

# DISCRIMINATION OF CLASS IN RUSKIN BOND'S "UNTOUCHABLE"

T.CHITRA  
II M.A.ENGLISH  
URUMU DHANALAKSHMI  
COLLEGE,  
KATTUR, TRICHY-19

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present about a real picture of the society divides the people into upper castes and lower castes. Ruskin Bond wrote one of his first short stories at the age of sixteen in 1951. He is crowned as a "Pioneer of modern children's literature". "Language is a tool for expressing oneself. It acts as a mirror to our world, reflecting back to us the way we live" (John Humphrys). The seed of Indian Writing in English was sown during the period of British rule in India. Now, the seed has blossomed on an evergreen tree, with fragrant flowers and ripe fruits. The fruits are being tasted not only by the native people but they are also being "chewed and digested" by the foreigners. "Early childhood education is the key to betterment of society" ([www.brainyquote.com](http://www.brainyquote.com)) Social class refers to the grouping of individuals based on wealth, income, education and occupation. Literature deals with social class issues and is always a reflection of the society.

Ruskin Bond is one of the dominant short story writers in contemporary Indian English Literature. He was born on 19 May 1934. He is an Indian author of British descent. He was born to Edith Clarke and Aubrey Alexandar Bond, in Kasauli, Punjab states Agency, British, India. He did his schooling from Bishop Cotton School in Shimla, from where he graduated in 1950. He received Sahitya Academy Award for his book "*Our Trees Still Grow at Dehra*" in 1992 and was honoured with the title Padma Shree in 1999. He lives with his adopted family in Landour, Mussorrie, India. Ruskin Bond's first novel, "*The Room and the Roof*" written when he was seventeen, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957. The other contemporary writers are R. K. Narayan "*An Astrologer's Day*" (1947) , Rabindranath Tagore "*Kabuliwallah*" (1892) , Kushwantsingh "*Black Jasmine*" (1971). His recent publications are "*Rusty and the Magic Mountain*" (2015) . His stories are related to the

society and nature. No one should change one's character, attitude and behaviour of others discriminate them. We live the life with our own way.

“There should be no discrimination against people on the basis of languages they speak, their skin color or religion” (Malala yousafzai)

“*Untouchable*” is a short story throwing lights on the social division based on the caste system in India. It was a very hot noon day. Ruskin is alone in his house, sat on the bed and looking out through the open window. His father has fallen sick with to malaria and got admitted in a hospital. Due to this circumstances, he wants to stay in a house in his neighbourhood but feels uncomfortable. He doesn't like to plays with them or they with him. He remains alone and aloof in the red brick bungalow of the big town. There is a sweeper boy in that house to help him in the house work and routinely sprinkles water on the window and doormats to keep the house cool and slept in the kitchen. Ruskin describes the sweeper boy of his age, around ten. He sparted a short-cropped hair, had white teeth, muddy feet, hands, and face. And he wore old pair of khaki shorts; and the rest of the body was bare and sun burnt.

The sweeper boy's main duty was to fetch water from the water tank and sprinkle water around the homes during summer. Also, he performs the other household works. Every time he sees Ruskin, the boy show his full white teeth. Ruskin is irritated and always shouts at him and says “Get Out”. Since, Ruskin is a son of sahib in fact all the sons of sahibs are not allowed to mingle up with the children of the gardener, water carrier, cooks and ayahs. These people were considered as a lower classes. He watched from the window flies buzzing and lizards scuttling out. Ruskin is alone and afraid of darkness especially at night time. One night before going to sleep, seeing a centipede on the wall, he screams and jumps on his bed in fear. The sweeper boy comes immedietly and suddenly takes one of the books from the shelf, and kills the centipede. The boy smiles and returns to the servant quarter. Soon after he is gone, the wind began to blew very strongly and Ruskin hears thundering sound repeatedly.

Ruskin is growing scared of a strange and horrible sound of scratching on his window pane. Unable to control, he runs here and there and enters the room of the sweeper boy. They both sit down quietly and Ruskin notices the bad condition of the room. From outside, both of them hear the sound of thunder and lightning. The sweeper boy was very happy because the climate has changed. Both of them smiled at each other. It is a good news for that hardworking little servant. Hence, he need not do the regular work of sprinkling water on the doors and window mats in the houses. Both the children are of same age but they can't play together, can't stay in the same house. In this story, Ruskin belongs to upper class and he is a school goer whereas the sweeper boy belongs to lower class so he works as a servant in that house.

“Light or dark, big or small,  
Same opportunities for all”

The class division can be seen in the work of ancient Greek philosophers, like Aristotle. The German philosopher, Karl Marx developed the theory of class conflict. The upper class people are assumed they superior to others economically, religiously and culturally. The upper class has control over the economy production and distribution as they controlled the capital for the investment. The capitalists to dominate the working class by giving their low wages and made them work for long hours and workers were forced to do work in an unsafe conditions. Working class people were kept below the poverty line. They kept labouring but earned only a minimum wage and they couldn't fulfil their needs and their children's wishes. They don't have any adequate knowledge and skills or education or knowledge of the recent development. Each and every country has problems related to discrimination on the basis of social classes which still occurs in societies around the world. People face different levels of discrimination in their work places, living space and in marketing their products. At the time of festivals, like Deepavali (the festival of light) and New Year all of them forget their class, caste and religion they enjoying celebration with others.

Ruskin Bond is a versatile Indian writer in English. His works are often said to be depicting the “real world” recognizing the true Indian spirit. Bond selected his characters from rural background and his own life. He chooses simple language to convey his thoughts to the readers can read easily and understand it clearly. The sweeper boy belongs to the lower class society. This possessions are few consisting of basic necessities. High class people possess great many things but they may not be living a happy life, they miss something in their life. But the poor class people, their mind and heart are fresh like the rain on the earth. They do not have any proper clothes, shelter and food but they seem to live happy and enjoying the moment.

“Learn to appreciate

Don't discriminate”

Any caste or class people achieve in the society not to discriminate of their classes and caste to appreciate their achievement. All are human beings they have happiness and feelings, good and bad all are same not to discriminate them. All students are equal to the teachers so they treat same in the schools. India is a developing country. Now a days, people in the world appreciate it to progress, ideas and technologies that are update in the modern world. All of them are equal before the law and god. No one should classify the people into rich, middle and poor classes. All of them have equal rights in the society. Distribution of money is the biggest problem in the society which separate the people. The class, caste, religion, wealth, income and education are man controlled.

“Happiness is a mysterious thing, to be found somewhere between too little and too much” (Ruskin Bond).

### Works cited

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