

# CASTE HIERARCHY IN INDIA AND ITS REFLECTION IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S 'UNTOUCHABLE'

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**Abstract:** The caste system of India is the most widely discussed subject all over the world. It is one of the unique features in Indian society. Since time immemorial, the caste system has been playing a vital role as a means of social stratification within the periphery of Hindu Community. To be born a Hindu in India is to enter the caste system. It is a social evil in which the so-called higher caste people exploits and subjugates the lower caste people and compelled them to live in sub-human condition like beast.

Mulk Raj Anand, one of the pioneer leaders of Indo- Anglican novel, is regarded as the champion of the underdogs and the downtrodden. He is a committed writer who exposes social hypocrisy and taboos, class exploitation and class struggle in his novels. His masterpiece, *Untouchable* (1935), exposes the callousness and hypocrisy of the caste Hindus who are enjoying a higher status in the social hierarchy.

**Key Words:** Caste system, higher caste, lower caste, hypocrisy, hierarchy, underdogs.

## INTRODUCTION:

The Indian caste system is considered a closed system of stratification, which means that a person's social status is obliged to which caste they were born into. In other words, every Hindu necessarily belongs to the caste of his parents and in that caste he inevitably remains. No accumulation of wealth and no exercise of talents can alter his caste status. The caste system of India divides Hindus into four main categories – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Sudras. Many believe that the groups originated from Brahma, the Hindu God of Creation. The Brahmins are supposed to be at the top of the hierarchical order of caste system and they are revered by one and all. The Sudras are at the bottom of this hierarchy. There is another group of people who are not even included in this hierarchy of caste system. They are the outcaste people who are represented by the Dalits or the Untouchables.

Mulk Raj Anand is one of the most versatile geniuses in the field of Indian Literature in English. Along with Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, Anand is also a stalwart of Indo- Anglican fiction. With the publication of his magnum opus *Untouchable* (1935), Anand received world wide acclaim. Indian Hindu society is very orthodox and caste ridden and has compelled a large section of its people to live sub- human lives like animals. Anand's masterpiece *Untouchable* is a scathing indictment of the caste system and exposes the callousness and hypocrisy of the caste Hindus. The novel focuses the miserable plight of the untouchables in a society which is purely dominated by the higher caste people.

## METHODOLOGY:

This paper is both analytical and descriptive. In writing this methodology both primary and secondary data have been used. Primary data is the novel *Untouchable* written by Mulk Raj Anand. Secondary data includes reference books and online articles on this particular topic.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the caste hierarchy of India and its impact upon the lives of the Untouchables. The study also attempts to explore the hypocrisy of the Caste Hindus and the miserable plight of the sweepers as presented by Mulk Raj Anand in his famous novel *Untouchable*.

## WHAT IS CASTE SYSTEM: ITS MEANING AND DEFINITION:

The word 'Caste' derives from the Spanish and Portuguese word 'casta', which means "race, lineage, or breed". Another similar word related to 'caste' is 'Jati', originated from the root word 'Jana' which implies 'taking birth'. Thus caste is concerned with birth.

The word 'caste' is not very concrete to define easily. Different people define it differently. Some definitions regarding caste system are mentioned below:

1. Mr. Nesfield defines caste as,  
 "A class of the community which disowns any connection with any other class and can neither intermarry nor eat nor drink with any but persons of their own community."<sup>1</sup>
2. Dr. Ketkar defines caste as,  
 "A social group having two characteristics: (i) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born.  
 (ii) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group."<sup>2</sup>
3. According to Anderson and Parker,  
 "caste is that extreme form of social class organization in which the position of individuals in the status hierarchy is determined by 'descent and birth'.<sup>3</sup>

The hierarchical order of the caste system is built like is: 'Brahmins' having the higher rank, 'Kshatriya', the warrior having the next higher, the 'Vaishyas', the merchants having the third higher rank and the 'Sudras', the workers at the bottom rank. Dalits or untouchables are not even included in this hierarchy. They are considered as 'outcaste'.

It has been said that the caste system is a clever device invented by the Brahmins in order to place themselves on the highest ladder of social hierarchy. In this regard, Brian K. Smith, in his book *Classifying the Universe*, opines –

"the Brahmin class is essentially defined by its supposed priority (as the class created first by the creator God), by knowledge of the Veda, and by the monopoly this caste holds on the operation of sacrifice. These traits justify the social position of the class vis-à-vis others." (Smith, 48)<sup>4</sup>

Further he opines –

".....although the Brahmans and Kshatriyas together proclaimed to be superior to the commoners, the Brahmans never hesitated to declare their own caste as higher than the kshatriyas. The reason of this, according to the Vedas, is that Brahmans have been characterized as being self- sufficient, whereas the kshatriyas are dependent on Priests. Thus it is said that Brahmans can live without rulers, but rulers cannot

<sup>1</sup> Ambedkar, B.R. "*Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*". P-4

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p- 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.clearias.com>. Title: "*Caste-system in India*". Time: 7:30pm.

<sup>4</sup> Deshpande. Monali S. "*The History of Indian Caste System and Its Impact upon India Today*". p- 13.

sufficiently execute their tasks without the aids of the Brahmans.” (Smith, 42)<sup>5</sup>

Thus among the four groups, Brahmins occupy the top most position and are highly honoured by all members of the Hindu society. The outcaste Dalits are the worst sufferer of this caste system because in the name of caste, the orthodox traditional Hindu society perpetrated the age old injustice upon the untouchables.

## REVIEWING THE NOVEL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CASTEISM:

Mulk Raj Anand is the champion and the advocate of the poor, the underdog, the downtrodden and the under privileged. He is regarded as Charles Dickens of Indian Literature. Like Dickens, Anand has a zeal to reform the society. Anand is a committed writer to the social cause. In each of his novels, he tries to mirror a faithful picture of social evils prevailing in Indian society. Premila Paul, in her book *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study*, says –

“His (Anand’s) novels undoubtedly projects a lively image of India, the details of which both reflect and imply his passionate concern with its social reality”. (Paul,1).

Anand has a great sympathy for the suffering masses. The protagonists of his novels belong to the lower strata of the society. They were never born with a silver spoon in their mouth rather they are the poverty-stricken people who are destined to live in an inhuman condition. Anand’s commitment to reveal the deep rooted social malice in the Indian society made him to create characters like ‘Bakha’ (the protagonist of the novel *Untouchable*) and ‘Munoo’ (the hero of the novel *Coolie*).

Mulk Raj Anand’s masterpiece *Untouchable* (1935) is a novel with great social concerns which focuses on some of the worst customs and traditions which authorize the caste Hindus to exploit the outcastes for their selfish interests. In this novel, Anand is on sure ground, as he is denouncing an aspect of traditional Hindu society which deserves wholesale condemnation. E. M. Forster, in his *Preface to Untouchable*, comments that the Indians –

“have evolved a hideous nightmare unknown to the west: the belief that the products [of excretion] are ritually unclean as well as physically unpleasant, and that those who carry them away or otherwise help to dispose of them are outcastes from society. Really, it takes the human mind to evolve anything so devilish. No animal could have hit on it.” (Forster,6).

The novel *Untouchable* is a saga of injustice and exploitation of the underdogs by the caste Hindus. The novel is a sensitive record of the painful experiences and sordid occurrences in a single day in the life of a teen-aged sweeper boy, Bakha in Bulandshahar. Everyday Bakha cleans three rows of latrines single handed.

Anand’s groundbreaking novel, *Untouchable* begins with the vivid description of the inhuman condition of the ‘outcaste colony’ in which the untouchables are compelled to live in. The colony is a dark damp and uncongenial place. The cottages with mud walls clustered together in two rows, are utterly ill-fitted for human beings to stay in. The inhabitants who do necessary works for the higher caste people live there. In small hole like huts poor people of different professions – scavengers, leather workers, barbers, grass cutters, washer men and water carriers – all huddled up together. They are in utter poverty and living without any privileges. They are humiliated and exploited in one or the other way by the so called superior caste people.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.p-14.

The novel presents a series of insults that the protagonist, Bakha, undergoes from dawn to dusk at the hands of the caste Hindus. His work of cleaning the latrines begins very early in the morning at the bullying order of his father, Lakha, to get up –

“Get up and attend to the latrines or the sepoy will be angry”. (Anand,3).

Then, Havaladar Charat Singh comes to Bakha’s house and shouts at him –

“Oh, Bakhya! Oh, Bakhya! Oh, you scoundrel of a sweeper’s son! Come and clean a latrine for me! Why aren’t the latrines clean, you rogue of a Bakhe! There is not one fit to go near!” (Anand,16).

Bakha, like an obedient boy, is ready to do the filthy work of cleaning for Charat Singh, picking “his brush and basket from the place where these tools decorated the front wall of the house”. (Anand, 17).

Through the character of Bakha, Anand, very faithfully and realistically, portrays the pathetic condition of the untouchables without any inflammation or exaggeration. The novel showcases several incidents and episodes which make us realize the miserable plight of the untouchables at the hands of the caste Hindus. In this orthodox and caste-ridden society, the untouchables are considered as mere dirt and so are treated as dogs and pigs. They are the subaltern who are at the margin of the society and are subjected to utter humiliation and subjugation at the hands of those holding a central position in the society.

Bakha, being a subaltern, remains isolated from the privileged ones whose dirt and excreta he cleans. He is an outcaste who is deprived 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.

Anand, very vividly and graphically portrays the attitudes of the caste Hindus towards untouchables. It is evident in the episode when Bakha goes to buy a packet of ‘Red-Lamp Cigarette’, the shopkeeper shows a spot on the board near him. When the coin is put the shopkeeper sprinkles some water over it and purifies and throws it into the corner. Then he throws a packet of ‘Red-Lamp Cigarette’ at Bakha, “as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing round the corner of his shop.” (Anand, 40).

Anand narrates numerous incidents of atrocities, committed by Hindus on the untouchables. Through these incidents, Anand brings to the limelight the traumatic experience of humiliation faced by the agonized soul of Bakha.

The first and the foremost episode of humiliation that caused mental depression to Bakha is ‘The touching-in -the bazaar’ incident. In the 1930s India, it was a custom that when the sweepers entered the town, they had to beat a drum hung around their waist to announce their approach. The caste Hindus believed that even the shadow or touch of an untouchable can pollute them. One day, when Bakha is in a jolly mood and he walks into the town, he buys some jalebies to eat. But as soon as he begins to eat them, he forgets to call out, ‘posh, posh, sweeper coming’ and a Lalaji, a man of upper caste, accidentally gets touched by him. The Lalaji begins to hurl at him abuse and rebuke:

“keep to the side of the road, you, low caste vermin. Why don’t you call,

You swine, and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched

me and defiled me, you cockeyed son of a bow-legged scorpion! Dirty dog!

Son of a bitch! The offspring of a pig! Now I will have to go and take a bath

to purify myself. And it was a new dhoti and shirt I put on this morning. (Anand, 38)

The Lalaji not only abuses Bakha but slaps him and spoils his sweets (jalebies) rendering unfit to eat. Bakha stood amazed and embarrassed. He was deaf and dumb. His senses were paralyzed. Only fear gripped his soul. Nothing could be more humiliating for a sensitive soul like Bakha. He silently listens to this insult without uttering a single word. Because he realizes that being a sweeper, it is his duty to announce his approach when he moves on a public road.

The untouchables are subjected to great hardships by the callous caste Hindus. They are not allowed to draw water from the well, even climbs its steps, because this would pollute the well. As Anand narrates –

“The outcastes were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the nearby brook as their use of it would contaminate the stream.”

(Anand, 14-15).

The untouchables do not have their own well because they are poor. With their empty pitchers they have to wait for hours for some generous caste Hindus to draw water for them and pour it into their pitchers. With servile humility, they entreated every passerby to take pity on them. They cannot cook or have tea, or clean their utensils till they have got a pitcher of water after a long wait.

The scene ‘Sohini at Well’ throws light on the hypocrisy of the caste Hindus. When Sohini (Bakha’s sister), Gulabo and others were waiting for a pitcher of water, their hours of desperate waiting comes to an end with the arrival of Pandit Kali Nath onto the scene. Sohini becomes the first recipient of Pandit Kali Nath’s generosity because he always had a very greedy eye on Sohini. He treats Sohini as a juicy morsel to satisfy his ‘waves of amorousness’. He was so engrossed by her graceful contour of her physique that he forgets other women who have been waiting with little patience for water. He asks Sohini to visit his temple and clean his house. He plays a malicious trick on Sohini to gratify his mean desire. And this is evident in the approaching chapters in which the readers get to know that how Kali Nath, on Sohini’s arrival, tries to molest her and after having failed in fulfilling his lustful desire, he manipulates the whole situation in order to defend himself and holds Sohini responsible for the entire scene.

Anand, with every possible way, tries to expose the hypocrisy of the caste Hindus and in doing so; he takes the help of ‘irony’ as his powerful weapon. It is an irony that the hypocrite Brahmins who are always conscious of their superiority and are polluted by the touch of an untouchable, can love and molest the women of the sweeper class.

The next episode in the novel that throws light on the sad plight of the untouchables is the ‘Temple episode’. The outcastes were not allowed to enter the portals of temple because their contact would defile the House of God, the Creator of all. After the terrible experience of touching in the market,

Bakha went to sweep the temple courtyard. He was obsessed with the desire of seeing the images of Gods and Goddesses. He was very much affected by the rhythm of the hymns that were being chanted by the devotees inside the temple. But being a sweeper, he is not allowed to enter into the temple as his presence is believed to defile its previous purification. But his curiosity propelled him to go up the stairs. Just then he hears a thundering sound:

“.....Get off the steps, scavenger! Off with you! You have defiled our whole service! you have defiled our temple! Now we will have to pay for the pacification ceremony! Get down, get away dog!” (Anand, 69).

Amidst these loathsome abuse and rebukes, Bakha, all of a sudden, heard another loud cry: ‘polluted, polluted, polluted’. He also saw the figure of a woman, Sohini, behind the shouting priest. Bakha ran down the steps and went to his sister Sohini. The little priest (Kali Nath) was angrily shrieking:

“You people have only been polluted from a distance, I have been defiled by contact”. (Anand, 69).

The worshippers from the top of the steps were shouting –

“Distance! distance! ....A temple can be polluted according to the Holy Books By a low- caste man coming within sixty-nine yards of it, and here he was actually on the steps, at the door. We are ruined, we will need to have a sacrificial fire in order to purify ourselves and our shrine.” (Anand, 69-70).

The crowd felt that the little priest, Kali Nath, had suffered terribly. All worshippers sympathized with him but they did not ask about the way he had been polluted. When Bakha pursued Sohini to explain what happened to her in reality, the latter reveals the truth –

“He-e-e just teased me. And then when I was bending down to work, he came and held me by my breasts”. (Anand, 71).

After hearing the truth from his sister, Bakha lost his control, his rage crossed all boundaries- ‘Brahmin dog! I will go and killed him’ (p-71) and he rushed blindly to the courtyard. But Sohini stopped him by dragging hard at the lapel of his overcoat.

Bakha’s blood is boiling for revenge. He feels a wild desire to retaliate. He would have slaughtered the lecherous Pandit if the caste Hindu society had not fabricated a strong wall to protect the mean interests of such hypocrite Brahmins. He cannot trespass the barriers forged by caste-culture. He fails to take his revenge. He is helpless and he cannot violate the conventions.

Trauma and humiliation seem to ceaseless and endless for Bakha who represents the whole outcaste community subjected to untold miseries. Another heart-touching scene of humiliation is the ‘chapatti-throwing’ scene which occurred in the Scene-VII of the novel. Although Bakha’s heart and soul are tormented due to his sister’s molestation, but he has to collect the daily food, otherwise the whole family will have to sleep with empty stomach. The sweepers feed on the leftovers of the caste Hindus which are often dirty. Bakha wanders from door to door for his daily bread. He begged and voiced his demand, “bread for the sweeper, mother”. It is a heart rending scene. A woman hurdles abuses on him because he sat at the doorstep. She scolds him harshly. He moves to next door. As he moves on, a woman throws a loaf of bread at him from an upper window as if he were a dog. Bakha fails to catch it. He has no alternate but to collect it from damp and dirty brick pavement and sets for home. He does not go to collect more food for the day. He feels extremely humiliated and hot anger burns within his heart. He is desperately yearning to get rid of these tormenting memories. But it is not possible as they have become an indistinguishable part of his life. Bakha thinks,

“All of them abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused?

[.....] Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too.” (Anand, 43).

‘The Hockey-Match’ incident recurs the same note. When Bakha saves a small boy from being crushed in a stamped in a hockey match and takes him to his home, the child’s mother, Bara Babu’s wife, instead of thanking him for his admirable job, scolds him for polluting her house by his entrance and says that it is he who must have the root of the trouble. Bakha is depressed, frustrated, humiliated, condemned and tortured. His agonized soul laments: “what have I done to deserve all this?”.(Anand,133).

After reaching home, Bakha narrates every incident to his father, Lakha, including his humiliating experience of collecting bread and about Sohini’s molestation. But his apathetic father does not sympathize with him rather he holds

Bakha responsible for everything that had happened to him. Then Lakha narrates a past incident to Bakha that how the Hakimji did not allow him to enter his house, when he went for getting medicine for his child. It happened only because Lakha belonged to the untouchable caste and he is not allowed to enter any high caste house even though he is in absolute pain and misery. Lakha recites his past experience in the following words –

“I tried to fall at the feet of every passerby and prayed them to tell the Sarkar, your honour, that my child was suffering. But Sarkar this is the time of kindness, be compassionate at this time, another time you may taken even my life. Only, save my child.”

(Anand, 73)

The above mentioned pathetic utterance made by an ill-fated father, Lakha, echoes the poignant note of suffering in the lives of the untouchables that has been running through generation to generation. Being a sweeper, Lakha could not enter inside the shop of medical practitioner and is compelled to see the bottles of medicine from outside.

Lakha, unlike his son Bakha, accepts his situation with resignation. The poor fellow tries to console his son by saying that they cannot do anything for their situation rather they have to be very submissive towards the caste Hindus because, in Lakha's words,

“they are our superiors. One words 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.....” (Anand, 87-88).

Thus, the novel elaborates the condition of a sweeper boy, Bakha, who has become a universal figure symbolizing the miserable plight of the underdogs, the whole sweeper community. Unlike Aristotle's ideal tragic hero, Bakha's misfortune is brought upon him not because of 'hamartia' or any fault of his own but because of his birth in the underprivileged subaltern class of sweeper living at the edge of the society. Bakha, at one point of the novel, cries pathetically: “They (the caste Hindus) think we are dirt because we clean their dirt”.

The sweeper is the worst and most miserable creature even among the low caste Hindus. Gulabo, a washer woman, looks down upon Sohini (Bakha's sister) because the latter belongs to the sweeper community, the lowest caste among the outcastes. Though Gulabo herself belongs to the lower strata of the society, she insults Sohini severely by using some derogatory terms like-‘eater of dung and drinker of urine’, ‘bitch of a sweeper woman’ etc. For Gulabo, their caste is superior to the sweeper caste. All these can be encapsulated in the following statement made by E.M. Forster about the sad predicament of the untouchable:

“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 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 disquieting as well as disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public road and it is his duty to call out and warn them that he is coming. No wonder that the dirt enters into his soul and that he feels

himself at moments to be what he supposed to be. It is sometimes said that he is so degraded that he doesn't mind, but it is not the opinion of those who have studied his case, nor is it borne out by my own slight testimony.”<sup>6</sup>. (P VII preface to *Untouchable*.)

Towards the end of the novel, Mahatma Gandhi himself appears in the novel at a public meeting where he addresses a large number of people about the horrible practice of untouchability in India. Gandhi remarks:

“The fact that we address God as ‘the purifier of the polluted souls’ makes it a sin to regard anyone born in Hinduism as polluted- it is satanic to do so”. (Anand, 164)

Bakha also went to Gole Maiden and attended the meeting where Gandhiji was delivering his most inspirational speech in favour of the untouchables. Bakha listens attentively and curiously the speech of Gandhi –

“I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should wish to be reborn as an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from their miserable conditions”. (Anand, 165).

Gandhi, in course of his speech, also observes that all public wells, temples, roads, schools, sanatoriums must be declared open to the untouchables. Gandhiji always wants justice and equality for the outcaste. He used a very dignified term ‘Harijan’ in honour of the untouchables, which means the ‘son of God’.

Gandhiji’s speech touches the innermost corner of Bakha’s heart and soul. His speech on the emancipation of the sweepers from the age-old injustice, impart a ray of hope in the tormented soul of the protagonist who is in constant quest for self-identity in a caste-ridden society. Gandhi’s speech acts like a healing balm on the wounds of the protagonist, Bakha.

Bakha also listens to the impressive speech of poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar who holds the idea that the sweepers can only be able to free themselves from the state of humiliation if they change their profession of cleaning dung with their hands. It will possible only when the flush system will be introduced and no human hands will be required to remove the dirt.

Thus, Bakha returned home with the hope in his mind that soon the flush system would come and then the sweepers “can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society”. (Anand, 173)

E.M. Forster, in his Preface to *Untouchable*, comments on the usage of flush system:

“.....No God is needed to rescue the untouchables, no vows of self-sacrifice and abnegation on the part of more fortunate Indians but simply and solely – the flush system. introduce water-closets and main drainage throughout India, and all this wicked rubbish about untouchability will disappear.....” (10).

After introducing new scientific and modern machines and equipments, the untouchables will no more clean human excreta with their hands and at the same, they can be freed themselves from the anathema of untouchability as

<sup>6</sup> Forster. E. M. *Preface to Untouchable*. P- 7.



well. Hence, Mulk Raj Anand concludes the novel with an optimistic note by providing a very realistic and meaningful resolution to the problem of untouchability which can uplift the social status of the sweepers.

Anand with his remarkable skill portrays Bakha's helplessness, frustration, anxiety and agony. He is not even praised for his humanitarian and kind deeds he performs. Wherever he goes, he is welcomed by the words: 'polluted' and 'defiled'. Throughout the novel, Bakha is oscillating between passive submissions to a conservative, rigid caste system on one hand and a keen desire to assert his human identity and fight for his amelioration on the other.

## CONCLUSION:

To sum up, it can be said that Mulk Raj Anand, in his novel *Untouchable*, vehemently condemns and criticizes the devilish practice of casteism and the inhuman treatment of the untouchables in the name of divine supremacy of the caste Hindus who, according to Hindu mythology, are supposed to be the most cherished children of the Brahma, the Hindu Lord of Creation. It is the hypocrisy of the orthodox Hindu society who considers the untouchables as born of the feet of the Lord Brahma and thus regarded as the lowest of all castes in social hierarchy. The novel deals not merely with the life and suffering of one individual untouchable, Bakha, but through Bakha, it presents before us a gigantic problem of the Hindu society. Thus Mulk Raj Anand focuses attention on the miserable plight of the untouchables in general and Bakha in particular. It is to be noted that although Mahatma Gandhi regarded the untouchables as 'Harijan (the son of God)', they are unable to elevate themselves from the position of extreme humiliation, oppression and suffering which are the perpetual part of their life. Anand's down-to-earth portrayal of the naked realities of social evils which are dismal and harrowing, makes *Untouchable* a social document. Untouchability is one of the most evil social maladies which is still practiced in some parts of our nation. Hence the novel is relevant even today's scenario of caste Hindu community. The novel is regarded as a manifesto of social realism and the manifest plea in the novel is for the total abolition of untouchability.

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