



Portrayal of Social Oppression and Adjectives illustration in Character of Bakha in Untouchable

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Indian caste system is hot cake to be discussed globally and has become source of endless speculation for the researchers. Caste system and status co. has become a social evil that portrays the tribulations and tortures of marginalized unprivileged people. A society where social class and caste were pervasive, this study reflects the powerlessness of Bakha who aspired to be an Englishman to get recognition, preserve dignity and to earn an identity as a human. Objective s of present study is to highlight those adjectives indited Mulk Raj Anand in portraying the character sketch of Bakha. The social effect of book is analyzed using Van Djik theory of cognitive approach with a focus on the character of Bakha. This novel depicts the social concern that is analyzed by the van djik theoretical application by close reading of text and purposively sampling of the text relevant to Bakha socially, culturally and economically marginalized. They are common victims and suppressive as they do not have the economic and political power to fight back the upper-class people's supremacy. They are not able get the voice to speak out their condition and portray themselves before the world. These subalterns have very few chances to change their fate in society which is measured by the upper class and closes the options like consciousness, education and equal rights to raise their status.

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1. Introduction

Untouchable is a novel inspired by a mission to eradicate the sins of casteism, duplicity, and exploitation of the poor in the name of mock supremacy. They treated them as personal property. The most heartbreaking aspect of their situation was that they had no legal standing to seek justice. They were forced to suffer. They were so obedient that they accepted any act of injustice as their fate. Bakha is a symbolic figure who represents the untouchables. The silences and contradictions in Anand's *Untouchable* are examined through the lens of Dalit discourse. In light of the untouchability debate between Gandhi and Ambedkar the controversy surrounding Christian conversions in India, also form the hegemony of Gandhian reformism and effective the actual struggle of Dalits for justice and equality (Garimella, 2005). In his first book, "*Untouchable*," published in 1935, he described the plight of the caste of Indian society that was considered untouchable. As a result of this work, he was acclaimed as the Charles Dickens of India. The book "*Untouchable*" allows its readers to feel what it is like to be a member of a lower caste. The story also highlights the difficulties of re-establishing one's own identity following colonialism. It has a foreword by E.M. Foster, who says that the book is "*indescribably clean*". The novel *Untouchable* is an eloquent indictment of the low caste system, which suppresses the oppressed untouchables at every turn of their lives. Even sharing the same street with the privileged would be out of the question for a man from a marginalised group (Kumar, 2017). Bakha goes through an identity crisis as he makes the mental shift from

childhood to adulthood. At first, he has no inkling that he is an outsider. Bakha's superiority mentality, fueled by the White Tommies' kindness and Mahatma Gandhi's words, is reflected in his behaviour and appearance towards his fellow social outcasts. He abstains from the filthy lifestyle of most dumpster divers. He stands out from the other outcasts due to his intelligence, sensitivity, and aura of nobility. Bakha is both an oppressed victim and a courageous freedom fighter. The inflexible caste system has him as its scapegoat. He acts defiant because of the injustices he has suffered. He's considering violence because he's been insulted and abused so much. In those situations, he feels like a caged tiger (Bartwal & Bijalwan, 2013).

1.1. Character of Bakha

Bakha is in good physical and mental condition. Each muscle in his physique was as tough as a rock when it was put to use, according to Anand, and it appeared to shine out like glass. He must have had a tremendous amount of stored energy. Bakha is unafraid and direct. His sensitivity, consciousness, and self-respect set him apart from other scavengers. This divinity is revealed by his amazing patience and humility. According to E.M. Foster's Preface. Bakha is not a lifeless figure. He has an active and aggressive personality. He appears to be making the shift from tradition to modernity based on his anglophile behaviour. In his heart of hearts, he is an iconoclast. Bakha is the key character. The novel centers around Bakha. Everything is seen through his eyes. He is a concentrated character and polarstar. The son of Lakha, Bakha is a sturdy, athletic young man of eighteen. His father is the official Jamadar of all the sweepers in the town and is in charge of maintaining public restrooms. Bakha portrays a complete tribe of outcasts who are forced to live in abject poverty rather than just one particular outcast.

Untouchable! Out of reach! There it is! Untouchable! I am an untouchable!" (p.55)

His contradictory traits have coalesced to fuel a split personality. There are two seemingly contradictory sides to his personality. The first shows that he gives up and accepts the high caste Hindus' superiority. These characteristics likely run in his family and are the product of a millennium of subjection. The second facet of his personality is a burning anger for those who wronged him. His spirit of resistance leads him to be an open rebel of caste-base society. According to Van Dijk (2005), "Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analysis research that studies primarily the ways social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts" (Van Dijk, 2005). Realistically Mulk Raj is concerned with the regaining power of general masses socially and economically handicapped by the superior hands. "Bakha" was socially exploited not only by Whites but by his townpeople that depicted the hypocrisy and double standards of society. Mulk raj created the character of "Bakha" that symbolically represents the oppression, injustice, humiliation of all the outcaste community.

Table 1

<i>Father</i>	<i>You, Lover of your mother, his father had once abusively said to him, take a quilt, spread bedding on a string bed and throw away that blanket of the Gora white men; you will die of cold in that thin cloth. (p.10)</i>
<i>powerlessness</i>	<i>Get up, oye, you Bakhya, you son of a pig, came his father's voice, sure as a bullet to its target, from a midst of a broken, jarring, Interrupted snore . Get up and attend to the latrines or the sepoy's will be angry. (p.10)</i>
<i>Havildar Charat Singh</i>	<i>Oh Bakhya! Oh Bakhya! Oh, you scoundrel of a sweeper's son! Come and clear a latrine for me. (p.11)</i>
<i>Whites</i>	<i>Kala admi zameen par hagne Wala (Black man who relieve himself on ground) (p.13)</i>
<i>powerlessness</i>	<i>There is no latrine clean. You must work for the pay you receive(p.13)</i>

The division of Indian society into four castes based on "Karma" is explored in the Vedic literature: Brahmana (priests, teachers, spiritual gurus, counsellors), Kshatriya (kings, warriors), "Vaishya" (tradesmen), and "Shudra" (craftsmen, labourers, slaves). Brahmana is at the top of this four-fold hierarchy, whereas Shudra is at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This fourth caste is further subdivided into sub-castes. Sweeper is the lowest of them all. This Shudra sub-division protects them from being exploited. They are socially excluded and exploited because they are not united. The policy of the government can be sensed herein its visible mark, divide and rule. "Caste system.

Figure 1



In India, social divisions have existed historically along a variety of lines, including class, religion, region, tribe, gender, and language. The caste system in India is one of these dimensions. Every human culture differs in some manner, but it becomes problematic when one or more of these factors overlap and serve as the only determinant of systematic ranking and unequal access to valued resources like wealth, income, power, and status. A person's social standing is determined by their caste because of the rigid character of the Indian Caste System. There are restrictions on how one should act and interact with people from lower socioeconomic classes. The various facets of the Indian caste system will be examined in this essay (Sana 1993).

The outcastes were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the nearby brook as their use of it would contaminate the stream. (14-15)

The story of the well in this book is crucial for comprehending the societal issues facing the Dalit or subaltern population. Anand condemns the Hindu caste system and the nefarious plans of the upper class to believe that they alone are entitled to life's luxuries. To the lecherous upper caste persons like Pandit Kali Nath, Sohini is expected to have the virtues of patience, meekness, docility, and obedience. Pandit Kali Nath kept an eye on her as he filled his pitcher at the village well, and when he invited her to clean his house, he tried to molest her and cried, "Polluted, Polluted!" when she resisted. By contrasting the treatment of a Sadhu, or holy man, who is begging for food and is treated with full devotion because his blessings will benefit the household, and that of an untouchable Bakha, who is also begging for food and is treated with contempt and abuses, Anand demonstrates the hypocrisy, pretence, and sham of the Hindu society.

1.2. Social Cognitive Approach

Teun A. van Dijk's social cognitive approach is an important aspect of his work in discourse analysis. It emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in understanding and producing discourse, particularly how individuals make sense of social situations and how their beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies are influenced by discourse. Van Dijk focuses on the role of mental models in discourse comprehension and production. Mental models are cognitive representations that individuals construct based on the information provided in discourse. These models help individuals interpret and make sense of the social world. Van Dijk makes use of the schema theory, which contends that people create mental structures called schemas to organise their knowledge and experiences. Schemas are activated during discourse processing and influence how individuals interpret and remember information. Van Dijk explores how social schemas shape our understanding of social situations and guide our expectations about discourse. Van Dijk investigates how discourse contributes to the formation and reinforcement of stereotypes and prejudices. He examines how social schemas and mental models can lead to biased interpretations of information, perpetuating social inequalities and discrimination. Van Dijk's approach acknowledges the role of social identity in discourse processing. The aspect of a person's self-concept that results from their membership in a particular social group is referred to as their "social identity." Van Dijk explores how social identities influence the way people

interpret and respond to discourse, as well as how discourse shapes and reinforces social identities.

1.3. Problem Statement

This research is qualitative, and the study of the novel focuses on the inequality & social abuse dominance by Mulk Raj Anand in *Untouchable*, in which Englishmen enjoy a privileged position in society while protagonist Bakha is constrained by their socio-designed structures to live under the patriarchal rules of no choice of their own and resistance to authority and leadership.

1.4. Research Objectives

1. To analyse how Bakha socially abused by community members.
2. To examine the mechanism of social cognition approach of the protagonist Bakha.

2. Literature Review

Bakha, the main character in Anand's work, is a prototypical member of India's oppressed classes before to the country's freedom. He represents everyone who has ever been victimized by tyranny, injustice, or humiliation. He is a global character. Because of their inferior social rank, the Dalits in India face a number of challenges and embarrassments, and he is a symbol of those challenges and humiliations. His identity crisis is brought to a head throughout the whole of the book *Untouchable* due to the fact that he is the target of bigotry and racial prejudice. Anand has, via the performance of Bakha, depicted the dreadful plight of the Dalits, who are subjected to a wide variety of forms of injustice and are mistreated by members of society. Therefore, the type of people's professions determines their social status and caste in society, either as higher, lower, or untouchable, respectively. Communities that are disadvantaged, oppressed, and untouchable are portrayed as being less prestigious, impoverished, filthy, uneducated, and uncivilized, and they are separated from the higher class (Afrin & Muniruzzaman, 2022). The portrayal of Bakha, the main character in *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand, caused a stir when it was published. Mulk Raj Anand was the winner who really came from behind. He was the first member of the literary group to acknowledge the oppression of the lower-class members of society. The inequities and inequalities that are rampant in our society are vindicated by the works of Mulk Raj Anand. The most significant contribution that Mulk Raj Anand made to Indian literature was his kind of realism, which laid the foundation for the modernization of Indian society. The social hierarchy that exists in India is shown rather well in the movie "Untouchable." Untouchability is a societal scourge that has fractured the oneness of people in India, despite the country's widespread recognition for the richness of its culture and traditions. His objective was to alter the destructive patterns that were prevalent in society. He was fully aware that the members of the higher class were taking advantage of the uneducated people on the basis of their religious beliefs and castes. His heart was always with those who were disadvantaged, and he did all in his power to assist those people in obtaining better living situations. The horrible condition of a segment of the people that has been subjugated is vividly shown in the film *Untouchable* (Sharma).

The practice of untouchability is a heinous social evil that occurs when particular groups of individuals are discriminated against or excluded from the mainstream sectors of society on the basis of their caste, social status, or occupation. Untouchables are the most downtrodden and marginalized persons in society; they sometimes do not have the right to speak their mind or participate in public debates. It is seen or treated as a task that is ascribed to the untouchables of the lowest levels of society. Manual scavenging is one of their jobs. Because of their employment, which requires them to transport human faces using only their bare hands, these individuals are not granted any dignity. Through his well-known story, "Untouchable," Mulk Raj Anand illustrates the torment and anguish that an untouchable kid called Bakha through at the hands of the casteist society in which he lived. Bakha worked as a manual scavenger (Unni, 2020). There is not the slightest doubt that *Untouchable*, written by Mulk Raj Anand is vicious irony on Hinduism and its deceitful issues. This is simply a mirror of modern culture. The novel is elevated to the level of a mini epic by the realistic depiction of the lead character's courageous battle in the face of adversity. His works frequently address such issues as religious hypocrisy, the feudal system, the East-West encounter, the status of women in society, folk beliefs, poverty, hunger, and exploitation. Despite focusing on the protagonist's day-to-day life, the novel also shows Indian society in the 1930s and 1940s, when extreme poverty, enslavement, and inhuman exploitation of the masses were at their worst. The novel

is elevated to classic status by its vivid and realistic depiction of the protagonist's courageous struggle against the cruel circumstances of his life. Anand's first-hand experience with the low caste people and their pitiful lifestyles inspired him to speak up for them. He had a complete understanding of the situation. Bakha is not just one outcast; rather, he stands in for an entire society of social outcasts. Young minds are especially vulnerable to the long-term effects of oppression and shame. In addition to the trauma of poverty and social hardship, children unconsciously build a temperament of hostility and defiance (Kumari, 2019).

2.1. Research Gap

Multiple authors with their literary creations have been analysed in various dimensions but the gap is still existed as, Marxist analysis, unholiness of Bakha ,subaltern agony, realism and voice of voiceless have been discussed deeply but social cognitive approach to character of Bakha is still needed to be explored. This is the research gap which researcher will fill with its critical analysis.

3. Methodology in Current Research

The study's ultimate purpose is to enlighten the voice of Bakha and social approach towards the most unprivileged section of society Knowledge already developed in the subject being researched will inform the study strategy. The study's design and the evidence at hand are compatible, which strengthens the study's credibility and analyse the character of Bakha by applying theoretical lens of Van Dijk Social Cognitive Approach.

4. Textual Analysis

This discussion proceeds under the premise that Bakha, the protagonist of *Untouchable*, is the victim of a centuries old Indian caste-system complicated by the imposition of colonial rule by the British. Both these oppressive conditions manifest themselves in the discourse prevalent in the social and communal context in which Bakha is coping with his existential predicament. Concerning discourse, Teun van Dijk says that the concept of context is critical in perception how communication is rooted in society (Van Dijk, 2005). Since the theoretical reference of this study considers context to be of vital importance, it is mandatory to examine the relevant points of this area of knowledge. This is all the more so in the light of the following statement by van Dijk: "*we need insight into the whole, complex context in order to know how power is related to text and talk, and more generally how discourse reproduces social structure*" (Van Dijk, 2005). He criticizes previous such studies for their emphasis on structures of interaction rather than on settings, characters, and their propensities. The importance he attaches to the last mentioned three elements of discourse is most relevant to the objectives of this study because the purpose here is to apply the socio-cognitive perspective to Bakha, his social milieu, and his interaction with and reaction to it. The writer begins by describing the area where Bakha lives with his father, brother, and sister: "*the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an 'uncongenial' place to live in*" (Mulk Raj Anand, 1946). This is the setting of the socio-cognitive context into which the reader steps at the very outset.

4.1. The Outrage in the Town

On entering the town, Bakha succumbs to his desire to smoke and buys a packet of the cheapest cigarettes. He knows that even this innocuous act by a poor man would be regarded as a presumptuous deed by the rich people. But self-assertion is still alive in him, and he goes ahead and has a smoke. While walking down the street, he ruminates on the fact that the well-to-do shopkeepers on both sides always cheated the likes of him by overcharging—considering it a compensation for dealing with an untouchable. These are thoughts which never occur to his father and brother as they have completely accepted their fate. The fact that Bakha has these thoughts shows that he is fully and painfully cognizant of the injustice meted out to people like him. Despite being aware of being so cheated, he buys some *jalebi* as another personal indulgence. What follows is, in a way, the central event of the action as it depicts the ultimate misfortune that can befall Bakha. Death is inevitable and therefore an accepted fact by all including the untouchables. But for an untouchable person to touch a higher caste person is a disaster for both. However, for the latter the maximum cost is a ritual ablution and a change of clothes. Whereas, for the former, the cost can be all kinds of physical and mental torture and may even lead to an ignominious death. To be sure, Bakha is stronger than anyone in the small crowd gathered there. He can overcome all of them physically. But, he senses that he is up against, not a physical barrier, but a moral one. The verbal abuse Bakha receives is sickening

in its intensity and is climaxed by a slap which dislodges his turban and scatters his dearly bought *jalebis* on the ground. His reaction is tortured in its impotent potential: "*The strength, the power of his giant body glistened with the desire for revenge in his eyes, while horror, rage, indignation swept over his frame*" (M. R. Anand, 1947). Here again, we see that Bakha does surrender to his humiliation as he moves away calling out the untouchable's warning which he had momentarily forgotten giving rise to this horrific incident.

4.2. The Incident at the Temple

When Bakha enters the temple courtyard to sweep it, he has no prior knowledge of what and how the people worship inside the building. He wonders about this as he begins his work. But his curiosity gets the better of him to the extent that he forgets his place and ascends the steps to get a better look inside. The sound of a hymn sung by the worshippers has an intensely spiritual effect on him: "*His blood had coursed along the balanced melodic line to the final note of strength with such sheer vigour that his hands joined unconsciously, and his head hung in the worship of the unknown god*" (M. R. Anand, 1947). This serene reverie is shattered by the harsh shouts of the priest of the temple who is exclaiming in the courtyard below that he has been polluted by the touch of an untouchable. He is followed close behind by Sohini by whose touch he claims to have been polluted. His noise brings people out of the temple who discover Bakha on the steps and another level of pollution is added to the issue. Somehow, Sohini succeeds in proclaiming loudly that the priest had harassed her while she was cleaning his house and, at her objection, is now bringing a false counteraccusation against her. In the ensuing confusion, both brother and sister manage to escape from the scene.

4.3. He Begs for Bread

Bakha's anguish at his sister's humiliation takes some time to subside as his inherited sense of resignation begins to take over. But this minor peaceful interlude cannot be prolonged as he has to beg for bread in a street which is actually a part of his sister's cleaning beat. Here, as is the norm, he cannot climb the stairs to announce himself. Being an untouchable, he cannot venture under the roof and has to call out his request for bread while standing outside in the street below. It being yet early noon, the housewives are on the uppermost floors and cannot, or choose not to, hear his voice. Bakha's hunger and fatigue begins to take its toll and he sits down to rest on the damp ground near the descending filth-pipe of one of the houses. Here, he falls into a restless slumber charged with a vivid dream. This is the part of the novel where the writer has recourse to a typical and yet exquisitely beautiful touch of magical realism. We see a glimpse of the Bakha who would be – but never could be. The beauty and pathos of his dream is, in a way, a token of hope and defiance which he nurtures deep within his subconscious but can never dare to even consider in the harsh light of fully conscious thought. Each episode in this dream has a beautiful event spiked by a painful incident. One of these is worth recounting, a little girl moves through a street holding food in her hand when a carrion crow swoops down and snatches it from her. A good-looking silversmith looks kindly at her and places a burning ember on her uplifted hand—the child toddles off happily bearing her trophy home. The bitter irony of this image is soon to be seen in real life when Bakha is jarred awake at being roundly abused by the housewife for polluting her steps by sleeping on them. The image is completed when she throws the bread at him from the upper floor and Bakha has to retrieve it from the ground because he can't catch its spiraling descent through the air. Of course, he is hungry and so is his family. So, like the girl in the dream, he carries home the tainted trophy in a state of polluted satisfaction. More misery awaits him as his father is not only very hungry but also fantasizing about having a fancy meal of pickles, spinach, and maize-flour bread. The old man is infuriated at knowing that Bakha has brought back only two chapatis. The narrator interjects with another episode of fantasy when Lakha remembers the times when he used to enjoy the food handed out to the poor at wedding parties in the town. He also remembers the time when the regiment in which he was Jemadar came back from the war and the celebrations produced heaps of food beyond his wildest dreams.

4.4. Bakha Goes to a Wedding

After the emotional interlude with his father, Bakha remembers another outstanding emotional debt he owes to himself. This concerns his desire to attend the wedding of Ram Charan's sister. The author's handling of this cameo incident is delicate and sophisticated. Bakha and the girl grew up together and he felt attached to her by virtue of this childhood association. She had been an emaciated little child but had since grown into the lush youthfulness which, in its capriciousness, visits the daughters of the poor like the ill-fated

bloom of a short-lived spring. On the same note, the author crafts this little vignette as almost a love-story which loses its way outside the bride's house when her brother comes out and takes Bakha away to play hockey with their other playmates. Out in the open, Bakha gets separated from his friends and finds his real love and lover. There is a very long passage at this stage which begins: "*The hand of nature was stretching itself out towards him...the curve of his soul seemed to bend over the heights, straining to woo nature in solitude and silence*" (M. R. Anand, 1947). The lyrical description of the scenery and Bakha's reaction to it covers many pages and depicts Bakha being in complete harmony with Nature. However, the ravages visited upon Nature by class and power are the culminating note on this short idyllic scene when Bakha sees that "*The contrast of the tremulous line of foliage which lay near him and beyond, the green, green mango orchards, and the marshland which surrounded his home, was a stark one*" (M. R. Anand, 1947). This is one of the few instances where, as a study in contrast, the cognitive level of the narrative rises above the prevailing socio-cognitive context of the novel and then collapses into an obvious anticlimax.

4.5. Bakha's Entry into Golbagh

Wandering about aimlessly, Bakha falls in with a crowd going to a meeting to be addressed by Gandhi at Golbagh. This is where his abortive spiritual debut with the colonel seems to hold some promise as the word 'Mahatma' has reached his ears: "*The word 'Mahatma' was like a magical magnet which he, like all the other people about him, rushed blindly*" (M. R. Anand, 1947). The variety of the people making up the crowd is truly amazing in the description given by the author. Men, women, and children from all sections of society and from all over the country were there. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and even some Europeans are proceeding eagerly towards the venue of the meeting. Even the diversity of their clothing and appearance is described in vivid detail. The third person omniscient narrator also declares that these people are not even aware of their reason for going. It is just a blind rush to get there as quickly as possible. Bakha's entry into Golbagh is described with an extended metaphor which suggests the storming of a medieval castle—which, in a way, it is. Finding the road leading to the venue to long and crowded, Bakha decides to jump the wall of the Golbagh. In daring to challenge the obstacle which stands in his way, he commits the first act of defiance in the whole novel "*wholly to the satisfaction of the crowd behind him, which once it had got the lead, followed like sheep*" (M. R. Anand, 1947).

*The dawn is here, O traveller, arise;
Past is the night, and yet sleep seals thine eyes.
What thou wouldst do tomorrow do today,
Do thou the task that thou must face today.*
(M. R. Anand, 1947)

5. Conclusion

This -novel manifests Mulk Raj Anand's sketch of the division of being powerful and powerless on social class, economic and political grounds. "Bakha" could survive among the whites by bowing to the white supremacy otherwise "Bakha" had three ways to eradicate the clutches of slavery by following Gandhi's tenets, Christianity and, use of flush system to clean lavatories. "Bakha" used to fascinate Whites for their manners but discriminatory attitudes of his people crushed him psychologically and made him unarmed powerless before powerful Hindus. Adjectives used for Bakha constitute the demolishing of his self-consciousness and to target his self-esteem being an outcast. Anand ends the book on a hopeful and idealistic tone. Bakha has high aspirations for a future when his work is valued and he is no longer stigmatized as an outcast. Anand painstakingly reveals Bakha's character's motivations and feelings. There was a rising tide of worry about the figurative "untouchables" in all areas of life and civilizations. As noted by Premila Paul that this is Anand's effort to condense a societal metaphor that encompasses several tenets of Hindu thought. This dialectical essay emphasises the possibility of synthesis, or spiritual restoration. Mulk Raj Anand expresses his wish for a caste-free Indian society where the practise of untouchability is no longer permitted by having Bakha deal with it.

5.1. Findings

1. Novel ends with a touch of hope and faith.

2. Bakha has unwavering faith that the day will come when his line of work and his place in society would no longer be defined by the stigma of being untouchable.
3. The futility written on Bakha's face prevented him from exacting revenge, as in order to maintain their excesses from being investigated, the caste men had created walls of tradition. The true tragedy is that Bakha's strong impulse to seek revenge was thwarted by a feeling of futility that was palpable on his face.

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