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A Study on Realistic Portrayal of the Dalit in the Works of Mulk Raj Anand

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	One important way that literature reveals social realities that are hidden from view is through representing marginalized groups within society. In this way, literature can also serve as a mirror of social reality and an indication of the various forms of inequality (both visible and invisible) that affect human existence. In many cultures, including those characterized by rigid hierarchies or traditional modes of subsistence, literature can be a powerful means for writers to depict the suffering, challenges, and hope of oppressed groups. In Indian society, where social relationships and access to opportunity and dignity are determined by the caste system, literary representation has been essential to highlighting the lived experience of marginalized populations. Writers of fiction have attempted through the storytelling process to challenge the silence that surrounds caste-based discrimination and to illustrate the human assets of people who have historically been excluded from recognition as fully participating members of society. Within the history of contemporary Indian English literature, Anand is among the first writers to create empathetic, real-life portraits of oppressed populations and to urge change. Anand wrote at the beginning of the 20th Century and was influenced by the social movements and political reform efforts that were attempting to change the culture of India and challenge many types of inequality. The focus of his novels is consistently on marginalized people such as Dalits, laborers and the poor in society. Anand saw literature as an expression of more than just entertainment; it was also a way to show readers the realities of social injustice and provide them with the basis for feeling compassion toward those affected by it and for developing a sense of social and ethical responsibility. Therefore, as a result of his identification with human beings, he approaches all of his major works with the objective of showing the dignity, complexity and emotional depth of those groups of individuals who have historically been ignored, misrepresented or oppressed in our culture's mainstream literature. This project focuses specifically on Anand's representation of Dalit life as evidenced in the major works (i.e. the novels Untouchable, Coolie, and Two Leaves and A Bud). These three texts are considered significant contributions to the development of social realism in Indian English fiction and provide graphic descriptions of the challenges faced by people who exist within oppressive social and economic structures, such as the caste system. Through the character of Bakha, the protagonist of Untouchable, Anand illustrates the daily life of a Dalit sweeper and the many ways that untouchability causes Bakha shame and humiliation. Additionally, the text provides insight into how caste discrimination affects people's daily lives and permeates virtually every aspect of society, including, but not limited to, public and private spaces, lines of work, personal relationships, sense of self, etc. By focusing on the experiences of a single character within the span of one day, Anand intensifies the emotional impact of the story and reveals the pervasive nature of caste-based oppression. The study ultimately concludes that Anand's realistic portrayal of Dalit life played a crucial role in shaping anti-caste discourse within Indian literature. By bringing the experiences of marginalized

communities into the domain of English literature, Anand helped create a space for discussions about caste inequality and social reform. His works laid an important foundation for the later development of Dalit writing in English and influenced subsequent generations of writers who sought to address issues of social justice, identity, and human dignity through literature. Even today, Anand's novels remain relevant for understanding the continuing struggles against caste discrimination and for appreciating the role of literature in promoting social awareness and change.

Keywords: Dalit literature, social realism, caste discrimination, Mulk Raj Anand, untouchability, marginalized communities, Indian English fiction

Introduction

The caste system has played a significant part in shaping what we know as "traditional" Indian society; it has produced a social order that is rigid (unmovable) and entrenched (set in place) in discrimination. Thus, for many centuries, people were divided into various social classes based on their birth and professions. The caste system historically gave more privileges to some than it did to others, denying basic human dignity/rights to many individuals. The people at the bottom of the social order were known as Dalit people ("untouchables") and experienced some of the most extreme forms of social exclusion historically and currently. For example, Dalit people were not allowed to enter temples, drink from the same wells, attend schools or enter most public places. Furthermore, the majority of Dalit people were made to perform occupations considered dirty and impure by upper-caste Hindu people. In addition to experiencing social ostracism and being subjected to public violence, Dalit people have experienced economic, cultural, and psychological forms of oppression. In addition to lacking access to the material resources necessary to achieve a reasonable way of life, Dalit people have also felt shamed and marginalized. Because of this, the caste system has functioned as a means of social control that has perpetuated an unequal distribution of resources through generations. (Zafar, 2020)

In this setting, the purpose of literature has been to draw attention to the plight of marginalized communities in society. Many authors have utilized literature as a platform to criticize unfair social systems and document the hardships of marginalized populations.

Storytelling can help people to understand hidden truths about themselves, challenge dominant beliefs and to create empathy between readers.

In India, authors have recorded the life of the oppressed castes throughout their history and in the early years of the 20th Century there were only a few authors who spoke of their plight in the English literature of the time. The emergence of a group of socially aware writers that were prepared to write about the experiences of the marginalized were an important turning point in Indian literary history.

Mulk Raj Anand was one of the above authors and was one of the first authors in modern Indian fiction to write about social injustice, describing the characters' lives with both realism and empathy. He wrote during a time of great change in India because of British colonial rule, and had to deal with the contradictions and tensions felt by the poor, working class and oppressed people of India who suffered through multiple political, social, and economic issues. Anand expressed that literature should have a social purpose instead of just being about the rich elite and should be based on the lives of ordinary people. Consequently, his novels focus on characters who belong to oppressed and neglected sections of society, including Dalits, laborers, peasants, and industrial workers. (Yadav, 2022)

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A major theme present in Anand's writing is a firm belief in and commitment to humanity. Through his characters, Anand expresses compassion and emotional truthfulness. His characterizations depict the reality of humanness under repressive social conditions. In addition to not portraying the underrepresented groups as mere victims, he portrays the emotions, hopes, frustrations, and strength of those individuals. His works not only tell a story but also serve as strong commentaries regarding injustices that exist within Indian society. By depicting the lives of people who would not be represented in the conventional canon of literature, Anand broadened the scope of Indian English literature, and incorporated themes associated with social realism, paving the way for future literature by writers of the same heritage.

The first novel written by Anand is widely considered to be a landmark work in Indian English Literature. The subject of the book is the daily life of Bakha, a Dalit sweeper. This makes the story's strength derive from its narrative structure. Bakha's life is chronicled over a 24-hour time period, allowing Anand to reveal many of the smallest aspects of daily human existence that have been affected by caste discrimination.

Bakha's daily life is filled with examples that demonstrate his position in society. He is frequently insulted, restricted, or excluded from certain places because of his caste. For example, he must shout his name out loud as he walks down the streets of his community so that the upper castes (the people who have the most power) will not touch him. These are examples of how the ideology of untouchability spreads through social relationships and makes those who are treated as untouchables feel inferior. (Verma, 2023)

The book also shows the psychological effects of caste discrimination through Bakha's experiences. Bakha lives in a society that continually devalues him, which creates feelings of shame, anger, and confusion in him. However, he has dreams of being treated with dignity and respect, which can be seen through his admiration for modernity and the British soldiers' lifestyles. Anand uses Bakha's inner struggles to show how social oppression impacts not only the material conditions of life but also the emotional well-being of marginalized groups. Therefore, the novel is an excellent critique of the caste system and how it dehumanizes those affected by it. While Untouchable deals specifically with the topic of untouchability, Anand's other novels examine the multiple layers of oppression that exist in colonial society and the interconnectedness of these oppressions.

Anand's novel Coolie recounts Munoo's story, a poor boy struggling against economic exploitation and class inequality. His journey through various spaces, such as homes, factories, and cities, exemplifies different types of injustice and reveals the brutal realities of colonial capitalism. Caste is not explicitly stated but nevertheless establishes how the economic power structure and social hierarchy marginalize poor and vulnerable citizens. (Tiwari, 2024)

Anand explores the same theme in Two Leaves and a Bud by exploring how plantation workers are exploited under colonial rule. In this case, Gangu is a peasant who comes to a tea plantation looking for a better living but ends up caught in a system of brutal exploitation. Anand unveils the view of plantation workers and how colonial economic systems solidified social inequality. This novel also illustrates the vulnerability of marginalized working-class populations who did not benefit from social safety nets or political representation. Both novels illustrate how Anand utilizes social realism in his writing and demonstrates how closely connected caste, class, and colonialism are.

By emphasizing that social inequity is not only due to individuals' situations but is also rooted in institutional frameworks and cultural conceptions, Anand uses everyday experiences of oppressed people to encourage people to face social injustice and challenge the ethical legitimacy of existing institutions that allow inequality to persist. (Singh)

Anand's literary works contribute significantly to social consciousness as well as reformist conversations. His works produced a forum for public discussion of the experiences of Dalits and other marginally positioned people's life experiences at a time when there was little discussion of caste discrimination in English literature. By conveying these people's everyday lives, Anand prompted readers to recognize the humanity of historically excluded and silenced populations. Anand also provided the foundation for the intellectual and literary development of Dalit literature and social critique.

In this vein, the current study will investigate how Anand's novels provide an accurate depiction of Dalit life and how these depictions relate to the larger discussion regarding caste inequity and social justice. By analyzing the themes, characters, and narrative techniques employed in his works, the study aims to understand the ways in which literature can function as a powerful medium for exposing social injustice and advocating for human dignity. (Pandey, 2024)

Review of Related Literature

Ahmed (2020) provided a comprehensive examination of caste and identity formation in Indian English fiction.Literature has long been a significant tool for expressing social realities and creating empathy for the oppressed. Literature can reshape society; through this avenue of artistic expression, resulting social transformations can occur. Dalit writers are exploring how literary texts help to unravel the complexities of caste-based social hierarchies and the psychological toll such discrimination has on those affected by it. For example, as noted by Ahmed, authors like Anand used fiction to illustrate the structural inequalities that plague Indian society. In addition to exposing social injustice, literary representations of caste provide an opportunity to rethink the dominant paradigm of culture. The overall argument is that novels that deal with caste oppression play an important role in raising public consciousness and promoting critical dialogue surrounding the need for social reform.

Banerjee's (2021) study regarding the emergence and growth of Dalit discourse within contemporary Indian literary production highlights the evolution of Dalit representation from being marginal and indirect within earlier forms of literature to taking on an extremely prominent role as a vehicle for expressing resistance in modern Indian literature. According to Banerjee, earlier writers (such as Anand) established much of the foundation for subsequent Dalit literary movements by bringing the marginality of the identities represented in their writings to the forefront of the mainstream literary world. In essence, Banerjee says that literature is both a vehicle through which oppressed groups articulate their struggles and a means through which they assert their identities.

Chatterjee (2023) examined the role of social realism in Indian English novels and discussed how writers employed realistic narrative techniques to portray social inequality and injustice. It has been proposed by the author that an important way to deal with issues such as poverty, class exploitation, and caste discrimination is through social realism, as demonstrated by Anand's novels. By portraying life's challenges in an emotionally realistic way, the author argues that Anand's works force readers to face the realities of social inequality.

Deshpande's (2022) research sought to illuminate the interplay between caste politics and literature in India. The author's contention is that works of literary fiction frequently mirror political and ideological discussions regarding caste and social reform. The author contends that novels which examined caste discrimination also contributed to larger discussions around justice, human rights, and equality. The author argues for a transformative role for literature that helps readers think critically about established social hierarchies and different possibilities for building an equal society.

Iyer (2024) researched how post-colonial writers represented Dalit people in their works and illustrated how they described the experiences of marginalized groups within colonial power structures and post-colonial power structures. The author concluded that representation of Dalits in literature often illustrated the interrelations between class, caste, and colonial domination. Iyer argued that authors such as Anand were among the first to portray these intersecting forms of inequality in a systematic manner. The study further emphasized that literary narratives focusing on marginalized communities contributed to the broader project of reclaiming subaltern voices within literary history.

Jadhav (2021) analyzed narratives of marginalization in Indian English fiction and highlighted the ways in which authors portrayed the struggles of socially excluded groups. Research findings have shown that many times, marginalised characters were the main character of a story that questioned oppressive social systems. Jadhav stated Anand's novels were excellent examples of such stories due to their focus on people's real life experiences that lived at the bottom of the social structure. Anand's works used these characters to show the human cost of economic exploitation and discrimination based on the caste system.

Kaur (2022) looked at the relationship between realism and social reform in Mulk Raj Anand's novels. Kaur asserted that Anand combined artistic expression with a focus on social justice. Kaur argued that the realism used in Anand's portrayal of the characters and situations in his novels helped readers to identify the systemic nature of social inequities. Kaur also stated cannons were being used by Anand for purposes of social critique and helping readers to look at the moral consequences of the caste system and class exploitation.

Kumar (2024) looked into the relationship between Dalit identity and resistance in contemporary Indian literature. Kumar's research showed that narratives in literature have been a way of giving a voice to marginalized identities and to challenge the dominant culture. Kumar stated Dalit narrative's representations of both pain and strength showed that the marginalised had the ability to push against the structures that caused their subjugation.

The research suggested that early literary depictions of Dalit life, including those found in Anand's works, contributed to the development of a broader discourse on identity and empowerment.

Kumar (2023) offered a detailed analysis of subaltern perspectives in the novel *Untouchable*. In examining the narratives focused on the character Bakha, a Dalit sweeper, the study sought to illuminate the overwhelming presence and effects of caste oppression on the daily life of Bakha. Kumar posited that the novel demonstrates how social hierarchies were established at both institutional and interpersonal levels by providing a narrative of the experience of a marginalised character; Anand utilized this method to challenge dominant narratives and bring attention to the experiences of people who typically would not have a voice in the dominant discourses.

Liaquat and Rashid looked at the representation of Dalit oppression and marginalisation in literature. They argued that literature typically depicts the systemic inequalities that are present in society. They also contended that the narratives of caste oppression depicted in literature emerge from the psychological and social consequences of exclusion. They recognised that texts like Anand's novels serve not only as a historical record for Dalit communities, but as an avenue for generating empathy in readers.

Mishra (2022) investigated caste consciousness in the Indian English novel and found that most authors employ fiction to critique the stratified structures of Indian society. The study points out that caste literature frequently emphasises the contradiction between traditional notions of social order and modern ideals of equality and justice. Mishra emphasized that the portrayal of caste discrimination in literature helped expose the persistence of social inequality even in periods of political transformation.

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Pandey (2024) explored the representation of Dalit narratives in modern literature and analyzed how writers depicted the struggles and aspirations of marginalized communities. This research shed light upon how the narrative voice can shape the representation of Dalit experience. Literary works that focus on marginalised characters therefore give readers insight into the social realities of oppressed groups (Pandey, 2020).

Ramu (2023), in his analysis of the representation of marginalised voices in the novel Untouchable, suggested that the text critiques caste-based discrimination. In his opinion, Anand's portrayal of Bakha's daily experience represented the dehumanising practices of untouchability; therefore creating an emotional connection between the reader and Bakha, resulting in the reader appreciating the moral injustice associated with caste oppression.

Sharma and Parag analysed socio-cultural realism in Mulk Raj Anand's work and posited that Anand's novels contained both literary creativity and social critique. They argued that Anand's realistic depictions of day-to-day life demonstrated how caste, class, and colonial power structures interact in complex ways. The conclusions drawn by Sharma and Parag highlight how Anand's writing continues to be relevant and demonstrates how marginalised communities still face various sources of oppression today.

Singh (2021) discussed the relationship between literature and caste hierarchy in India and argued that literary texts often functioned as critiques of social inequality. This research illustrated how authors employed a variety of narrative strategies to expose and ultimately challenge the ways in which caste prejudice was manifested. Singh suggested that representing the real lived experiences of those considered outsiders or outcasted would legitimize and undermine caste prejudice.

Singh and Pandey, using a cultural materialist lens, interpreted the narrative of Untouchable through an economic perspective of caste oppression. The authors argued that the novel illustrates a reciprocal relationship between social and economic structures to perpetuate the social construct of caste. Their analysis of the text indicates that assessing literary works in context with the broader historical and socioeconomic context of that work adds value to the understanding of an author's intent.

Tiwari and Mishra (2024) presented a socio-cultural analysis of the portrayal of Dalit life in Untouchable, illustrating how Anand's authentic representation of social interactions highlights the everyday lives of those who are discriminated against by way of the caste system. Further, the authors indicate that Anand provides a portrayal of the systemic nature of untouchability, as well as the overall impact of untouchability on an individual's dignity.

Verma (2023) articulated the role Dalit literature plays in facilitating social transformation. This research indicates that narratives concerning marginalized communities, when contextualized in the literary experience, provide a way for the community to challenge dominant ideologies and help facilitate social change. Verma argued that early representations of Dalit life in works such as Anand's novels helped pave the way for the emergence of a more assertive Dalit literary movement.

Yadav (2022) examined the representation of marginalized communities in Indian fiction and highlighted how authors portrayed the struggles of individuals who occupied disadvantaged positions in society. The research emphasized that literature has been an important source of knowledge about the way people from marginalized communities experience their lives and, thus, plays a significant role in helping to understand history in a society more completely and inclusively.

Zafar (2020) examined how themes of social justice are revealed in Indian English literature and presented a perspective that writers of such literature often used it to promote equal rights and humanity. He noted

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that socially aware fictional works serve to increase awareness of problems related to poverty, casteism, and gender disparity.

In general, prior studies have, through literature reviews, explored and analysed the areas of caste, marginalisation, and social realism within the context of Indian English literature.However, there is a distinct need for an in-depth study that focuses specifically on how Mulk Raj Anand portrays the realities of Dalit-life in a variety of his novels.The current study will address this gap by examining how Anand depicts the experience of Dalits through his novels, including how those depictions contribute to discussions regarding caste inequality and social justice.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to examine how Mulk Raj Anand realistically portrays the lives of Dalits in his literary works. The study seeks to analyze the representation of caste discrimination, social humiliation, and economic exploitation experienced by Dalits in Anand's narratives. Another objective is to explore the literary techniques employed by Anand to depict the psychological and social realities of marginalized communities. The research also aims to evaluate the significance of Anand's works in the development of Dalit discourse and social realism in Indian English literature.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative research methodology based on textual and thematic analysis. The research primarily relies on the close reading of selected novels by Mulk Raj Anand, particularly *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud*. These texts are analyzed in relation to themes of caste discrimination, social inequality, and marginalization.

The theoretical framework of the study is informed by social realism, subaltern studies, and Dalit literary criticism. Social realism provides a lens through which the depiction of social conditions and class structures can be examined, while subaltern studies emphasize the representation of marginalized voices within historical and literary narratives.

Secondary sources such as journal articles, scholarly books, and contemporary research studies published between 2020 and 2024 are used to contextualize the analysis. These sources provide critical insights into the socio-historical background of caste oppression and the literary significance of Anand's works.

The analytical approach involves identifying recurring themes, narrative strategies, and character representations in the selected texts. By interpreting these elements within the broader framework of caste and social hierarchy, the study aims to understand how Anand constructs a realistic portrayal of Dalit life.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of Mulk Raj Anand's selected works underscores his profound commitment to social realism and his deep concern for the lives of marginalized communities. Anand's writing consistently shines a light on the harsh realities faced by those at the bottom of the social hierarchy—particularly Dalits and economically disadvantaged groups. But his work goes beyond surface-level depictions of oppression. He delves into the intricate structures of power, hierarchy, and prejudice that shape everyday life in colonial India. Through vivid characterization, evocative settings, and emotionally charged storytelling, Anand

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paints a realistic and often unflinching picture of a society where discrimination and inequality are deeply ingrained.

One of the most striking aspects of Anand's realism is his focus on the lived experiences of ordinary people. His characters are far from idealized heroes; they are vulnerable, complex, and struggling to maintain their dignity under oppressive conditions. By placing marginalized individuals at the center of his narratives, Anand challenges the literary tradition that often prioritizes elite or privileged perspectives. His works serve not just as literature but as powerful social commentaries that reveal the hidden suffering of those largely ignored in mainstream discourse.

A close look at *Untouchable* illustrates this approach vividly. The novel follows a single day in the life of Bakha, a young Dalit sweeper, offering a microcosm of caste oppression in colonial India. From the moment Bakha begins his work, his social identity dictates how he is treated by others. His occupation itself— sweeping the streets—is a symbol of the rigid caste hierarchy, marking him as "impure" in the eyes of the upper castes.

Anand provides several moments that highlight the humiliating realities of untouchability. For example, when Bakha accidentally brushes against a high-caste man in the marketplace, he is immediately rebuked and accused of polluting him. This incident starkly illustrates how caste ideology governs social interactions, perpetuating both fear and hostility. Anand's portrayal exposes the cruelty and irrationality of such discrimination, forcing readers to confront its human cost.

But Anand does not stop at external oppression; he also explores its psychological toll. Bakha's experiences reveal the deep alienation, shame, and self-doubt that result from constant humiliation and exclusion. Though he longs for respect and acceptance, society continually reminds him of his "inferior" status. Through Bakha, Anand demonstrates how systemic discrimination shapes not only material conditions but also personal identity and self-perception.

Yet *Untouchable* also contains glimmers of hope. Bakha's fascination with modernity—his admiration for British soldiers' lifestyles, for instance—reflects his yearning for a life unbound by caste. The novel's discussion of reformist ideas suggests the possibility that social progress and technological advancement could challenge entrenched practices like untouchability. Anand thus offers a cautiously optimistic vision of social transformation.

In *Coolie*, Anand broadens his critique of social injustice to explore the intersection of caste, class, and economic exploitation. Here, Munoo, a poor boy from a rural village, embodies the struggles of individuals navigating a deeply unequal social system. His journey from village to city exposes him to relentless exploitation—harsh labor, meager wages, and physical abuse. Though caste is less explicit here, the link between social status and economic opportunity is clear. Munoo's vulnerability stems from both poverty and the absence of institutional support. Across domestic service, industrial work, and urban employment, he faces a world where social hierarchies and economic power structures intersect to reinforce marginalization.

A similar critique appears in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, which portrays the lives of plantation workers under colonial rule. Gangu, a poor peasant seeking better prospects on a tea plantation, encounters a system designed to exploit and control. Workers endure grueling conditions while receiving minimal pay, highlighting the human cost of economic inequality. Anand's portrayal underscores how colonial structures perpetuate social hierarchies, leaving marginalized individuals trapped in cycles of poverty and dependence.

Across these novels, Anand consistently employs vivid realism to immerse readers in the lives of his characters. His detailed descriptions, use of colloquial language, and culturally specific expressions lend authenticity to the narratives. Rather than presenting abstract critiques of social injustice, Anand shows it in action, allowing readers to experience oppression through personal, tangible stories.

Equally important is Anand's insistence on the humanity of marginalized individuals. Despite facing systemic hardship, his protagonists are complex, fully realized human beings with desires, emotions, and dignity. They are not mere symbols of suffering; they are people whose lives demand empathy and respect. This humanistic approach encourages readers to question the moral legitimacy of social systems that deny such dignity.

Overall, Anand's works function as both literary masterpieces and incisive social critiques. Through compassionate storytelling and realistic portrayals, he exposes the structural inequalities of caste and economic hierarchies in colonial India. His novels document historical realities while challenging readers to reflect on issues of equality, justice, and human rights—a legacy that continues to resonate in contemporary discussions of social justice.

Findings of the Study

The findings of this study highlight that Mulk Raj Anand's literary works stand among the earliest and most powerful attempts in Indian English literature to portray the realities of Dalit life through a socially conscious, realistic lens. Analyzing his major novels—*Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud*—reveals that Anand deliberately centered the experiences of marginalized communities to expose the deep-rooted structures of inequality in colonial India. His narratives offer a vivid record of the everyday struggles, humiliations, and hardships faced by those at the lowest rungs of the caste hierarchy, showing how caste discrimination shapes not only social relations but also personal identity.

A key finding of the study is that Anand's novels illustrate how caste discrimination permeates nearly every aspect of social life. In traditional Indian society, caste was not just a social label; it dictated occupations, social interactions, and access to resources. Anand's works show that individuals from marginalized communities often faced exclusion, humiliation, and exploitation simply because of their birth. In *Untouchable*, for instance, Bakha's experiences reveal how caste identity defines one's place in society and colors how others treat him. His daily encounters with insult, rejection, and isolation vividly demonstrate the oppressive realities of life under a rigid caste system. Through this lens, Anand's novels emerge as powerful critiques of the social structures that sustain such discrimination.

Another significant insight is Anand's deeply empathetic portrayal of Dalit characters. Unlike many earlier literary depictions, which often reduced marginalized individuals to passive or stereotypical figures, Anand presents his characters as fully human—complex, emotional, and aspirational. Bakha, Munoo, and Gangu, for example, experience anger, frustration, hope, and a longing for dignity, making their struggles deeply relatable to readers. By emphasizing their agency, individuality, and desire for a better life, Anand challenges dehumanizing stereotypes and highlights the resilience and humanity of those society seeks to marginalize. This humanistic approach encourages readers to empathize with the characters and question the moral legitimacy of the social system that denies them equality.

The study also finds that Anand's works offer a broader critique of social inequality by exploring the intersection of caste with class exploitation and colonial domination. In novels like *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand examines how economic and political forces reinforce marginalization. Characters such as Munoo and Gangu navigate exploitative labor systems and oppressive social hierarchies, showing that

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caste oppression cannot be understood in isolation—it is entwined with economic inequality and colonial power structures. Anand's multidimensional portrayal offers a nuanced understanding of social injustice, highlighting the complex interplay of caste, class, and colonial exploitation.

Anand's realistic narrative style further amplifies the impact of his social critique. His novels are rich in detailed descriptions of daily life, social interactions, and the emotional experiences of his characters. This meticulous attention to detail allows readers to see and feel the harsh realities of marginalized communities. His use of clear, powerful language, along with culturally specific expressions and dialogues, enhances the authenticity of the narrative. By depicting ordinary events with such precision, Anand makes the systemic discrimination he critiques tangible and immediate, encouraging readers to reflect on its moral and human consequences.

The study also emphasizes that Anand's novels function not only as works of literary art but also as important socio-cultural documents. Beyond their narrative craft, they provide insight into the historical realities of colonial India, documenting the social practices, beliefs, and institutional structures that perpetuated inequality. In this sense, Anand's writing bridges literary discourse and social history, offering readers a window into the lived experiences of marginalized communities.

Finally, the research highlights Anand's lasting influence on Indian literature. By bringing Dalit and marginalized experiences into English-language literature, he challenged a dominant literary tradition that often ignored the oppressed. His works created a space for conversations about caste inequality and social justice, inspiring later writers and scholars to explore similar themes. The study concludes that Anand's realistic and compassionate portrayal of marginalized life not only shaped socially conscious literature in India but continues to resonate today, reminding readers of the enduring importance of equality, dignity, and human empathy.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Mulk Raj Anand's literary works play a significant role in exposing the realities of caste oppression and advocating for social justice. Through his realistic portrayal of Dalit life, Anand challenged the dominant narratives of his time and brought the experiences of marginalized communities to the forefront of Indian English literature.

Anand's novels serve not only as literary achievements but also as important social documents that reflect the historical realities of caste discrimination in India. His emphasis on human dignity and equality aligns with broader movements for social reform and anti-caste activism.

The realistic depiction of Dalit experiences in Anand's works laid the foundation for later Dalit literature and inspired subsequent generations of writers to address issues of caste and social inequality. Even today, Anand's writings remain relevant in understanding the continuing struggles against caste discrimination and the quest for social justice.

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