakha was a sweeper and that was the first job done by his son. Only outcaste people were doing this cleaning job and high class people did not do the work of scavengers. In this the gap between high and low was revealed. The identity of the oppressed people after independence also continued in our society. The outcaste people were economically very poor and below the poverty line. Bakha was not interested in cleaning duties. Bakha ignored his father but eventually got up to answer the demands of high caste man. At first Charat Singh gave a lengthy aggressive speech in the novel because Bakha was doing cleaning duties and this was not accepted. Later he gave a gift and hockey stick.

This novel has been supportive of outcastes people by one character charat singh . the charat singh was not believe in high caste and low caste then charat singh have lack of faith in untouchable for upper caste people is water is no matter because they are very fortune and can get water easily .The opposite to the lower caste people they toil a lot of they can not get water easily . On a situation Sohini she was sister of Bakha , unfortunately there is no water in their house . Sohini went to fetch the water from well . At that time she had already very big line where out caste people waited to fetch water and Sohini also joined the queued guloba stopped sohini finally outcaste people waited for long time , but they could not fetch water from the well. Pandit kalinath helped sohini to fetch water from the well . this was main concept in the novel , where outcaste people were neglected to fetch water ,even if they water touch that water became polluted . Pandit kalinath tells sohini to clean temple . but sohini says that she would keep the water at house and then do the cleaning work . Though she was assigned the work to clean temple .She could not enter the temple .Instead she could clean the courtyard. This also reveal the major theme which mulkraj anand project that out caste people were neglected by upper-class people by all the means of day to life.

Pandit abuses Sohini. Pandit was a priest at temple, he ill-treated Sohini. Sohini as a outcaste person could not even claim her own identity and right . This was miserable condition of the outcaste people .They were traded bad by upper class people. Bakha went to candy shop , he went to buy cigarette and candy . There shopkeeper gave cheap product to Bakha, because Bakha was uneducated and could not enquire about the product. The shopkeeper also treated outcaste people as low persons. Muslim vendor was wandering around the street and selling things.

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Unfortunately Bakha touched the vendor. So he put down all the things because Bakha was an outcaste person. The vendor humiliated Bakha and beat him. This was the condition of the outcaste people in the society.

Bakha was playing hockey and he put the goal. That was not liked by opposite team. So they started throwing stones and hurt him. While throwing stones, a small boy came in between and Bakha with a kind heart saved the boy from getting hit. But the small boy's mother accused that Bakha planned to kill her son. This was the situation of outcaste people in society.

“And they can do that soon, for the  
First thing we will do when we  
Accept the machine, will be to  
Introduce the machine which clear  
Drug without anyone having to  
Handle it – the flush system. Then  
The sweeper can be free from the  
Stigma of untouchables and  
Assume the dignity of status that is  
Their right as useful members of a  
Casteless and classless society.”

Iqbal Nath Sarshar, p.302.

Mulkraj Anand said that he drafted this work to eradicate suppression and poverty. This article throws light on the development of outcaste people lifestyle. In the society all the people are equal in identity, race, color, etc. There should not be any biased or negative view on oppressed people. This article focused on the equality of people in all the levels. This status of oppression can be changed through education. If people were educated to treat all equally then there would not be slavery, poverty, etc.

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