

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

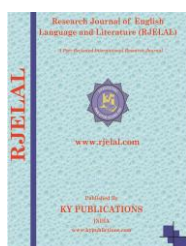
2395-2636 (Print); 2321-3108 (online)

REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY AS SOCIAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE EARLY  
INDIAN TRIO NOVELISTS' NOVELS *UNTOUCHABLE*, *WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA*  
AND *KANTHAPURA*

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ABSTRACT

The novels written during the period deals with almost Gandhian Literature with the idea of "one nation" and "one identity", as a language, English in India achieves the first goal of erasing the internal differences which constitute regional identities within India.

Mulk Raj Anand's character Gandhiji speaks in the novel *Untouchable*. The religion with its defects made people to become selfish in India. He felt untouchability as a sin and crime. So that he asked the public to declare to open the temples, water wells and to sit in hotels and public places equally. Gandhi taught change of job.

R.K. Narayan's novel *Waiting for the Mahatma*, the character Gandhiji entered into untouchables huts and offered one untouchable boy to the pulpit and offered him oranges. He felt reservations for untouchables.

Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* sets on religious equality among the Kanthapura villagers. The character Moorthy who treated as mini Gandhi, in his trial of elimination of untouchability, he was excommunicated by both his family and by his community.

Ultimately, prophetically it is said that the problem of untouchables and its incurred knots are a part of the real attainment of swaraj at individual and national level. The untouchable community of Bhaka or pariah with names or without names as untouchables', socio economic solutions are rested at its fulfilment of the prophecy by implementation.

Nationalism in India offered hope to a people where men, women, the rich and the poor come together to imagine a country of their own. During colonization the British viewed Indians as second-class citizens and denied them their independence. In response, Gandhi, the nationalist movement leader wanted to develop a nation that included everyone regardless of race, socio-economic class, caste or religion.

The novels written during the period deals with almost Gandhian Literature with the idea of

"one nation" and "one identity", as a language, English in India achieves the first goal of erasing the internal differences which constitute regional identities within India. As a result of this plethora of regional, social inequalities and local multitude is neatly eliminated. Any construction of identity is based on series of inclusions and exclusions in the Indian society.

The Indian novelist in English was preoccupied with the representation of India in its identity, usually for a European readership: its most

important practitioners were Anand, Narayan, and Rao, though Bhattacharya, Desani and Singh.

As a rule, then, Indian writing and speaking in English since the Gandhian revolution has tended to be wisely utilitarian, cultivating the virtues of clarity and directness and brevity rather than eloquence and elaboration and exuberance.

In Mulk Raj Anand's view, Gandhian political and social philosophy was a fusion of individualism, idealism and socialism. The key words of his social, economic and political programme were self sufficiency, non competition, and equitable distribution and decentralized production.

Being a rational thinker among the major Indo-Anglo novelists who were born between 1904 and 1908, and grew up in a period of significant socio-political change in India, the three writers Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao are related to Gandhian philosophy.

The writing on untouchables made him untouchable by both colonial and Indians; literates, politicians, the orthodox and the then bureaucrats. Anand's humanism makes him a novelist with a mission, his mission being a writer for the betterment and upliftment of the under-dog of society.

He borrowed the personal philosophical longing and struggle to encounter the evils in the society in view of untouchables. The novel *Untouchable* was turned down nineteen times by publishers which moved him towards despair and contemplation of suicide.

Mulk Raj Anand's character portraits view the cosmos. His characters represent micro and macro level to the whole modern universe. He demonstrates the satirical criticism in his sociological novel *Untouchable*. He justified the modernity and tradition of India via East-West themes in the novel *Untouchable* of untouchables. His perceptions, being a scholar and devotee in both research and patriotic life led him to challenge and to adopt the same by the critics in literature and also to the politicians.

Anand's hero, 18 year old *Bakha*, was designed as a non-violent, poor boy standing for truth, with innate qualities like modesty, sincerity, honesty, responsibility and punctual at work. His

hidden features were of a fighter, helping nature, seeker of solutions to the Problems, but the leadership was futile due to lack of freedom.

When *Sohini* explains Kalinath's molestation upon her, *Bakha*, like a tiger at bay, with clenched fists and blood-red eyes, moves threateningly towards him (*Untouchable* P.54). Later he withdrew the idea of revenge against him with retaliation by his higher castes. It is therefore proved that *Pandit Kalinath's* attitude to outwit his religious hypocrisy.

The retrospect for the prospect of wearing sahib's dress as well as status in his life becomes a dream in his life. Anand's simile with the Sun from morning to Evening i.e ascending and descending nature of feelings of *Bakha* were exact in appearance and word to deed in *Bakha's* life (*Untouchable* P.147). *Bakha* proceeded homewards to explain about the speech delivered by Gandhi (*Untouchable* P.148). *Bakha's* enquiry of Jesus Christ as saviour or Yessuh Messih (*Untouchable* P.116) was rested as unredeemer of physical problems of untouchables. His yearning for want of education was also abortive. (*Untouchable* PP.31-32)

Anand's autobiographical experienced character *Mahatma Gandhi* speaks on: Panchayat raj, true religion, modern world, god's love, swaraj (Self government) (*Untouchable* PP.129-140). Gandhiji kept his legs against the idols as proof of his belief that god is everywhere and changed traditional superstitions with scientific application. (*Untouchable* P.130). Bapu said that panchayat can do good service. Gandhiji's speech on untouchables, Gandhiji's fast for the sake of low castes is subtly described (*Untouchable* P.131). Harijans are not different to Hindus but their touch would mean pollution (*Untouchable* P.132). Gandhiji wished freedom for untouchable but not separate legal political status (*Untouchable* P.136). Gandhiji's suggestion on cleaning of lavatory is to serving of Hindu society but not for Musalman (*Untouchable* P.138). In Gandhiji's opinion untouchability is the fault of people but not religion. The untouchable should be offered only grain instead of food for their work. He educated the public to declare open the public wells, temples, roads, schools, sanatoriums, to the untouchables (*Untouchable* P.139). Gandhiji's

ambition is that emancipation of untouchables and protection of cow would mean real swaraj and he wishes the salvation with it (Untouchable P.140). He also felt that untouchability is sin and crime.

Anand's predictability of Bakha's present agony in all his tribulations and sufferings being an untouchable was for the betterment of his own section of society.

Of the trio novelists' novels, in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Narayan's character *Gandhi* spoke in the meeting about his philosophy that how one could practise the non-violence in his personal life; he suggested to the gathering for the evil doers with the parable of Lord Jesus Christ's preaching "Turn the other cheek." instead of evil for evil. *Gandhiji* also spoke on untouchability and caste in view of superiority and inferiority. He taught to them that about how to manage or mismanage is management or ruling of our country is our own business. He also exonerated to the followers and to the public that we should have pure heart and mind with love and without enmity and bitterness to say to the Britishers to leave India and to invite them not as rulers; but as friends and guests to our country,

just pray for the destruction of that evil. ....' Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ meant the same thing when he said "Turn the other cheek." ... When Mahatmaji spoke of untouchability and caste, *Sriram* reflected, 'There must be a great deal in what he says, we always think we are superior people. (*Waiting for the Mahatma* P.30) For her the Mahatma was once who preached dangerously, who tried to bring untouchables in the temples... (*Waiting for the Mahatma* P.62)

Narayan's character *Gandhi*, as a social reformer entered into the hut of the untouchable, who moves always around municipal building. All the shops were closed, and all the school children and whole the town was celebrating.

The Mahatma entered his hut. This was one of the dozen huts belong to the city sweepers who lived on the banks of the river. .. they hardly ever lived in their huts, spending all their time around the municipal building or at the toddy shop run by the government ... since as an untouchable class they lived outside the

town limits, beyond nallapa's Grove, where nobody went, (*Waiting for the Mahatma* PP. 35-37)

Narayan's Character, Gandhi follows the Gandhiji's Life Code of Conduct to be successful Truth and Non-Violent practitioner; removal of untouchability as one of them, spoke to the untouchable sweeper boy and enquired their profession with the symbol of Short broom and long broom.

Mahatmaji said: 'Av, Av' in Hindi. When it made no impression on the by, he said in the little Tamil he had picked up for his part of the country, 'Inge Va'. Others pushed the boy forward; he came haltingly. *Gandhi* offered him a seat on his divan, and gave him an orange. (*Waiting for the Mahatma* P.47)

The untouchable nestled close to the Mahatma, The boy was saying' my father sweeps the streets' 'with a long broom or short broom?' the Mahatma asked. The boy explained, 'He has both a long broom and a short broom.'... The Mahatma turned to someone and explained: It means that he is both a municipal sweeper and that he has scavenging work to do in private house also. The long broom ought to be the municipal emblem.' (*Waiting for the Mahatma* P.48)

Gandhi is portrayed as compassionate, straight forward and very perceptive. True to how history books speak of him, he is seen championing the cause of the untouchables (or Harijans), not being attached to material possessions and following a strict diet and schedule. The famous spinning wheel makes various appearances as a symbol of self-reliance, and has its own role to play in the love story.

In Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* and of its ninth chapter, Gandhian character, *Moorthy's* fast, which comes in tools of Non-violence action as Satyagrahi. It upholds him against his excommunication. His follower Rangamma served him at his stoppage in the village for his bedding in the night.

What with his fasting and his looks, *Moorthy* was holding away over the hearts of the people and even swami

excommunication did nothing to stop it. Well every squirrel his day. (*Kanthapura*. P.110) ..., hurried over the meal that Rangamma served, spread his bedding and laid himself down, thinking, how, how is one an outcaste? (*Kanthapura*. P.115)

Rao's character *Moorthy* prepared himself, his followers also, who had followed the footsteps of Gandhiji in achieving Satyagraha after the arrest of Gandh. Gandhi natured character *Moorthy*, and Gandhi simultaneously Jalianawallabagh mascre. And another day was memory of Tilak death day. The followers of *Moorthy*, like advocates; Ranganna and Sankar, and pariah of Siddappa and the others fought against the government while conducting meetings about freed India. Recollecting Gandhi's principles with the Professor Parawardhans maintained integrity among Hindu, Musilm and Christian Pariah. They also began to fast for the arrest of the Gandhi. On the same arrested day, even whole family was on fast.

In fourteenth chapter of the novel, the congress committee has sent message of arrest of Mahatma to the *Kanthapura* people and of its panchayat. The panchayat decided to held meeting for the discussion on fast and Don't touch Government campaign as per the satyagrahi's engagement or tool of non-violence action. The satyagrahis' from village women, men and children ready to follow footsteps of *Moorthy* as he was local Gandhi. They planned seventeenth time to picket for toddy grove. *Moorthy* advised them to love enemy at don't touch campaign and to obey satyagrahi rules. Again they declare their unity in diversity being Brahmin and paraiah irrespective of religion and caste. They shouted Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai they neglect the warnings of the police officers. The women being in hungry mood also participated in the fight whole society and people of *Kanthapura* involved voluntarily for the sake of freeing India from enslaving Red-men. They were ready to get lathi charges while entering into toddy grove. Women Satygrahis, being hungry march fast against the police.

Congress committee has sent a messenger on bicycle to say the Mahatma was arrested what with his *fasting* and his looks, *Moorthy* was holding away over the

hearts of the people and even swami excommunication did nothing to stop it. Well every squirrel his day. (*Kanthapura*. P.110) And next week don't touch the Government campaign, and today everyone will *fast*, and the Congress panchayat will meet, and in the evening bhajan.' (*Kanthapura*. P.177)

Children-and the pariahs and the ... feel they were of one caste, one breath. Don't touch the Government campaign – but how is that to be done, toddy booths that are to be picketed, 'for toddy trees are Government trees, and toddy booths are there to exploit the poor and the unhappy,' (*Kanthapura*. P.178). and yet sometimes leave the leaders Obey your chief and love your enemy, that is all I ask of you,' ... (*Kanthapura*. P.180). Now march singing we are women and satyagrahis and we are hungry (*Kanthapura*. P.187)

K.R. Srinivas Iyengar rightly identified that Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan being in Gandhian age and of its Gandhian literature used the real character as spoke-men in their novels both in *Untouchable* and *Waiting for the Mahatma*.

Narayan's seventh novel, *Waiting for the Mahatma* with its hero, does focus on particular issue of *Gandhian* programmes as Anand's *Untouchable* does. He also takes the whole town as his canvas in order to show *Gandhi's* impact as Raja Rao does in *Kanthapura*. However, the choice of Narayan's subject, a major man's life during the national movement in India, significantly indicates his concern with the education system, one of the important aspects of *Gandhian* philosophy.

In the fiction of the novels, in Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable's* character Bhaka's, R.K. Narayan's novel *Waiting for the Mahatma's* characters Jagadish's, Bharati's, Gorpads and Sriram's and Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* characters *Moorthy's* and Ratna's, conversion to equality and nationalism comes through revelation of the Mahatma's social and political messages by his virtue and deed.

This is how a new identity is going to emerge out of a fixed relationship; an identity that recasts the binary relationship of the colonizer/colonized and puts it in a harmonious and mutually

constructive mould, in the best spirit of universal religion. In sum, the novels demonstrate the possibility of how creative writers can tap the deeply spiritual resources of their people living across a geographical locale to build the concept of nation with composite concepts such as even for; culture, religion, place, etc., that coordinate to construct the nation on par without bias.

Ultimately, prophetically it is said that the problem of untouchables and its incurred knots are a part of the real attainment of swaraj at individual and national level. The untouchable community of Bhaka or pariah with names or without names as untouchables', socio economic solutions are rested at its fulfilment of the prophecy by implementation.

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