



Caste System Turns into A Social Curse and Social Discrimination: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* in the Perspective of Post-independence Bangladesh

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Received: 09 Sep 2023; Received in revised form: 13 Oct 2023; Accepted: 22 Oct 2023; Available online: 31 Oct 2023

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Abstract— The caste system roots in the heart of Hinduism and falls apart Hindus into touchable and untouchable. The sweepers are regarded as untouchables and are given no choice and access to their social life. The caste system in Hinduism and, therefore, in the Hindu-majority nation in India is a strong social discriminatory hierarchy that has been exercised for more than two millenniums. Mulk Raj Anand, with a firm belief in the dignity and equality of all human beings, attempts to project a panoramic scene of the caste system by beckoning a single day from the diary of Bakha, an untouchable boy who is a sweeper in profession. The present paper attempts to address the curse and discrimination triggered by the caste system, which is prevalent in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. Though the scenes of the novel belong to a small, interior town in Punjab, the happenings are pan-Indian in nature. This paper also argues how the caste system paves the way for inter-caste conflict and exploitation and, apart from several caste discrimination, why changing the upper caste's outlook is the sole way out to wipe out the stigma of the caste system.

Keywords— social discrimination, exploitation, religious doctrine, curse, social hierarchy.



I. INTRODUCTION

It is rationally expected to see a society where all men will be treated equally, and no cast, creed, or hierarchy will be taken into consideration to determine the dignity of men in the society. Caste in Hinduism plays a decisive role in determining the position of men in society. The practice is centuries-old. The modern-day India also gives space such exercise. The root of *Castism* dated back to more than two millenniums. Caste in Hinduism is determined by Varna¹. Untouchable falls in no caste that makes them suffer a lot in society in every sphere of their lives. They are looked down and ill-treated by the superior castes even when the upper castes are stupendously culturally liberal. Although caste system creates gruesome social discrimination, it turns into

a social curse and has been dominating as a blatant religious doctrine and a tool to exploit lower caste Hindus.

The original title of *Untouchable* was Bakha at the outset, and the length of the text was more than double than its present length. Anand wants to shed maximum light on Bakha, the central character of the novel, in order to emphasize his immitigable hardships and physical and mental agonies as the story centers around his spending a single day. However, Bakha is not the only character in the novel author wishes to save from the inhuman treatment and injustice of the social evils of casteism. Author's main intention was to portray the condition of the lower caste people prevalent mainly in Hindu society. He finds *Untouchable* is more appealing and more appropriate that

¹ Varna, a Sanskrit word with several meanings including type, order, color, or class, was used to refer to social classes in Hindu texts like the Manusmriti.

serves his visionary goal most, and therefore, Anand ends up his maiden novel with *Untouchable*.

Anand got influenced by Gandhi, the pioneer who sought to abolish caste system from the root of Hindu society along with saving nation from the British rule. Gandhi realized India should not get freedom only from the British but also from religious dogmatism. Casteism was a grisly social practice that was falling apart the nation. Gandhi made effort to spread the message of love and brotherhood to the people all over the country to convince them not to indulge in inhuman activities of caste system. Anand met him in Sabarmati Ashram in 1932 and shared the idea of writing on evils of caste system, where Gandhi convinced him to concise the novel telling "One must not write anything which was not based on one's experience." (George 1994: 11)

Untouchable is Anand's debut novel by which he stepped into the realm of literature, more appropriately in the domain of English literature which showers him immense appreciation from the critics and readers alike, not because of the narrative style and the selection of diction but the subject matter he plucks from the society ruled by British and Hindu dogmatism to begin his intellectual journey. The novel has been brought to light in 1st May 1935. Though it garnered applaud, several newspapers in London criticized it as 'a dirty work'. E.M. Forster later came up with the response of their criticism in the preface of *Untouchable*.

It seems to me indescribably clean and I hesitate for words in which this can be conveyed. Avoiding the rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it (*Untouchable* 9).

He focused his attention on the sufferings, misery and wretchedness of the poor as a result of the exploitation of the downtrodden class of the Indian society. Religious hypocrisy, feudal system, East-West encounter, the place of woman in the society, superstitions, poverty, hunger and exploitation are his common themes.

Century-long rule of British government in India witnessed several peculiar social norms and by as the time went, had already abolished several discriminatory and inhuman practices from the society, namely customs such as sati, polygamy, child marriage and the caste system (Wikipedia 2020) in Hindu religion pioneered by Ram Mohan Roy. The initiation of widow remarriage by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in 1856 was another groundbreaking reform in the society. But the fate of untouchable remains unchanged and miserable. Avatthi (2006) points out how India with

multiculturalism get accustomed with cultural diversity by time but social and economic diversity ignored.

The cruelty lies in the way how casteism is imposed to a person. Although originally caste depended upon a person's work, it soon became hereditary. Each person was born into an unalterable social status. A person born into the untouchable family has to accept the stigma of untouchability while the person has no control over his/her birth. To realize the price and the social position of the untouchables, learning the hierarchy of caste system and their boundary is necessary.

There are four primary castes in India. As the following graph shows Brahmin, the priests, tops the rank, maintain all religious customs and rituals. Second comes Kshatriya, warriors and nobility. They undertake the war and businesses. Vaisya falls in the third group. They are farmers, traders, and artisans. Shudra comes last. It includes commoners tenant farmers and servants. Some people were born outside of (and below) the caste system; they were called "untouchables" or Dalits—"the crushed ones."

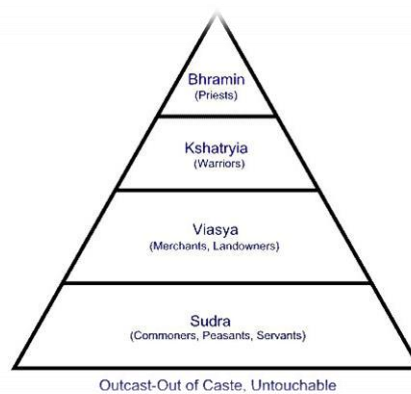


Fig.1 the hierarchy of casteism

The lives of the untouchables in the Indian society touched the author. And he starts describing the lives of and treatment they get from other castes through the life of Bakha. The novel narrates a single day of Bakha what he starts with digesting abusing and disgrace from his father in the morning at home.

The caste system, as it actually works in India is called jati². The term jati appears in almost all Indian languages and is related to the idea of lineage or kinship group. There are perhaps more than 3000 jatis in India and there is no one all-Indian system of ranking them in order of status. Yet in each local area jati ranking exists and is very much related to

² The term "Jati" is derived from the Sanskrit jāta, "born" or "brought into existence," and indicates a form of existence determined by birth.

purity and pollution. Each jati has some unique job, but not everyone in the jati performs it. A jati is identified in a local setting by whom its members will accept food and water from and to which jatis its members will give food and water. People will try to marry their sons and daughters to members of their same jati and will give their major loyalty to their jati. A jati will usually be organized into a biradari (a brotherhood), and this organization carries out the business and oversees the working of the jati and has the power to exclude an offender from the jati.

Anand's timing of writing down with the real condition of lower caste – untouchables is immensely significant. It was the time when India was fighting for independence collectively. The pioneers of the movement convinced people all castes and religions to fight against British rule in India and promised to put an end to caste system. Avatthi revealed, "The 'front-runners' of India's freedom struggle convinced particularly the Dalits promising that once the British rule in India could be brought to an end, the problems arising out of caste could be eliminated. And as citizens of free India all castes and communities would enjoy due share in social status, political power and opportunities of economic development."

II. DEFINING UNTOUCHABLE

The untouchables are now commonly known as 'Dalits' "popularized by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the world and across Bangladesh" (Sultana and Subedi 2016) getting widely used in textbooks, political manifestoes, speeches and sermons. "However, public perception towards Dalit sweepers is still framed by the concept of untouchability. While attention has been drawn to caste-based discrimination by activists, Dalit narratives have received little attention and not been sufficiently documented" (Sultana and Subedi 2016).

It has several 'textbook' dictions such as the Depressed Classes, Untouchables, Scheduled Castes, Protestant Hindus, Anti-Shudras, Panchamas, Harijans etc. Anand as an English author choose fairly common English diction 'Untouchables' to mean the caste. Avatthi (2006) comments, the untouchables are the India's most marginalized and exploited community. The Hindu caste system is a rigid social institution—a theory that is solidified by the belief that in a caste system, an 'individual's social position is fixed at birth, and cannot be changed' (Giddins 1989: 735) by any means.

Practices associated with caste varied through time and across India, but all shared some common features. The three key areas of life historically dominated by caste were marriage, meals, and religious worship. Bakha, the

protagonist, and his societies digest all of these in the society for ages by all means.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Anand attempts to shine a light on one of the most vexing social challenges on the planet: the Indian caste system, which among other things subjugates 300 million Untouchables (Dalits) into economic and social servitude. Anand comes up with a vision of bringing to an end to these inhuman practices having been "infused with a political commitment that conveyed the lives of India's poor in a realistic and sympathetic manner" (Mahashweta 2017) brought him immense appreciation and touches millions of readers and paves the way for deep concentration on this issue from the wider spectrum of social, economic, political and cultural arena. Mahashweta (2017) labels Anand's choice as the "task of attacking social snobbery and prejudice".

Kumar (2017) explores that Anand denounces definite article "the" from the title in order to make the novel a symbolic saga of the miserable lives of the thousands of untouchables in India who belong to outcaste Hindu society and sufferer of social injustice. He further discloses why even after eighty years of the publication *Untouchable* keeps touching the readers.

Anand's dealing with poor and downtrodden sect of the society established him as The Dickenson of Indian literary canon. As Reddy and Gopi (2013) states "Anand is Dickensian in his ultra-sensitivity to the existence of social evils in protean forms". Human predicament and sufferings of lower caste untouchable "propelled" Reddy and Gopi (2013) Anand to choose literature as a tool to raise awareness. Anand is so honest in projecting the "realistic picture of society" through the live of a sweeper boy. Anand is credited for being "notable for his depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society". *Untouchable* precisely justifies Reddy and Gopi's comment.

When the novel was written, India was passing through the crucial phase of the movement for independence. Anand played the due role as an intellectual bringing lower and downtrodden caste in the limelight with his pen. Anand was success in his effort shaking the hearts of Indians who believe in the humanity and equality. Many Indians believe that emancipation lies not only in the retreat of the British from the Indian subcontinent, but also in the eradication of the social and religious dogmatism realizing humanistic appeal of all caste and religions. Anand had firm belief in it and joined the force in intellectual manner with great concern for down-trodden people of India (Mahashweta 2017) keeping the vision to free them from Hindu religious doctrine in mind. and led by the trot "Men is equal to God".

Kumar (2017) appreciates Anand's belief "in the dignity and equality of all human beings" and his deep feelings for the untouchables who are treated by the so called "twice born." The very first novel *Untouchable* earned him name and fame all over the world and it is considered as one of his best novels that deals with the lives of "poor and downtrodden" people to their problems to the surface. Anand step into the realm of English literature as an ambassador of the voiceless, marginalized sect of Indian society. Hossain (2013) evaluates Anand as prominent as "proletariat humanism, social realism, naturalistic approach, creative stamina and his 'mulkese' realistic language".

IV. UNTOUCHABLES: DAY AND OUT

Anand pen down a single day from the diary of an untouchable boy Bakha, a scavenger boy "a man of eighteen, strong and able-bodied, the son of Lakha, the Jemadar of all the sweepers in the town and the cantonment" (Anand 9) to literate his readers about the real condition of the untouchables and of their agonies and sufferings. Though the scenes of the novel belong to a small, interior town of the Punjab, the happenings are pan Indian in character. Bulandshahr, a small town with an outcaste colony on the outskirts represents a normal Indian town found anywhere in India. Most of the action of the novel takes place at an outcaste colony and in the streets of the small town.

From the opening paragraph of the novel, Anand attempts to draw a clear line between the untouchables and other communities living in the town leaving the readers to witness the miserable condition of their lifestyle. "The outcastes' colony was a group of mud walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate from them. There lived the scavengers, the leather-workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society." (Anand 9)

The living condition of the untouchables is further achieved with the following passage.

There was no provision for lights in the sweepers' street, so most of the inhabitants compensated themselves for the nights spent in utter darkness amid the smoke of smoldering hearth fires in the small congested houses, by spending most of their time in the open air. (Anand 66)

Bakha starts his day welcomed by the abuses of his father and is forced to clean the latrines with a brush and a basket. "Get up, ohe you Bakhya, you son of a pig...Get up and attend to the latrines or the sepoy will be angry." (Anand

13) Bakha's humiliation continues as Anand keeps telling us how Bakha, a representative of untouchable marks his day for a living. The story further reveals Bakha's humiliation when he unintentionally touches a Caste Hindu in the crowd. The reaction and physical abuse leaves Bakha deaf and dumb even after wholehearted apologizing.

You 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! Now, I'll have to go and take a bath to purify myself. And it was a new dhoti and shirt I put on this morning! (Anand 9)

Embarrassed, amazed, deaf and dumb Bakha nothing but accepts the fate of being untouchable what forces him to calm down and digest all these humiliation in public.

Wherever Bakha goes, the treatment and response he gets from his surrounding caste Hindus remind him of his very caste identity, making him forget his human identity. The treatment that is given to an animal is reserved for him. He has been suffering a series of humiliating experiences right from the morning. Lakha's abuse in the cold morning "Get up, ohe you Bakhiya, ohe son of a pig!... Get up and attend to the latrines or the sepoy will be angry." (Anand 15) marks his beginning of the day. Anand provides a brilliant hint of their everyday businesses and to what extent they have to digest humiliation in and out. Bakha leaves home unwillingly keeping the caste consciousness in mind and therefore, he is expected to digest anything happen to him all the day long without showing any reaction.

Anand keeps surfacing Bakha's routine task to investigate untouchable's normal businesses with discrimination and endless sufferings. The scene of his collecting food adds from another tear-jerking mortification. Bakha bags for food, "Bread for the sweer, mother. Bread for the sweeper.... The sweeper has come for bread, mother!" (Anand 67) Anand shines the discrimination with a sadhu in the same task of collecting food from houses. Sadhu manages to get food within minutes with a call "*Bham, bham, bholanath*' the peculiar lingo of sadhuhood, shaking the bangles on his arms" (Anand 68). While Bakha loses in drowsy listlessness getting tired of drawing attention of the master of the house.

The treatment of the woman sharpens the discrimination further. As she screams getting Bakha on the wooden platform outside her house.

You eater of your masters.... may the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you perish and die! You have defiled my house! Go! Get up, get up! You eater of your masters! Why didn't you shout if you wanted food? Is this your father's house that you come and rest here? (Anand 69)

Bakha does not react as it should be. He instead keeps apologizing and attempting to convince the lady for food. Bakha later manages a piece of bread "thin, paper-like pancake" in the price of cleaning the drain what his sister is supposed to do and tolerating dire disgrace of taking the bread "floating in the air" (Anand 73). First, Bakha's plea for food is ignored and later when he is found carelessly sat on the wooden platform, Bakha is accused of defiling her house, while sadhu gets food soon after he asks for it. The proportion and type of food is another clear distinction between Bakha and sadhu.

However, the eighteen years old scavenger boy is tired of such events of humiliation. Anand reveals that "Bakha was a child of modern India. The clear-cut styles of European dress had impressed his naïve mind." (Anand 10) That clearly implies that Bakha was aware what is happening around him that lets him fantasize a 'modern Bakha'. However, his caste confined him in the bondage of discrimination, exploitation and Bakha is wondering why this happens with them, why they are ill-treated by the caste Hindus.

...All of them abused, abused, abused why are we always abused? The sanitary inspector that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it to... I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable I am an untouchable! (Anand 58-59)

Anand applies a young female character namely Shohini, Bakha's sister to project the real condition of girls and women in the caste-dominated Hindu society. Anand narrates her beauty when she approaches to fetch drinking water for her brother.

She had a sylph-like form, not thin but full-bodied within the limits of her graceful fame, well rounded on the hips, with an arch narrow waist from which descended the folds of her trousers and above which were her full, round, globular breasts, jerking slightly, for lack of a bodice, under her transparent muslin shirt. (Anand 14)

However, Sohini's identity in the society like her brother Bakha also bases on the caste identity. Her pretty and innocence look and well-mannered behavior cannot make out anything. Rather these natural and human traits put her in further trouble in every step she attempts making fellow-outcaste inferior. Anand exposes inter-caste conflict and exploitation through these two events. Sohini becomes the ambassador in Anand's *Untouchable* for the young untouchables girls and shows what they digest routinely – mentally and physically to pay price of being untouchable.

First, Sohini faces the wrath of Gulabo, "a fair complexioned, middle-aged woman" (Anand 16) although Sohini does nothing wrong with her except ignoring her and

staying calm, while she is expected to fight back giving Gulabo a rational ground to indulge her 'so-called superiority'. Gulabo "who thought herself superior to every other caste" (Anand 16) makes every opportunity happen to satisfy her instinct by abusing and calling Sohini's name. Gulabo, who is a washerwoman by profession, practices her superiority and enjoys her faded beauty to abuse Sohini. Both of them do the cleaning job.

Anand introduces Sohini again, "Now Sohini being of the lowest caste among the outcaste would naturally be looked down upon by Gulabo" (Anand 17). Who herself gets abused by high caste now makes her best to abuse another outcaste – Sohini. "Bitch, why don't you speak! Prostitute, why don't you answer me?" (Anand 17) Gulabo attacks finding Sohini reluctant to response. "You annoy me with your silence, you illegally begotten! You eater of dung and drinker of urine! You bitch of a sweeper women! I will show you how to insult one old enough to be your mother." (Anand 17)

The profundity of curse and exploitation begotten by casteism is further exposed by the second event on the very day with the conduct of Pundit Kali Nath. It displays another form of ill treatment towards untouchables, particularly with girls from the most superior caste exposing their hypocrisy at best. Sohini falls victim of their lust and hypocrisy and pays the price for her caste – untouchable. Untouchability and gender are the two aspects what make Sohini victim of Pundit's sexual attempt. She is offered a favor when Pundit recognizes her as "Lakha's daughter" at the well. Sohini hesitates to take this uninvited favor from Pundit Kali Nath as if she knew what it might demand in return. Pundit tries to convince Sohini to accept his favor with religious words, "You have been patient and the reward of patience, says the holy books, is supreme" (Anand 21). Anand's mockery of religious hypocrisy is exposed later, when Pundit attempts to molest Sohini. It is the clear advantage of his caste that make out such exploitation every day. Pundit's two-facedness surfaced further when he starts pouring curse on Sohini being rejected in molesting her.

Data indicates that these (untouchable) women, who comprise about 16% of India's female population, face a "triple burden" Yengde (2019) of gender bias, caste discrimination and economic deprivation. "The Dalit female belongs to the most oppressed group in the world, "She is a victim of the cultures, structures and institutions of oppression, both externally and internally. This manifests in perpetual violence against Dalit women" Yengde (2019). Sohini's hesitation for taking Pundit's favor is shaped by such instinct of fear, as she is known with such payment, which is later happened with her.

Anand shows his concern for the untouchable's women and girls as the recent data intimidates us with the horrific misconduct with the untouchables. They are victims of violence because of their poverty, lower caste and gender, so looked down upon by all. There is no one to help or speak for them. They face more sexual violence because they don't have any power. All these series of events from dawn to dusk indicate how helpless they are and they have been subjected for all sort of discrimination and exploitation. And Anand attempts to pull the attention toward them with a hope to change their fate.

Any form of art – literature, cinema, music, arts etc. can be a potential tool that can project what nothing else can do. Anand pens down to speak for the subaltern (Dar 2018), and displays his great concern and compassion towards the untouchables, and seeks the end of such deadly practices from all stages. Anand characterizes the lives of the untouchables and their mental and physical agony and immitigable hardship (Reddy and Gopi, 2013) to incite the society's elite who has all means to bring the end of their misery, curse and stigma. He also wraps up his novel with three timely yet impossible-to-implement suggestions, which is expected to bring the desired change in the society.

V. POST-BANGLADESH SCENARIO

The Dalits encounter prejudice in every aspect of social interaction like in lodging establishments, hair salons, places of worship, as well as educational institutions. In terms of their position within society, they hold very little significance. According to Rahman (2016), Chowdhury (2009), they do not participate in social interactions and are frequently manipulated by powerful individuals to pursue their nefarious objectives. Accepted and supported as long as they stay within their customary social positions, they are openly menaced and mocked, and physically harmed while striving to instigate transformations within their community. Dalits are considered as impure and filthy due to work and descent and consequently forced to live a secluded from the mainstream society.

In Bangladesh, Dalits are mainly associated with their conventional job roles such as fisherfolk, sanitation workers, hairstylists, laundry workers, metalworkers, jewelry craftsmen, shoemakers, and oil extractors (Chowdhury 2009). From a statistical standpoint, Muslims constitute the majority, while Hindus constitute the minority. The Dalits, on the other hand, signify the most disadvantaged and marginalized segments in the society. The Dalit communities typically reside in the most undesirable regions that others would not desire or aspire to possess. Furthermore, the untouchables are not even allowed to purchase, and build houses in the residential

areas of mainstream society keeping them restricted inside their designated areas. The untouchables are often pushed to the outskirts of the village due to the bias against them, labeling them as 'impure'.

In 1971, Bangladesh came into the existence with a host of commitments and potentialities. To build a nation ensuring equal opportunity and rights for every cast and creed was the decisive goal of the independence (Grote and Röder, 2012). Nevertheless, while the country grappled with the tasks of forming a nation and changing society, the ancient caste system's influence could still be felt within its social structure. As once-part of India, Bangladesh still finds many things in common including Hindus and caste system in their vein. Additionally, Hinduism holds the second most prominent religious status in Bangladesh (BBS, 2022), with approximately 13.1 million individuals identifying as adherents. This accounts for about 7.95 percent of the overall population, making Hindus the second largest minority group in the country, as reported by the latest 2022 census.

Following the independence, Bangladesh emerged as a freshly established country, giving rise to hopes for fair treatment among society. Constitution of Bangladesh (Article 27) clearly states that all citizens are equal before law. In addition, article 28 has renounced all kind of discrimination, and article 29 has said equality of opportunity in public employment. Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and article 19 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have called for the fair treatment and respect of every individual regardless of their place of birth, social status, faith, or citizenship. However, as time went on, the branches of the caste system were able to infiltrate the developing society, although in a subtle way. The historic impact of caste system, along with social and economic disparities, led to the continuation of prejudice within specific societies.

With a dedication to promoting social unity, Bangladesh after gaining independence aimed to tackle the enduring issue of discrimination based on social hierarchy. As a move, the government took proactive steps by introducing legal actions to address such practices. Nevertheless, obstacles in putting these initiatives into action, combined with deeply rooted societal beliefs, impeded the complete achievement of these policies' influence on the lives of disadvantaged populations (Rahman, 2016). As Sultana and Subedi (2016) comment, in Bangladesh, the Hindu cleaning workers have faced long-standing unfair treatment and exclusion, as well as being denied the freedom to pick their

own job, find suitable housing, receive education, and enjoy other advantages.

Looking at things from a comparative perspective helps us see the complex patterns of caste in both India and Bangladesh. Although the two countries have similarities with respect to their past as British colonies, origins, cultures and many the paths they took after gaining independence have resulted in different ways in which caste-related prejudice is demonstrated. The adventures of the main character, Bakha, in the novel "Untouchable" have a widespread impact, connecting with the challenges faced by people trying to understand their place in a society that strongly emphasizes social hierarchy.

As India as well as Bangladesh are marching towards developing, the presence of social class issues serves as a constant reminder of the challenges that remain hidden beneath the overall advancement. The accounts of "Untouchable" connect with the tales of present-day Bangladesh, showing the complex interplay between long-standing customs and evolution. By taking a comprehensive approach that incorporates laws, public knowledge, and cultural empowerment, the country can aspire to surpass the restrictions enforced by the caste system, creating a future that includes everyone and is fair for all.

Dalits and socially marginalized individuals in Bangladesh are encountering a significant issue of being ignored and downgraded, along with experiencing poverty and being deprived of their rights. They bear the burden of untouchability from birth until death. These elements have oppressed them with the designation of the lowest group in the community and stripped them of their fundamental civil entitlements.

Although caste system creates vicious social discrimination that ended up being a social curse and lives as a categorical religious practice and a tool to exploit lower caste Hindus, there must have way outs. Anand wraps up his saga *Untouchable* with a resounding note of optimism. He leaves a set of solutions that seem to make Bakha optimistic with a little confusion in mind. One is conversion to Christianity that Colonel Hutchinson, a Christian missionary, always offers to any Dalits. With no exception, Hutchinson takes him to the church and asks him to confess before Christ. The hypocrisy and the sexual exploitation of Pundit Kali Nath put Bakha's belief in God in confusion. Getting rid of untouchability by confessing before God seems lame to Bakha as he does not commit any sin except his birth in the untouchable family.

Second solution comes from Mahatma Gandhi, whom Bakha listens to in a public meeting at Golbagh. He presents the idea of 'equality' in the eyes of God. He even renames the untouchable as "Hajiran" the child of God and call them cleaners of Hindu religion. Gandhi shares the wish to be reborn as untouchable. He also warns them against their bad habits and asks them to stop begging the food for their work. Though Gandhi's speech shakes his heart and Bakha appreciate at the beginning, high Caste Hindu mentality and their concrete practices bar him to depend on Gandhism too.

The third solution comes in the form of future prospects of introducing flush system in toilet. Bakha thinks this may work out most replacing the sweepers with flush system one day. However, Bakha will have to depend on sahib³ to implement the flush system to get rid of the disgrace and exploitation of untouchability. So, the emancipation of the untouchable still in the hands of upper caste. Since the untouchable has no authority to alter the cleaning method, they have left no choice to change the scenario. Changing the outlook towards the lower castes and recognizing them as the 'children of God' and sharing due rights and social status with them would be best way to free them from the shackle of caste-bondage.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the intricate fabric of social structures, the caste system has consistently embedded itself as a troubling element, causing unfairness and unevenness in the lives of people. Using the book "Untouchable" by Mulk Raj Anand as a reference, this study has examined how the caste system evolved into a social burden, showing similar effects in post-independence Bangladesh. The exploration of the past, examination of stories, and comparison between two countries has shed light on the various ways in which the caste system still troubles communities, hindering advancement and spoiling the principles of fair treatment for all.

"Untouchable," with its heartfelt portrayal of Bakha's hardships, acts as a potent literary reflection showcasing the cruelty of discrimination based on caste both in India and Bangladesh. The book's significance goes beyond its initial setting and is reflected in the present situation of Bangladesh after gaining independence, where problems related to social class continue to exist in different ways. The collective encounters of disadvantaged people, regardless of where they live, emphasize the commonality of their challenges, while also underscoring the necessity for interventions tailored to each unique situation.

³ Sahib refers to British official in India who hold all power and govern India.

The discussion about discrimination based on caste demands a thorough analysis of the structural foundations that uphold it without hesitation. This research shows that education and knowledge are powerful means to break down the deep-seated prejudices of the caste system. While, (Rahman, 2016) recommends urgent legislative modifications, such as the implementation of a law that opposes discrimination. Efforts aimed at promoting comprehension and compassion among communities have the capability to interrupt the harmful pattern of prejudice, creating surroundings that flourish on inclusiveness and fairness.

The story of "Untouchable" also emphasizes the changing influence of books as a means for altering society. As the story in the book progresses, it not only provides an engaging reading experience but also evokes understanding, encourages thinking deeply, and calls on society to face its problems. Books and other written works play a significant role in sparking discussions that have the potential to change how we see things and question deeply rooted beliefs.

In relation to the period after Bangladesh gained independence, the term "Untouchable" acts as a link between past stories and present challenges. As the country deals with its own social and political difficulties, the importance of Bakha's story shows that the struggle against prejudice is not limited to any particular region. It is a struggle to regain respect, to renew human qualities, and to rebuild communities where each person can prosper without worry of bias.

In summary, the examination of how the caste system transforms into a societal affliction and promotes social bias, as demonstrated in Mulk Raj Anand's "Untouchable," offers deep understanding into the societal difficulties faced by both India and post-independence Bangladesh. The repeated instances of prejudice based on social class, reflected in the story of the book, reverberate across history and the world, compelling us to address the deep-seated prejudices that impede advancement. It is only by working together, motivated by learning, understanding, and compassion, that the chains of the caste system can be shattered, enabling societies to go beyond the limits of past biases and move towards a future characterized by fairness, sameness, and togetherness.

As we come to an end of this period of investigation, the quest to abolish the curse of the caste system persists, driven by the life-changing power of books and the steadfast dedication to remodel communities into environments where the value of each person is acknowledged and honored, regardless of their past experiences.

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