

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This present thesis is intended on the novels of Mulk Raj Anand who has been one of the most prolific of the Pre Independence Indian novelists writing in English. Mulk Raj Anand began his novelistic career with *Untouchable* (1935) and revolutionised Indian novel in English by making an untouchable the protagonist in this novel. Anand dedicated his literary career in representing the exploited and the oppressed. He dared to do so against the current milieu of fiction writing where a well-recognised protagonist had been a marked phenomenon. Anand's love for the suffering masses of India was unprecedented and it was unique in the domain of fiction writing of his time. For Anand, literature was "a weapon for attacking social, political and economic institutions injurious to human freedom and equality of opportunity" (Berry, 1971, p. 27). This spoke of Anand's immense compassion for those impoverished human beings whose position in the social hierarchy was a debased one. Anand (1986) remarked that his love for man was based on his "faith in the creative imagination of man, in his capacity to transform himself" (p. 96). Looking at the poverty, misery and ignorance of the Indian masses, he commented:

I am conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and the other suppressed members of the society, to human dignity and self-awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair to which they have been condemned. (Anand, 1986, p. 137)

Anand considered novel writing as a self-imposed duty through which he could change the world. It is conspicuous that for Anand novel writing was neither a tool for earning

fame nor it was a channel for making money. Writing was a response to his inner call. At the very beginning of his writing career, he faced a serious set back when nineteen publishers refused to publish his first novel *U*. It was his belief in his decision of becoming a writer, which helped him to continue his pursuit as a writer. Anand believed that art is for life and it should always be integrated with the life of community. According to Anand (1986), the role of an artist was very important because: “modern commercial society had forced the writer into isolation, it was necessary for him to link with the disinherited, the weak and the dispossessed, as a human being and as an artist with special talents, to help transform society” (p. 122). He stated that the creative artist was suited to change the society. At the same time, he also opined that a creative artist should be sincere about himself because such an artist could:

Exalt men to the full heights of their dignity, to equip them with the necessary spirit to tackle the tasks before them. By giving vent to their inmost desires, by revealing to them the true nature of men and by informing their will, the writer thus helps one to take part in the drama of revolt from which emerges the new society (Anand, 1986, p. 135).

He regarded the creative artist as the prophet of the age rather than an entertainer. When Anand decided to become a creative writer, he understood that his primary duty would be to show the society the necessary ways to change. He believed that it was necessary to leave the decadent and then to strive for the valuable. He was certain that such an ideal must be followed but at the same time, he was also aware that it would be very difficult to achieve success by following it. He was aware that it would be a difficult task to remove all the dark prejudices and habits from the Indian society. His observation was that the basic requirement of a writer was freedom of speech and

expression. However, he knew that it was not possible under the British rule. This understanding led him to say: “We would have to interest ourselves to some extent in the struggle for liberation from British imperialism...it was the only way in which we could achieve the liberty to read and write at all freely” (Anand, 1986, p. 82).

Anand wanted to keep himself away from politics. However, it was not possible to do so for any Indian of the period because India was a mere colony of Britain, under the tyrannical rule of British government. The thirties was an explosive period, and his first three novels were based on explosive themes. In this regard, the remark of Iyenger (2001) is worth quoting:

The novels were ‘explosive’ only because truth is explosive at time, and the open expression of the truth can be an incitement and a rebellion. Probing the hidden nucleus of exploitation, Anand released chain reactions of terrific urgency. And for a time he came to be identified in literature with the same spirit that in politics, in the person of Jawaharlal Nehru had thundered in 1929 at the Lahore Congress: Long Live the Revolution. (p. 335)

Anand created an impulse in Indian English novel against injustice. This trend spread to other Indian languages too. He took the novel form to speak against injustice, because it was more human and it could produce different emotions and feelings. He experimented with the technique, content and language of novel writing to modify his novels. He considered novel writing easy in comparison to other genres of literature:

The form of creative writing, which is the novel came to me such more naturally than any other form, because through this I could live through the experiences of other people and realise what silent passions burst in their hearts, what

immediate and ultimate sorrows possess them, where they want to go and how they grapple, in their own ways, with their destinies. (Anand, 1986, pp. 197-198)

On the basis of his remark on the form of the novel, he can be regarded as the harbinger of social realism in Indian English fiction because he wrote about the contemporary problems of the poor and the exploited in India. Anand (1973) expressed his concept of realism in this way: “My realism is only superficially like that of the West-European. Deep underneath, all the characters search for their human destiny in the manner of the heroes of our forest books” (p.31). Therefore, Anand believed that novel could become the important medium through which the serious issues of life were discussed to alter the social order so that satisfying human relations could be established. He made novel writing a potent means of protest through which he tried to make the world a better place for the unfortunate and the underprivileged people of India. It is against this background that the present research study is undertaken, and attempts have been made in the various chapters of this thesis to discuss the elements of social discontents and the subdued spirit of rebellion in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand. This attempt, on the other hand, will also help to situate Anand as one of the most significant Indian English novelist in the history of Pre-Independence India.

### **A Brief Outline of Indian English Novels before Independence:**

In the Indian literary history, novel was a new entry during the middle part of the nineteenth century. Though this literary phenomenon was directly related to the beginning of English education in India, the earliest novel that was written in India was not in English. The first novel to be written in an Indian vernacular language was in

Bengali. It was *Alaler Gharer Dulal* written by Peary Chand Mitra in 1858. He was immediately followed by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya who wrote many well-known Bengali novels amongst which *Anandamath* and *Devi Chaudhurani* were most notables. Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya were two other important Bengali novelists of that time. Novelists who tried their hands in novel writing in English were Raj Lakshmi Devi, Toru Dutt, Kali Krishna Lahiri, H. Dutt and Khetrapal Chakravarti. Iyengar (2001) remarked that novels written by these novelists in English had only “antiquarian or historical interests” for the present day period (p. 315).

It was indeed very difficult for the early Indian novelists in English to decide upon the selection of subject, style and technique, and most importantly their audience. Novelists who decided to write in English were suffered from the doubt of getting a sizeable readership. Mukherjee (2014) remarked that for the early Indian novelist in English the “implicit target must have been the British reader, if not in England, at least the colonial administrator in India” (p. 94). Of course, various works in pre-novel forms written in English were extant in India at that time. In this regard, Kylas Chunder Dutt’s imaginary historical tract “A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours 1945” can be mentioned. It was published in 1835 in *Calcutta Literary Gazette*. The tract was about a patriotic Indian army, led by Bhoobun Mohan, who confronted the British army. At the initial stage, they got upper hand, but gradually the British army decimated their progress. The year of confrontation was almost prophetic as it was only two years later that India got the much-awaited independence (Mukherjee, 2014).

Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s “The Republic of Orissa: A Page from the Annals of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” was another imaginary historical tract published in the *Saturday Evening*

*Harakuru* in the year 1845 (Mukherjee, 2014). The narrative was set in 1916 when the British passed a Slavery Act. The rebellion was led by Bheekoo Barik—a leader of the Kingaris. The British was routed in the confrontation, and Orissa became an independent province. Shoshee Chunder Dutt's two other novels *The Young Zamindar* (1883) and *Shunkur* (1885) were delineation of difficult relationship between the ruler and the ruled i.e., the British and the Indians. K. K. Sinha, in his *Sanjogita* or *The Princess of Aryavarta* (1930), delineated the tragic defeat of Prithvi Raj Chauhan at the hands of Mohammad Ghori. This historical novel is a brilliant exposition of the gradual decline of Hindu rule in India. Sarath Kumar Ghosh wrote *Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (1909) where the English culture was shown victorious against the Indian culture.

These early novelists of Indian writing in English had a predilection for showing their familiarity with the best of the English writers like Shakespeare, Cooper, Coleridge, Byron, Scott etc. Whenever they found an occasion, they referred to them or quoted passages from their texts. The possible reason of such exhibition was to parade their felicity with the best-known western classics in the eyes of British readers. Along with such direct influences, indirect influence of English literature was also noticeable in the early Indian novels written in English as Mukherjee (2014) observed: “Echoes of canonical English novels are often perceptible in the texts” (p. 98).

The first novel in Indian writing in English was Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya's *Rajmohan's Wife*, which was published in 1864 in serialised mode in a weekly journal named *The Indian Field*. The novel was about Matangini and Rajmohan and their middle class life in a Bengal village. P. Gopal (2009) made a pertinent comment about it: “a tragic romance and a study of an unhappy marriage” (p. 29). Bankimchandra

evoked the trauma and passion of Matangini in lyrical prose, which was not readily comprehensible for the English readers because domestic life of the Indian village was much a covert affair at that time. Next to Chattopadhyaya, Lal Behari Day made an ethnographic attempt of documenting the nineteenth century village life in Bengal in his *Govinda Samanta*, or *The History of a Bengal Raiyat* (1874). The novel encompassed the difficulties of Govinda Samanta's life in between the years of 1820 to 1870. Mukherjee (2014) remarked that there was "no precedent for such a novel in Indian fiction" (p. 100). Krupabai Sathianadhan wrote two novels—*Kamala, A story of Hindu Life* (1894), and *Saguna, A Story of Native Christian life* which was published posthumously in 1895. Both the novels represented the progressive women of the period through the eponymous protagonists Kamala and Saguna. Sathianadhan was concerned with some of the important issues that emerged in later periods such as caste, gender and socio-cultural existence. The struggle of Kamala and Saguna for a dignified life in a period when life of woman was subjugated was truly noteworthy.

The works of other writers like Kylas Chunder, Lal Behari Day were not regarded novels proper. However, at the same time, it is also interesting to note that these writers went on writing novel like texts in a period when there was sparse readership as the number of English educated Indians were really few. In fact, Mukherjee (2014) remarked that readership was indeed a remarkable factor in Indian writing in English towards the end of nineteenth century.

The period that followed this earliest attempt of novel writing was one of turbulence. That was the period of the growth of Indian nationalism, which encompassed the social fabric of India. Almost all the novelists who tried their hands in writing novels in English contributed to this aspect directly or indirectly. While dealing with Indian

nationalism, they also took up some of the other important issues prevalent in the period such as poverty, caste and class, industrialisation, problems of the peasants etc. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, Ahmed Ali, K. A. Abbas, Bhabani Bhattacharya were some of the important novelists of this period. Apart from Narayan, they had the experience of living abroad, which contributed to their broad cosmopolitan outlook (Gandhi, 2014). As the purpose of this thesis is to examine the social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion through the study of Mulk Raj Anand's fictional works, here emphasis will be given on the consideration of novel written during the period before Independence.

The nationalistic fervour in Indian novels in English was mostly expressed through what may be called the "Gandhi" theme. Gandhi's immense contribution to Indian National movement against the British made him a living legend. Beginning with the Non-Co-Operation movement to the Civil disobedience movement leading to India's independence in 1947, Gandhi emerged as a pivotal figure around whom almost all the activities of India's nationalistic movement and freedom movements were moving. In this regard, Leela Gandhi's (2014) words are worth quoting: "Mahatma theme was announced within the nationalist agitation as a uniquely imaginative, carefully symbolic, and irresistibly fictionalisable way of doing politics" (p. 169). These novels were termed as "Mahatma novels", "Gandhian novels" or "novels with Mahatma-Magic", they served the purpose of exploring the contemporary colonial India with Gandhi or the philosophy of Gandhi as the dominating motif, as can be summed up in the following deliberations.

Kaveripatnam Siddhanatha Venkataramani's two novels *Murugan*, *The Tiller* (1927), and *Kandan the Patriot* (1932) were devoted to the themes of Gandhian economics and



politics. Ramu, one of the protagonists of *Murugan, The Tiller* did his best to acquire success through the implementation of village-based economy of Gandhi. Kedari, the other protagonist of the novel also associated himself with Ramu in this endeavour. *Kandan the Patriot* was published serially in a daily paper *Swarajya*. It projected a comprehensive picture of a mass movement in national perspective. In this regard, Iyengar (2001) remarked, “Personal and domestic problems mix and fuse with the larger political problem, and in the result a fascinating pattern of motive and character and action emerges in the novel” (p. 282). Both these novels were testament to the fact that past and present could be bridged for a beautiful future.

K. Nagarajan’s *Athawar House* (1939) was the delineation of a family chronicle with Gandhian national movement as its background. The portrayal of an inter-caste marriage between a Brahmin girl and a Smartha man was revolutionary at that time. Nagarajan’s second novel *Chronicle of Kedaram* (1961) had Gandhi as a character whose arrival was necessary to defuse the feud between the two sects of Iyengars—the tengalai and the vadakalai (Iyengar, 2001). This intervention was necessary to strengthen the Congress as a political entity. Nagarajan was successful in his attempt at portraying the most important event of the period—the vocational movement for liberation with other social issues of the time in convincing detail.

Similarly, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas’ *Inquilab* (1949) was a comprehensive portrayal of Gandhian revolutionary age starting from Rowlatt Bill and the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh. Along with Gandhi, many other notable leaders of the period were portrayed in the novel. The events of the novel were threaded with the protagonist Anwar who was only eight years old when the action of the novel began. Though an illegitimate son of a Hindu businessman, Anwar was brought up in the household of a Muslim. After his

expulsion from the university and subsequent disappointment in love, Anwar participated in the political action of the period and travelled extensively across the country looking at the enthusiasm of people for liberation. The novel ended with the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

Bhabani Bhattacharya, another important novelist of the period, realistically portrayed the tragedy and trauma of 1942-43 famine in Bengal as well as the impact of Quit India Movement in *So Many Hungers* (1947). The novelist poignantly painted the sufferings of men, women and children due to famine in Bengal. However, the hoarders and black marketeers amassed immense wealth out of such a tragedy. Amidst cruelty and corruption, two characters Kajol and Rahoul could show courage and conviction to live a life of dignity and respect. Rahoul's grandfather Devesh Basu was addressed as 'Devta' in the novel who used to practise the tenets of truth, love and non-violence— he was wholeheartedly a Gandhian character. Gandhi was not a character in the novel but Gandhi's presence was felt in the novel through the character of Devesh Basu (Gupta, 1999).

Raja Rao, one of the triumvirates of the novelists of the period along with R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, is best known for his novel *Kanthapura* (1938). In the 'forward' to this novel which is generally acknowledged as the manifesto of Indian writing in English, Raja Rao stressed the importance of the "systematic indigenisation of English" (Gandhi, 2014, p.180). Indianisation could be done by incorporating epic narrative techniques prevalent in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In this novel, the activities of Indian national movement under the leadership of Gandhi became a fascinating subject. The protagonist of the novel Moorthy skilfully introduced Gandhi to his village Kanthapura through the organisation of Harikatha. Gandhi was elevated to

the stature of an epic hero, and the village women took part in non-violent Satyagraha following his teachings. The women of Kanthapura were guided by Ratna, a young widow who had keen interest in India's movement for liberation led by Gandhi. Another important aspect of the novel was its presentation of the social fabric of Kanthapura, which was based on caste as the village quarters were segregated on the basis of caste, and appropriate names Brahmin quarter, Sudra quarter, Potters quarter, Pariah quarter etc. were also given to them. In *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao delineated a truthful account of a village community with all its details ranging from participation in Indian freedom movement to village economy, polity and class structure.

R. K. Narayan began his illustrious literary journey with *Swami and Friends*- a novel with a child protagonist in the famously fictitious district town of Malgudi. Before Independence, he wrote three other novels *Bachelor of Arts* (1963), *The Dark Room* (1938), and *The English Teacher* (1945) where he presented the society of Malgudi from the perspective of a detached observer. Iyengar (2001) remarked that Narayan's art "resolved limitation and conscientious exploration: he is content, like Jane Austen, with his little bit of ivory" (p. 360). Narayan was aware of the political nature of the period due to the nationalist agitation, but he avoid touching some of the major events of the period like struggle for independence, exploitation and oppression of the colonial Government, famines, partition etc. Only in *Waiting for Mahatma* published after Independence in 1955, Narayan took the Indian Freedom Movement as the background. Narayan's upbringing, his dependence on the support of British readers and the patronage of British publishers for his writing career might be the reasons for his ambivalent attitude towards the Indian National Movement against the British (Mishra, 2014). However, in *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955), Narayan occasionally strayed away

from the secure setting of Malgudi and engaged both the central characters- Sriram and Bharati in politics. Bharati and Sriram had devotion towards Gandhi, and this served as the background to their romance. Sriram participated in the Quit India Movement, but later, he drifted himself away from the Gandhian non-violence to extremism for which he was imprisoned. In this case, Gandhi as a national leader was everyone's inspiration but his principles and ideologies were not imbibed actively. Mishra (2014) remarked:

Gandhi alone emerges as the active self-aware Indian in the novel, struggling and failing to awaken an intellectually and emotionally torpid colonial society, a society made up overwhelmingly of people who have surrendered all individual and conscious choice, and are led instead by decayed custom and the herd impulse, in whose dull marginal lives Gandhi comes as yet another kind of periodic distraction (p. 203).

Other novels of Narayan—*Mr. Sampath* (1948), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-eater of Malgudi* (1961) and *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) were portrayal of an exotic world located in Malgudi (Iyengar, 2001). Though contemporary to Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan took a different path and went on portraying the Indian society with all its idiosyncrasies in the exotic and fabulous Malgudi setting.

Nearly all the novels by Mulk Raj Anand are testament to his uncompromising love for the lowest dregs of the society. Anand began his novel writing with *U* (1935). Then, he wrote two novels one after another about the sufferings of the coolies in *Coolie* (1936) and in *TLAB* (1937). *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1941) and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) are the poignant tales of the condition of the Indian peasants with Lal Singh as the protagonist of all these three novels. Anand's last novel

before the Independence was *TBH* (1945). After Independence also, Anand continued writing fiction one after another. *Seven Summers* (1951), *The Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953), *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960), *The Road* (1963), *The Death of a Hero* (1964), *Morning Face* (1970), and *Confession of a Lover* (1976) were the novels that he wrote after the Independence.

Along with his love for the exploited compatriots, Anand portrayed burning social issues of his time through his novels. Like Raja Rao, Anand portrayed the character of Gandhi in two of his early novels—in *U* and in *TSATS*. In both the novels, Gandhi was portrayed as one of the most influential leaders of India. In *TSATS*, there was even a discussion between Gandhi and the protagonist Lal Singh in which the latter was trying to get the support of Gandhi for the sake of the landless peasants and the tenants of Rajgarh. Anand's portrayal of Gandhi and Nehru in this novel could be termed as realistic.

The rise of Indian National Movement under the leadership of M. K. Gandhi was historically a very important occurrence as it brought a cultural unity to the Indian society. Such a unity was instrumental in raising the feelings of patriotism among the Indian people, which helped the proliferation of novel during that period. It is very important to note that Iyengar considered “the period between 1920-1947 as the era of the Gandhian Revolution and the modern heroic age” (as cited in Asnani, 1985, p.3). Of course, the novels of this period, as has been discussed above, were direct renderings of the social, political, economical and cultural developments of the time. Along with the Indian National Movement, these themes were also adequately dealt with by the novelists of the period. Mulk Raj Anand, on whose novels this research is intended, shall be discussed next. For this, at the beginning, various influences on Mulk Raj

Anand will be looked at and will also be analysed. Such an attempt will help to the better understanding of Anand as a novelist of the marginalised people of Pre-independence India.

### **Formative Influences on Mulk Raj Anand:**

Social awakening and political turmoil marked the formative years of Anand. In terms of political activity, Anand's hometown Amritsar was the centre of it. Due to deportation of leaders like Ajit Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai, there was Kisan Agitation in Punjab in 1907. During the First World War (1914-18), Ghadar party was formed by the Punjabis of United States of America to fight against the British. Then, after World War I, there occurred the Agitation against the Rowlett Act under the leadership of Gandhiji. In connection with this Agitation, on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1919, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place, and hundreds of people lost their lives and thousands were wounded. Then, there began the Civil Disobedience Movement (1920-22). Against the Government control of Gurudwaras, there was a Sikh Political Agitation (1920-25) by the name of Akali Morcha in Amritsar. At the same time, a socio-religious organisation Arya Samaj inspired young people to take part in reformatory works.

Young Anand was aware of the political climate of India of his time. In 1919, when the martial law was imposed in Amritsar, Anand came out to the streets along with others to show the dissent. He was arrested for violating the curfew, and by the order of the police superintendent, he was punished with seven stripes on the back. This incident created deep impression on his young mind regarding the servitude of the Indian masses. Then he also took part in Gurudwara Reform Movement when he was studying in Khalsa College and he was imprisoned for this. His father was from the coppersmith

community who received western education and enrolled himself as a clerk in British army. Like many other educated Hindus of the time, his father was also one of the followers of Arya Samaj. According to Anand (1979), his father “considered the Arya Samaj to be the respectable outer cover for their pecuniary interests and happiness” (p. 57). However, when there was a message from the Army headquarters asking all the army personnel to sever the ties with Arya Samaj, Anand’s father obeyed the order without making much delay. This was an incident, which influenced Anand very much.

Anand understood that his father was devoid of any moral scruples and he was practising only hypocrisy and opportunism. In this regard, he stated about his impression of his father, “seemed to abide by no faith except his position in the British-Indian regiment, his future prospects as a loyal servant of the Sarkar, to ensure his pension on retirement and good prospects in service of the British for all his sons, and some form of recognition for his loyalty” (Anand, 1979, p. 57).

He was bewildered because of the apparent discrepancy between precept and practice of his father, which forced him to remark: “I remember him reading the *Gita*, but I don’t remember him practising any of the ideas laid down in this prayer book” (Anand, 1986, p. 32). The money mindedness of his father was also a matter of profound dislike for him for which he expressed that his father was: “paying lip service to the tenets of Hinduism while he sought to amass a fortune through efficient service, as well as through various sidelines in money-lending, buying and selling houses, accepting mortgages of property and bribes” (Anand, 1986, p. 33). Anand became conscious of his sanity and self-respect because of he disliked his father’s meanness, greediness, duplicity, lack of moral scruple and also his servility towards the British. All such habits and ideals were intolerable for Anand and so he rejected the values cherished by

his father. Thus, he was forced to take one final decision regarding his future due to the differences with his father. So, he was forced to state:

After a long tussle with my father during which I learnt to hate all the compromises which he had accepted, all his ideas of flourishing in the world, of obeying the Government, of my marrying a girl of his choice and settling down like a respectable person....after realizing that I should die or disintegrate if I could not satisfy my curiosity for truth I left India at last in the autumn of 1925. (Anand, 1986, pp. 44-45)

Anand's mother was different from his father. When Anand was in jail for breaking curfew in 1919, his mother went to the jail for seeking his release. But his father reacted in a different manner. Anand referred to the reaction of his father: "I will have to turn him out of the house and disown him! I will not allow a rebel in my house" (Anand, 1976, p.170). Anand mentioned another incident of his student life when he was studying in Khalsa College:

The suppression with bloody violence of a students' strike in Khalsa College by the police when we demanded purification of the holy shrines through a movement led by Professor Teja Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh, brought conflicts between my accepting father and my rebel mother. (Anand,1977, p. 58)

Anand's father could not accept his behaviour but his mother went to receive him when he was released. Anand stated that she embraced him with these encouraging words, "You have proved a worthy grandson of your grandfather-a true Sikh" (Anand, 1976, p. 275).



In this way, Anand grew into manhood in a very difficult situation because of the confluence of two opposing forces i.e., the influence of his father and mother. He got the spirit of rebellion and patriotism from his mother. However, his father attempted to instil into his mind the respect for authority and loyalty to the British.

His maternal grandfather Nihal Singh was a Sikh peasant who fought for the Khalsa army against the British in various Sikh wars. He was an inhabitant of Daska village of Sialkot district. Whenever young Anand went to the household of Nihal Singh, he used to listen to the glory of Khalsa Raj from his grandfather. Anand's grandfather told him that the British army defeated the Sikh soldiers because of the treachery of a few Khalsa Generals. He inspired Anand to continue his fight against the foreign rulers. In his autobiographical novel *Seven Summers* one gets to read about what Anand's grandfather told him about it:

I know your mother is a rebel like me, for I filled her with hatred for the ferungis, who bought us off through the traitors rather than beat us into submission....I have fought for the Khalsa, and I hope when you grow up you will be like me and your mother, rebels against the ferungis. You must not become their servants like your father. (Anand, 1951, p. 214)

Anand's adopted uncle Dev Dutt also influenced him very much. He was a Sanskrit scholar and prominent leader of Arya Samaj. Through him, Anand became aware of the blind superstition and meaningless rituals practised by the coppersmith community. Those practises were intolerable for Anand. The Urdu poet Mohammad Iqbal's great poem *Asrar-i-Khudi or The Secrets of the Self* (1915) attracted him so much that he even went to Lahore to meet Iqbal. Iqbal supported him when he told his sense of

despair and disgust due to the atmosphere of slavery and falsehood in India. Regarding the influence of *Asrar-i- Khudi* on him, he remarked:

If I can recall any one book which may have meant to me more than others, I would like to say that *Asrar-i-Khudi* (which I always kept in my bag wherever I went for years), is a treasure into which I have dug deep. In fact, all through my philosophical studies, specially into the sceptical thought of David Hume and Bertrand Russell, and the scientists Heisenberg, Einstein and Schrödinger, I returned to the *Asrar* to integrate myself. (Anand, 1978, p. 115)

The philosophy of Iqbal was a new concept in which a man could become a perfect human being with the help of his self-effort. It was not necessary to have God's will in the growth of man. Such a confident man could create a new world by imposing his will, and his presence in the contemporary decadent India. Such a philosophy was revolutionary in the social context. Iqbal's influence made Anand confident to face the world.

Guru Nanak's fight against inequality and injustice also shaped Anand's moral understanding. He stated the influence of Guru Nanak on his life in this way:

Whenever I saw cruelty, I thought of Baba Nanak, looking tenderly at men and women of all faiths. Inside me, without telling anyone, I decided to look at everything with fresh eyes, without the bias of all the dasturs and the ritual of Brahmins and the injunctions of the Maulvis. (Anand, 1977, p. 57)

Inspired by the preaching of Guru Nanak, Anand decided to fight against the cruelty prevalent in India of his time. It was Guru Nanak's attempt of finding truth, which

inspired him to take the decision of going to England in search of his identity at the age of twenty. In India, at that time, there were many restrictions on individual sensibility and so it was not possible for Anand to get the desired identity he was searching for. Therefore, he felt the need to search for the truth because one “must be freed from social restraint if it were to be truly free” (Cawasjee, 1977, p. 10).

In 1925, Anand went to London and enrolled himself in University College. There he became one of the members of ‘Bloomsbury group’. Other prominent members of the group were E. M. Forster, T. S. Eliot, John Strachey, Leonard and Virginia Woolf etc. He was hopeful of getting support from these writers in his anti-colonial liberal values. However, he was shocked to learn that an eminent writer and literary critic T. S. Eliot regarded freedom movement leader M. K. Gandhi an “anarchist”. He also referred to other writers in this regard: “Spender told me, in Orwell’s presence, that he was not in favour of India’s freedom” (Anand, 1973, p. 83). He found that many English writers of the period were not in favour of the freedom of India from the British rule. In this regard, Anand remarked:

Some intellectuals asserted that it was a good thing for Indians to remain under British rule, as the executive business of Government being relegated to others, the natives could occupy themselves more usefully in cultivating their ancient genius in the arts and the humanities. (Anand, 1986, pp. 81-82)

Such attitude on the part of British intellectuals forced him to look at them critically as they did not have the moral courage to support India’s liberation. Therefore, he considered it his duty to take the cudgel on himself, and began his mission through writing. He opined that in such a time of hopelessness, E.M.Forster’s *A Passage to*

*India* (1924) and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) were the two books, which influenced him very much. In 1927, he went to Ireland and got immensely influenced by W. B. Yeats after meeting him. With utmost attention, he noticed Yeats' adequate representation of the village life of Irish common people in his writing. It was as if he received the much-needed guidance for deciding his goal.

Amongst the European thinkers John Locke, T E Hume and Bertrand Russell were the prominent literary personalities who might have influenced Anand. They were great thinkers with liberal as well as sceptical values. Anand's admiration for Locke was due to his opposition to the authority of the king, his emphasis on the value of tolerance, rights of equitable share for the labourers, and his plea for education for all. Then in Hume, Anand found a rebel because he did not give any privilege to religion, but emphasised on the dignity of individual. However, the impact of Russell was more visible on Anand because of his personal contact with this great thinker. Russell's questioning of authority influenced him. He shared Russell's rationalism and his faith on man's ability to bring change. He considered that Russell's influence and friendship moulded his thinking.

Then, it was the General strike of England, in 1926, which had a great impact on Anand. He was shocked to observe that in England like in India, class-consciousness was very much intense. During the strike, upper class people were against the workers who were fighting for better wages. He supported the strike, and for this, he had to face physical assault. He realised that in the matters of exploiting the poor, the situations in England and India were alike. His observation in this regard was like this: "the problem of India seemed to me to be connected with the problem which I had seen fought out with such bitterness in England before my eyes" (Anand, 1986, p.62). However, the

failure of the general strike was a baffling incident for him. He discussed with his Marxist friends about the possibilities of communism in eradicating the social problems. In 1932, he got the opportunity to read the writings of Karl Marx on India, and he was very much influenced by it. Regarding his experience of reading Marx, Anand remarked:

By one of those coincidences, which happen to those who are habituated to discursive reading, a series of letters on India- written by Marx to the New York Herald Tribune in 1853 fell into my hands at this time...And a whole new world was opened to me. All the threads of my past reading, which had got tied up into knots, seemed suddenly to straighten out, and I began to see not only the history of India but the whole history of human society in some sort of interconnection. (Anand, 1986, p. 105)

After his perusal of *Communist Manifesto* (1848), he began to take part in the discussion of Marxism with the famous trade unionist and pamphleteer Allen Hall. Anand said that after this, he began to look at the world with different perspectives. He was charged as a communist propagandist, which pained him much, and to clarify such a charge he said that he got the idea of socialism from Tolstoy, Ruskin and Mahatma Gandhi. Anand (1986) regarded himself as a humanist, and also believed in Protagoras' utterance: "Man is measure of all things" (p. 140). Therefore, he (1986) stated, "I accepted Marxism as a fairly good historical yardstick but considered humanism, the view of the whole man, as the more comprehensive ideology" (p. 185). Inspired by Marx's writing, he published his *Letters on India* (1942). The ruthless exploitation of British government on the Indian masses was the subject matter of this book.

In 1927, when he visited India, he spent a few months in Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. Anand read Gandhi's banned book *Hind Swaraj* (1909) when he was a school student. From that time onwards, he was influenced by Gandhi. While living in his Ashram, Anand had a consultation with Gandhi regarding the first draft of his novel *U*. Gandhi did not consider it favourably, because according to him, the draft carried the touch of 'Bloomsbury' spirit in it. Therefore, Anand revised the draft of *U*. Later, he said that Gandhi made an indelible impression on him. He said:

In retrospect, I feel that, under the tutelage of the Mahatma, who did not pretend to be an artist, I was able to exorcise all those self-conscious literary elements, which I had woven into the narrative in anticipation of what the critics might approve. (Anand, 1986, p. 180)

In 1938, Anand extensively travelled across India. He spent a few months with communist leader Kanwar Brajesh Singh of Kalakankar, and helped him in organising Kisan Sabhas. Then, he returned to London. He planned to return to India soon, but in the mean time, World War II started. Therefore, he decided to contribute his share of participation in India's freedom struggle while living in London. There he collaborated with V. K. Krishna Menon, the great Indian nationalist, diplomat, and politician, in raising the awareness of the Englishmen and the Indians living in England. Anand (1986) commented in this regard: "I met V. K. Krishna Menon, a follower of Mrs Besant, and began to work within his office in the Strand" (p. 66). Cowasjee (1977) commented significantly about this relationship: "the two did more to influence British public opinion in India's favour than any other Indian residing in Britain" (p. 21). While doing so, he was also aware that the British were not the only entity to exploit the poor Indian masses. Anand envisioned a huge panorama of native exploitative

forces in India and he decided to fight against them, so that he could liberate the exploited. In Anand's words:

My hatred of Imperialism was bound up also with my disgust for the cruelty and hypocrisy of Indian feudal life, with its castes, creeds, dead habits and customs, and its restrictive religious rites and practices. I was one of many groping young men of my generation who had... set our hearts on our liberation and those of other oppressed people, whoever they were, wherever they were and whatever shape, size and colour. (Anand, 1986, pp. 86-87)

Anand believed that in the Indian society there were many social evils due to the blind faith of the Indian masses on God and god-men. Anand lost his faith in God when he was a child. His playmate and cousin Kaushalya's death came at the tender age of nine. Anand's mother explained to him that Kaushalya died because her parents were evil and sinful. Anand could not accept such an inhuman explanation as he considered it an injustice to punish one for the crime or sin of another. Anand remarked:

I revolted against the very idea that a cruel God could punish children for the alleged bad deeds of their parents. And I wrote a letter to the Almighty protesting against His Godship's unjust misuse of His power. If He was anywhere about, I said, He should answer my charges. And if He was nowhere in sight, then He did not exist at all and His name was just a scarecrow to frighten children with. Needless to say, no answer came. So I decided at this stage, that there was no such person as God and people had just made up a lie to appease their bad conscience. (Anand, 1979, p. 58)

Anand understood that religion would be inadequate when it came to solve the real problems of mankind. The ignorant Indian masses believed in Karma for their misfortunes. He was aware that this belief in Karma ultimately made the Indian masses fatalist. Therefore, it was necessary to change this attitude. He said that the concept of Maya, Rebirth etc. made men fatalist and led to believe in a predestined lot leading to acceptance of his miserable state. His belief was that man could ameliorate his life without any divine intervention. Anand (1986) remarked: “man who docilely accepted his position within the framework of traditional Hindu caste society, however, low and humiliating that position, was a good citizen, whereas those who consciously questioned tradition and suffered unwillingly were moral lepers” (pp.69-70). Even the concept of Heaven and Hell was negated by Anand and he stated: “there are not two worlds, heaven above and the earth below. There is no ‘spiritual’ world separate from the ‘material’ world. The soul is body and the body is soul” (Anand, 1977, p.16). But, at the same time, he readily accepted Buddha’s doctrine of love and empathy, and Guru Nanak’s honest living messages.

As a creative artist, Anand wanted to liberate the Indians from religious orthodoxy, social restraint and from the servility towards the British. He also decided to tell the fear-gripped marginalised people of India about the difficult possibility of getting freedom and happiness. He identified himself with the socially disadvantaged and the downtrodden. For centuries, they were exploited and so they lost the courage to ask the wages of their services. He got real joy out of discovering a new way of life for the disadvantaged and downtrodden.

Due to different types of oppression in the society—economic, political, social, cultural and religious etc. individual growth of man often suffered, and individual could not



have a life of self-fulfilment and self-respect. He wanted to raise the consciousness of men by improving their relations amongst them. Anand (1973) remarked, “My aim is not negative, merely to shock, but to stimulate consciousness at all levels” (p. 116).

Then, in the thirties, Anand became a founder member of All India Progressive Writers’ Association. The Association was formally formed in the month of April 1936 in Lucknow. The initial sittings for the formation of the association were held in Bloomsbury. In the fortnightly meetings held in London, lectures were delivered along with activities like reading of stories, essays and poems. Stalwarts of Indian literature—Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, and Munshi Prem Chand blessed the AIPWA’s foundation conference in Lucknow. Prem Chand was the President of the foundation conference of AIPWA. In his presidential address, Prem Chand remarked that the purpose of language was to mould thoughts and emotions and then to endow them with appropriate direction. As their purpose had already been served, the main purpose of the conference was to find out meaning of things for which language had been constructed (Namboodiripad, n.d.). In the same speech, Prem Chand also said that there was a rapid transformation of the literary taste of Indian people. At the same time, literature of the period was also going through transformation. Prem Chand stated in his address:

It is coming more and more in grips with the realities of life; it interests itself with society or man as a social unit. It is not satisfied now with the singing of frustrated love, or with writing to satisfy only our sense of wonder; it concerns itself with the problems of our life and such themes as have a social value. The literature which does not arouse in us a critical spirit, or satisfy our spiritual needs, which is not ‘force-giving’ and dynamic, which does not awaken our sense of beauty, which does not make us face the grim realities of life in a spirit

of determination, has no use for us today. It cannot even be termed as literature (as cited in Namboodiripad, 1986).

Prem Chand also pointed out towards a new task of literature where the writer's sense of beauty was its instrument. When a writer could develop this sense of beauty within himself his writing would be more effective. Prem Chand said that such a writer would not be able to tolerate ugliness and inhumanity. He remarked:

He becomes the standard bearer of humanity, of moral uprightness, of nobility. It becomes his duty to help all those who are downtrodden, oppressed and exploited-individuals or groups-and to advocate their cause.... He knows that the more realistic his story is, the more full of expression and movement his picture, the more intimate his observation of human nature, psychology, the greater the effect he will produce. (as cited in Namboodiripad, 1986)

Commenting on the presidential address of Prem Chand to the inaugural session of AIPWA, Namboodiripad (1986) stated that his speech was a remarkable piece of literary criticism, which was the amalgamation of "the best in the Indian and world culture, Indian patriotism with international humanism". AIPWA did not accept the fashionable trend of the period that creative writer should put himself away from politics. It was acknowledged that every creative writer must be concerned with the happiness around him. The manifesto of AIPWA was drafted in London by Mulk Raj Anand and Sajjad Zaheer. In the manifesto, it was clearly stated, "the new literature of India must deal with the basic problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness and political subjection. All that drags us down to passivity, inaction and un-reason, we reject as reactionary" ("1<sup>st</sup> Manifesto...", n.d.).

It was very natural that Mulk Raj Anand, as a founder member of AIPWA, had similar view regarding the duty of the literary artists. So, Anand (1973) decided:

...to be with the people, with the rabble, who had done all the work, built the monuments but remained anonymous...No writer in India before me, except Prem Chand, had loved the people, even for their failures. So, at the risk of being called a propagandist, I was determined to devote myself to them. (p. 52)

According to him, the writer had to fulfil the dual duty of the citizen and the artist. Anand opined that the artist needed to link himself with the lowest strata of the society (1986). Then, he should act as an interpreter and should communicate his vision to his fellow beings. Such an act on the part of the writer was necessary to forge bonds of sympathy between one man and another. At the same time, the writer could also become the spokesman of man's inner desire. He could reveal man's true nature and will. When the writer could perform all these tasks, he would be able to help man to raise their voices against the atrocities and exploitation. In this way, man could become self-sufficient and would be guided by his conscience to such an extent that he would not surrender to a tyrant. Like Anand, there were other writers in English such as Ahmed Ali and Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, in Urdu Sardar Jafri, Krishan Chander and Sajjad Zaheer, in Punjabi Sant Singh Sekhon and Jaswant Singh Kanwar and in Hindi Yash Pal. They went on writing like Anand. They were also members of AIPWA.

It is against this background that Mulk Raj Anand became a novelist with high ideals of liberating the downtrodden. In this regard, Cowasjee (1977) remarked, "Anand took up this fight for liberation in his novels in the early thirties, and it is continuing to this day in his work" (p.12). Therefore, it was quite natural on the part of Anand to show his

non-compromising attitude towards the social evils like poverty and exploitation of the poor through his novels.

### **Review of Relevant Literature on Mulk Raj Anand:**

While carrying out this research, the following related works were taken into account. These works helped this researcher to gain a comprehensive idea on the fictional works of Mulk Raj Anand, besides providing new ways of conducting research on the works of Anand.

In her book *Mulk Raj Anand: The Man and the Novelist* (1971), Margaret Berry tried to prove that Anand was a propagandist. In her attempt to prove this, she disregarded the opinions of some important critics of the period like V. S. Pritchett, C. D. Lewis, Stephen Spender, R. A. Scott-James, Walter Allen, Bonamy Dobree, E. M. Forster etc. She considered Munoo, the central character of *Coolie*, as imperceptive, static and dull. According to Berry, such a portrayal only facilitated the Marxist pattern of showing the evils of the rich and wealthy. In her book, Berry tried to show that Marxist influence on Anand was radical which also changed Anand's outlook on literature.

In the book *Mulk Raj Anand* (1972), K. N. Sinha stated that the dearth of critical material on Anand prompted him to write on Anand. According to him, the main driving force behind Anand's novels was his mellow and creative humanism. He stated that Anand's novels were "novels of responsibility, of involvement, of creative tension and its resolution, of profound moral beauty" (Sinha, 1972, p.13). Along with the Appendix, there were ten chapters in the book. The first chapter was devoted to the discussion of Anand as a man and the influences on him. Then in the following five chapters, Sinha discussed the novels of Anand. In chapter seven, he discussed the short

stories of Anand. Imagery and art of characterisation in the novels of Anand were discussed in chapter eight. A detailed discussion on Anand's use of English language was done in chapter nine. In the concluding chapter, Sinha (1972) made a fair evaluation of Anand and found him "the foremost and most significant novelist" (Sinha, 1972, p. 135).

In the book *Mulk Raj Anand* (1973), M. K. Naik acknowledged Anand as a committed writer devoted to the philosophy of humanism. According to Naik, as a creative writer Anand was able to maintain a harmonious balance between his ideas and his novelistic art. The book contained ten chapters, which were devoted to discuss most of his novels, shorter fiction, his technique of novel writing and artistic achievements. Naik remarked that amongst all the novels of Anand, his first novel *U* was the best. The Village trilogy with Lal Singh as the protagonist was the most ambitious fictional attempt of Anand. Naik's book on Anand is a special attempt because of the simplicity and clarity of his expression.

As the title of the book suggested, in *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective* (1974), G.S. Balarama Gupta examined the humanist element in Mulk Raj Anand's novels and short stories. He wanted to show that in his novels there was a clear fusion of Anand the novelist and Anand the humanist. He discussed extensively about Anand's humanism and finds out that it was Anand's unparalleled love for man, which led him to become a humanist. Therefore, all kinds of atrocities, exploitation, and oppression were repugnant to him. In this connection, Gupta found out as many as sixteen tenets of humanism observed in Anand. In his concluding chapter of this book, Gupta commented that Anand had a mission for fighting against falsity, hypocrisy, insensitivity and cruelty. Anand's novels were only a part of this

mission. This critical evaluation of Anand as a humanist on the basis of his novels and short stories is a commendable achievement.

Saros Cowasjee, in the book on Anand, entitled *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fictions of Mulk Raj Anand* (1977), unfolded Anand's life and the social environment in which he wrote. Cowasjee probed deep into Anand's life and scrutinised the influence of various social, political, cultural, aesthetic and traditional values on him. He examined all the major fictions written by Anand upto 1976. Cowasjee's evaluation of Anand on the basis of his artistic abilities as a novelist and his achievements is lively and sympathetic. According to Cowasjee, Anand had necessary insight and sensitivity of mind to look into his characters, which make him a formidable Indian English novelist. Cowasjee made a close textual analysis of his novels, which is enlightening. The bibliography included in the book is comprehensive and helpful.

In her book *Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study* (1983), Premila Paul identified several themes of Anand—caste system, class system, religion, education and the problems of woman. She discussed all these themes in detail. While talking about the caste system, Paul remarked that *U* was a significant novel because it referred to colonial experience, and at the same time concerned with the pitiable condition of the untouchables. Talking about religion as portrayed in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, she referred to his portrayal of evil in organised religion. Paul opined that Mulk Raj Anand had immense faith in the goodness of man because he was a humanist. Her book is illuminating and thought provoking.

Marlene Fisher in her book *The Wisdom of the Heart: A Study of the Works of Mulk Raj Anand* (1985) peeped at the life of Anand comprehensively. Anand's relationship with

the Bloomsbury group, with two of the foremost leaders of Indian national movement Gandhi and Nehru and how he was involved with All-India progressive Writers' Association—all these were closely looked at by Fisher. She considered Anand's commitment to fight against the exploitation of the poor and underprivileged as exposition to his humanism. In this book, Fisher incorporated many personal anecdotes and reminiscences of Anand. It is observed that the scholarly criticism of Fisher revealed Anand the novelist and the man comprehensively.

P. K. Rajan in his study *Mulk Raj Anand: A Revaluation* (1994) looked at humanism of Anand. His standpoint was that in the novels of Anand, duality was observed in his humanistic treatment the characters. In the first chapter, Rajan discussed the concept of ambivalent humanism. Then in the next chapter, he proceeded to discuss *U* and *The Road* in the light of ambivalence. In case of *U*, such ambivalence increased the inner tension, while in *The Road* it failed to bring unity to the narrative. In *Coolie*, Anand's duality enhanced the internal harmony but in *TLAB*, same duality negatively affected the fusion of the theme and the form. *TV*, *ATBW*, *TSATS*, *TBH*—these novels, according to Rajan, were strengthened by Anand's ambivalent humanism. Rajan's book offered new avenues to look at Anand's humanism, which had been focus of attention in most of the earlier novels.

In his book *The Insulted and the Injured: Untouchables, Coolies and Peasants in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (1997), Shaileshwar Sati Prasad probed deep into Anand's humanism and regarded it as the “result of an East-west encounter” (p.22). According to him, Anand used his humanism as a weapon. In his study, Prasad found that *C*, *TLAB* and *TBH* were interlinked. In *C*, the destruction of labour is portrayed whereas in *TBH* the novelist tries to offer a solution to the problems of labour. Similarly, in *TLAB*, the

readers were made aware of about the major shortcoming in the tea gardens—lack of labour organisation. Talking about the Lal Singh trilogy, Prasad remarked that use of history in the Trilogy was very much discernible in characterisation and in social, political and economic condition of the time. Lal Singh trilogy received a detailed critical evaluation from the writer. Prasad concluded his book by referring to Anand's optimistic vision of the bright future for the peasants.

Though Anand refused it repeatedly that he was a Marxist, in his book *Mulk Raj Anand: The Novels of Commitment* (2000), S. A. Khan attempted to find out Anand's Marxist orientation in his novels. He approved of Anand's belief in "an ambrosial future for mankind" (Khan, 2000, p.17). By referring to Anand, he stated that Anand was influenced by great vernacular writers like Prem Chand, Yashpal and Tagore. He also said that like Faulkner's characters, Anand's protagonists were also alienated from the society as well as from their self. Of course, such a comment is contentious. Khan's (2000) critique of Anand's characters is pertinent when he remarked that they basically struggle for their survival (p. 139). However, it is hard to accept Khan's statement that after the Independence, Anand's ideological commitments have lost the relevance.

C. J. George's book *Mulk Raj Anand: His Art and Concerns* (2000) was a reproduction of his doctoral thesis "The Artist as a Social Critic: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Major Novels". In this book, George analysed all the major novels of Anand in a comprehensive manner. His analysis of Anand's novel is steady and critical which provides new insights and fresh interpretations. He considered Anand to be a social critic who could understand the root cause of all the evils in the society. Though fair in his critique of Anand, he commented that the last volume of Lal Singh trilogy *TSATS* was inferior to the preceding two. George reasoned that in this novel, Anand was unable



to distance himself from his characters. In his concluding remark, he said that in the strict sense Anand was not a propagandist.

*The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Critical Study* (2000) edited by M.K. Bhatnagar and M. Rajeshwar, is an anthology of critical essays on various aspects of Mulk Raj Anand's novels and his style. The essays in the anthology offered fresh perspectives to the various novels of Anand. The essay devoted to the literary style of Anand is a comprehensive discussion on the different styles adopted by Anand in his novels. 'An Interview with Mulk Raj Anand' is a very helpful one in the understanding of Anand's concept of humanism of Gandhi.

T.M.J. Indra Mohan's anthology *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (2005) comprises of twelve insightful essays written on Mulk Raj Anand's literary output. In the essays, various issues like dejection and delight in Anand's novels, his narrative technique, his humanism, his creativeness in the use of English language, his portrayal of individual amidst testing social conditions etc. were dealt with in comprehensive detail. The anthology provided new vistas to the study of Anand as a prominent literary artist of India.

Jyotsna Kulkarni in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (2006) focussed her attention on the influences on Anand, which moulded his novelistic career. While talking about the influence of Marxism on Anand, she opined that "Anand's Marxism was informed by a lively humanism which put men before dogma" (Kulkarni, 2006, p. 41). Despite various obstacles, Anand's characters – Kanwar Rampal Singh, Ananta, Maqbool, Lal Singh etc. understood the need of unrelenting struggle against injustice and oppression. Kulkarni's viewpoint was that Anand believed in the capacity of man, and man must

work for his own destiny. In this regard, she also highlighted Anand's humanistic zeal to work for the betterment of other.

The anthology *Mulk Raj Anand* (2006) edited by B. R. Agarwal is a collection of twenty-one critical essays on the socio-economic vision of Anand. His social vision, humanitarian approach, concern for the poor and downtrodden, use of English, technique and style of novel writing, impact of Gandhi on his novels were some of the important issues dealt with in this anthology. In one of the essays, a critic commented that almost all the protagonists of Anand came from the lower class of the society because of the impact of Gandhi.

Ketaki Goswami's book *Mulk Raj Anand: Early Novels* (2009) is devoted to the discussion of three early novels of Anand—*U, C*, and *TLAB*. The book is divided into nine chapters. In the anthology, some of the important issues related to Anand like the themes and applications, combination of rage and humour his use of language, assessment of gender, colonialism etc. were discussed. Goswami also discussed some of the short stories written by Anand. She considered Anand a humanist of the highest order. According to her, Anand's belief was grounded on those human beings who live a life with dignity.

K. Pooma in the introductory chapter of her book *The Mind and Art of Mulk Raj Anand* (2009) extensively discussed the difficulties and problems of Indo-Anglian writing. Use of English language, national and regional prejudices against English, influence of English writers, indifference of the publishers, paucity of literary criticism etc. were some of the problems that she discussed. Along with it, the formative influences on Anand were also discussed comprehensively. Pooma's concluding remark was that it

was Anand who imparted social realism, naturalism and proletarian themes and characters to Indian novels in English.

In her book *Mulk Raj Anand: From Literary Naturalism to Hopeful Humanism* (2010), Jova C. Marak made a comprehensive discussion of naturalism in European, American and Indian context. In her analysis, she found the novels of Anand as the legacy of Indo-Anglian literary naturalism. She also gave emphasis on the nature of Anand's humanism. Her observation of Anand's humanism is like this: "He strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon the underprivileged by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse love and tenderness into the hearts of all men" (Marak, 2010, p. 241). While commenting on Anand's humanism, she said that tolerance and universal compassion were the driving force behind his humanism.

In his book *Mulk Raj Anand: His Vision and Work* (2010), Dr. Rajvir Singh explored the reason of poor villager's migration to big industrial towns and cities in the novels of Anand. Due to their poverty, illiteracy and ignorance, poor village folks migrated to the towns and cities with the dreams of having happy and peaceful life. However, such hopes and dreams led them to different sorts of problems and hazards. Dr. Singh's study attempted to foreground Anand's endeavour to bring the plights of untouchables, coolies, peasants, labourers into prominence. It was humanism, which inspired Anand to raise his voice against the exploitation and oppression of the helpless people. The book concluded with the remark that Anand's fictions were expression of a fine fusion between the idyllic and the urban (Singh, 2010, p. 176).

Shruti Nath in her book *Delineation of the Disadvantaged* (2011) analysed and interpreted the sad plight of the downtrodden and disadvantaged multitudes portrayed in various novels of Mulk Raj Anand. She made an exhaustive effort to investigate the causes of social, political, economical and psychological problems of the downtrodden of the society. She attempted to foreground the important role played by Anand's novels in ameliorating the fate of the disadvantaged multitudes of India. For her study, she took the pre and post-independent novels of Anand and made a comparative study of them with other contemporary Indo-Anglian novelists of the period.

On the basis of the review on different works of Anand as part of this study, it has been found that most of the authors and critics have tried to examine Mulk Raj Anand as a novelist with a definite objective of writing for the disadvantaged and dispossessed. In this regard, Anand can also be regarded as a humanist who constantly fought against the exploitation, oppression and atrocities on the poor. His humanism is instrumental in his portrayal of the lowest dregs of the society. Although various important aspects of Anand's oeuvre have been undertaken for discussion in these works, none of these writers and critics is seen to have provided a detailed discussion of the elements of social discontents and the subdued spirit of rebellion in the novels of Anand. Therefore, although Mulk Raj Anand is an overworked Indian English Writer, the present study is very significant as it is an attempt tried to provide important analysis of the novels selected for study on the basis of the elements chosen for discussion.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

This study proposes to investigate the causes of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion on the part of Anand's protagonists. It encompasses the following objectives.

1. To look into the elements of social discontent in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand.
2. To study Anand's character delineation in finding out how his characters try to find justice in a hostile environment.
3. To appraise the nature of the role of the characters in his novels against oppression and injustice.

### **Methodology:**

This study will undertake an objective interpretation of the elements of social discontent and the subdued spirit of rebellion in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand. Descriptive analytical method is adopted to discuss the novels. Looking at the social importance of the issues, a sociological viewpoint has also been adopted when necessary. To do so, the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand are taken as the primary source. The novels are selected on the basis of the period they are written and the issues discussed. All the novels selected for this study, belong to the Pre-Independence period. Various critical studies ranging from magazine and newspaper articles, articles published in journals and books, critique of different critics on Anand's works are also taken as the secondary sources.

### **Outlines of the Chapters:**

This present study is an attempt to critically study the prevailing elements of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand. The novels that are selected for this research endeavour are—*U, C, TLAB, TV, ATBW*,

*TSATS*, and *TBH*. These novels were written before the Independence of India, and they belonged to the early phase of Anand's writing career. Again, they also represent that period of Indian society, which was socially and politically very volatile due to the freedom struggle against the British. Hence, the motivation for selecting these novels for this research attempt comes from the similarity of social, cultural, and political atmosphere of the society in which they were written or which they represent.

**Chapter 1**, which is an "Introductory" chapter, is devoted to the discussion of Indian English novels with regard to the myriad socio-political aspects of the Pre-Independence period, particularly the impact of Gandhi on the early novelists including Mulk Raj Anand. Then, an in-depth discussion has been made on the formative influences on Anand, and how he became a creative writer with the purpose of serving the humanity. Various critical works on Anand are also discussed to have a better grasp of the scholarship on Anand so that this present research endeavour can contribute to the existing literary output on Anand.

**Chapter 2** entitled "Contextualising Social Discontent and Subdued Spirit of Rebellion" is devoted to the analysis the elements of the social discontent and the subdued spirit of rebellion in Anand's novels selected for the study. Caste, exploitation of the labour, destruction of the peasantry and effects of Industrialisation are some of the elements that caused social discontent in the minds of the characters. Caste began with the division of labour, but later on, with the passage of time, it changed into an exploitative inhuman system. In the caste system, the lower caste people suffered at the hands of upper caste members of the society. Then, in the subheading 'Exploitation of Labour' analysis has been made about the ways in which the poverty-ridden people were abused and ill-treated. The helpless poor peasants and children were exploited of

their labour by the cruel authority and its agents without any sympathy. Here attempt has been made to analyse such exploitation of labour. Then, it has been studied how the poor peasants were exploited by the agents of the British Government. The British Government implemented new laws in India which helped the landlords and the moneylenders in their ruthless exploitation of the peasants. The helpless peasants lost their land to the landlord or to the moneylender, as they were unable to repay their debts. The last element of the social discontent has been seen through Industrialisation. Here, it has been analysed how Industrialisation became a curse to the cottage industries of India. Before the arrival of the British, the Indian masses earned their livelihood by working in the cottage industries. However, the British introduced machines and established various industries in India, which handicapped the cottage industries of India. Consequently, the workers in cottage industries suffered from unemployment and low wages.

Then, there is discussion about the concept of 'Rebellion and the Rebel'. The discussion is focused on how rebellion occurs and the essential requirements to be a rebel. After this, the concept of 'subdued spirit of rebellion' is discussed. The elements, which are responsible for the subdued spirit of rebellion, include—the maze of caste system, the influence of Karma, and the problem of illiteracy. Caste is so deep rooted in the Indian society that almost all Indians are influenced by it. The upper caste people used it to dominate the lower caste members of the society. On the other hand, the lower caste people are forced to accept their relegated position. Generation after generation this system went on and thus, thousand years of continuous subjugation and oppression created a psychological barrier in the minds of these people which became unbreakable. These low caste people lost all hopes and could not dare to protest. Belief

in Karma is another hindrance before the exploited Indian people as it creates a submissive mind against all sorts of atrocities. The belief in Karma made men fatalists, which ultimately created a feeling of helplessness. The Karma philosophy led to the doctrine of rebirth. Everything is related to one's own action good or bad committed in the previous births or in this birth. The belief in such a philosophy would definitely weaken man's determination and the necessary resolve to fight against any form of exploitation. Caste and Karma would not have been able to harm Indian people so much, had there been proper education system in India. The Pre-British education in whatever form it might have existed, definitely contributed to the perpetuation of injustice and exploitation. Instead of eradicating prejudice and dead habits, in actuality, such an education system tend to perpetuate it. These elements of subdued spirit of rebellion are vital in making the characters feeble in responding to the exploitation, particularly in *U*, *C* and *TLAB*.

**Chapter 3** entitled "*Untouchable: The Ruthlessness of the Caste System*" is devoted to the study of the novel *U*. Here, Anand's portrayal of the untouchables has been analysed. The untouchables were subjected to different atrocities at the hands of the upper caste people. The untouchables were discontented due to such atrocities and exploitations, but they were unable to express it. Analysis has been made as to why the untouchables could not express their discontent. The finding shows that the untouchables were mostly illiterate and they lacked necessary awareness to understand the exploitation they had been subjected to since time immemorial. They believed in Karma and had the propensity to attribute their sufferings and misery to the sins they might have committed in their previous births. Therefore, the untouchables remained in their backward position without having any alteration to their status.



**Chapter 4** is titled “*Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud: The ‘Saga’ of the Coolies*”. These two novels are discussed together as both of them deal with the exploitation of the labour in extreme ruthlessness. The poor labourers were exploited of their physical works by the wealthy employers and industrialists. Even their children also became the target of exploitation. The parents often disregarded the well-being of their wards and forcefully employed the children in return of financial benefit. While working in the factory, the children were exposed to hazardous situation, and sometimes accidents also occurred. The labourers employed in the factories and plantations were exploited by the foremen and the sardars. They were also exposed to the ruthless behaviour of the plantation managers. The women and teenage girls often became the victim of sexual exploitation at the hands of plantation managers. Therefore, the coolies, factory workers and plantation labourers were full of discontent and dissatisfaction. However, unfortunately, they could not express their discontent for fear of punishment. They were illiterate, and did not know how to unite themselves to fight against the exploitation. The authorities also did not let them any opportunity to organise protests under a union. In fact, they were subdued from all quarters and there was no scope for them to protest vehemently against the exploitation and atrocities perpetrated on them. Sometimes, there were attempts of showing discontent through physical expressions like strike and boycott, but these attempts were also nipped in the bud by the plantation authority wielding coercive measures.

**Chapter 5** is titled “The Lal Singh Trilogy: The Loss of Peasantry.” Here, three novels —*TV*, *ATBW*, and *TSATS* are discussed together because these novels have the same protagonist Lal Singh, and at the same time, the novels also contain Lal Singh’s development from a naïve teenager to a member of the British Indian army, and then to

a peasant revolutionary. In the novels, the deplorable condition of the peasants is delineated with all the pathos. The landlords and moneylenders exploited the peasants and made their life extremely miserable. The peasants were full of discontent and wanted to fight against the exploitation. They organised themselves through Kisan Sabhas. However, their fight was not successful as the British government ruthlessly subdued them through police atrocities. These novels portrayed the discontent of the landless peasants and the tenants and their attempt of fighting against the injustices done to them. The study divulged that though the peasants were suppressed and subdued, they did not shrink away from staging protests against the exploitation.

**Chapter 6** titled “*The Big Heart: The Onslaught of Industrialisation*” is the study of the conflict which arose due to the establishment of an industry for the production of utensils. The thathiars made their livelihood through making utensils in their cottage smithies. All of a sudden, the wealthy Thathiars and Kesaras decided to establish an industry to produce utensils through machine. However, only a selected few thathiars got employment there. The unemployed thathiars grew agitated and decided to fight against such injustice. Some of them wanted to destroy the industry as they regarded it the reason behind their sufferings. However, some thathiars supported the industry, as according to them there was no alternative to machine in the modern age. They believed that the judicious use of the machine could bring about a complete change to the destiny of the thathiars. The discontent of the thathiars was justified because they found it very difficult to survive without their occupation. They expressed their discontent through violent means by destroying the industry. Based on the analysis, it was observed that the thathiars staged a destructive protest against the industrialisation because they suffered from it.

**Chapter 7** is the “concluding” chapter. Here, a summary of the entire research thesis has been provided. Though Anand’s novels under discussion for the research were written before the Independence, the issues that Anand raised in these novels are relevant even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the society is struggling with lots of problems resulting out of the politics of caste, hatred and exploitation of the poor. This aspect is discussed in this chapter in some detail. Besides, attempts have also been made to identify the various other aspects of Mulk Raj Anand’s fictions on which further research can be conducted on various other aspects.

If seen against the backdrop of the socio-political aspects of Indian English Literature before the Independence of India, an understanding of how and why ideas like social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion are formed may help in examining the works of a novelist like Mulk Raj Anand from new perspectives. Basing the assumptions on Anand’s life and writings, it is interesting to examine how he discussed the notions of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in a broader context of Indian English Literature. Subsequently, an attempt in the thesis has been made to discuss and understand the concepts of discontents and subdued rebellion, and how the writers like Anand had so beautifully adapted these concepts, and made them the most dominant themes in his fictional works. Considered in terms of the various contexts in which his fictional works are conceived, nurtured, and developed, Anand’s handling of social discontent and the subdued spirit of rebellion has not only helped in examining the literary worth of fiction written during Pre-Independence India, but has also helped in providing a critique of how novel writing became a tool for protesting against social injustices during his time. Mulk Raj Anand, with his unique orientation on the Indian society of his time, not only emerged as one of the most prolific of Indian writers in

English, but also succeeded in providing ample resources for examining the artistic problems faced by other Anglo Indian novelists of his time. This thesis, it is assumed, shall further add to the existing critical literatures available on his fictional works.

At the end of the each chapter of this research work, References are included. APA (American Psychological Association) 6<sup>th</sup> edition citation style is followed in References and in the Bibliography.

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