

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUALISING SOCIAL DISCONTENT AND SUBDUED SPIRIT OF REBELLION

As a novelist, Mulk Raj Anand has emphasised on individuals as human beings, but at the same time, pressing social issues also receive due importance in his novels. In fact, complex social issue like ‘untouchability’ gets adequate representation through the deft portrayal of some powerful characters in most of his novels. As a conscientious novelist, Anand was aware that he might be accused of giving more importance to the social problems rather than the characters of his novels. Therefore, whenever he got opportunity, he expressed his concerns and interests through his characters. It is his creative desire as well as the demand of time and situation, which are responsible for the creation of such subjugated characters. Therefore, the close study of his characters on the basis of how they were socially discriminated is necessary to find out the elements of social discontent in his novels. This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the main issues of the thesis—‘social discontent’ and ‘subdued spirit of rebellion’, which would help to discuss Anand’s art of character portrayal in his novels. Both the issues are looked at from close quarter, so that important matters related to them become conspicuous. This is necessary, as it would offer a better position to grasp the cultural and social issues of the time in which Anand’s novels were written.

Whenever Anand’s novels are mentioned, one is always reminded of the characters like Bakha in *Untouchable*, Munoo in *Coolie*, Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Lal Singh in *Lal Singh Trillogy*, and Ananta in *The Big Heart*. While delineating them, Anand took resort to his imaginative apprehension and recreation in delineating these

characters and he was successful in showing through his novels how social discrimination had been rampant in Indian society. Some of the main factors which give birth to social discontent are—caste system present in the Hindu society, merciless exploitation of the poor by the rich, dehumanising effects of Industrialisation-an outcome of modernisation, destruction of peasantry or peasants' world etc. Through his novels, Anand sensitised his readers about the presence of various social discriminations rampant in the Indian society of his time, and tried to liberate the Indian masses from the clutches of such oppressions.

An attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss what is social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion in case of the fiction of Anand, and how various societal elements usually contribute to the emergence of social discontents. It is important to mention here that while carrying out this research, the researcher is influenced by ideas of Social Realism, which mostly refers to an international movement in arts that draws attention to the everyday conditions of the working class and the poor. Like a social realist, Anand too is very critical of the social structures and forces, which create and maintain these conditions. However, in Anand, we find a unique attempt of exploring the ills of the society and provide a vehement critique of the same, a characteristic not so easily to be found in his contemporary Indian novelists writing in English.

The Notion of Social Discontent:

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the meaning of “Social” as “connected with society and the way it is organised”. Therefore, when we refer to ‘social’, we understand the relationship of the individual with the society, and how in larger contexts, this relationship ultimately leads to the organisation of society. The

same dictionary defines “discontent” as “a feeling of being unhappy because someone is not satisfied with a particular situation”. Therefore, social discontent refers to the dissatisfaction and unhappiness of the members of the society due to some particular issues related to them. Discontent arises from definite forms of oppression and marginalisation. It has been linked with rejection. It is closely related to the feelings of the marginalised and oppressed masses, and is also allied to the agenda of increasing the range of freedom and justice.

In India, social discontent is pervasive because, individual and groups have been being subjected to discrimination on the basis of caste, class, poverty, religion, political ideology, custom and tradition from the ancient times. Social discriminations are varied, and motives behind social discrimination are also complex and multidimensional. Sometimes, it is difficult to find out the real causes of discrimination because they may be due to prejudice or because of ego. Therefore, it is not possible to think of having a society without discrimination. When we look at it from close quarter, it is seen that all societies across the world are full of discriminations. However, the manifestations of social discrimination may vary from society to society. If in a society there is oppression, misery, suffering, exploitation and tyranny, the manifestation of discontent can become a matter of serious concern.

It can be stated that social conflicts and tensions occur because of discrimination, which might have taken place earlier. In this research study, an attempt has been made to look at the dissatisfaction and discontents of some of the characters in the novels of Anand selected for this study due to the problems related to caste, exploitation of labour, modernisation, destruction of the peasantry etc. In other words, these elements give birth to discontent in the hearts of the subjugated characters who are destined to suffer

in the world presented in the novels of Anand. However, for the convenience of understanding the various elements, which create social discontent in the fictional world of Anand, they are attempted to be explored individually in this chapter.

Caste:

Caste has been ingrained in the Hindu social system since the ancient times. To have a clear understanding of Caste, it is necessary to give a careful look inside the Hindu social system with reference to Varna and Jati. The term Varna refers to the attributed ranks of various jatis. Varna is comprised of several jatis with similar ritual positions. Jatis are graded on the basis of hierarchy—Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya are the three upper level jatis. The Shudras are the lowest amongst the four. Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya, these jatis have to undergo initiation rites after their birth. Therefore, they are regarded as twice born. The Shudra jati consists of various artisans and other occupationally specialised non-polluting jatis. Apart from these four levels of jatis, there is another level comprising of those jatis who follow occupations, which are regarded unclean and polluting. These jatis are excluded from the Varna system, and they are called Antyaja. Antyajas are untouchables because of their polluting occupations – they work in leather or do scavenging (including handling human wastes). Gandhiji called the Antyajas Harijans, and now a day, they proclaim themselves as Dalits. Adivasi or Girijans are also inside the Antyaja category but most of them are free from the curse of untouchability. They are included in the Hindu society but are excluded from the Varna system.

There are a few theories on the origin of Varnas. Best known and most cited amongst them is the theory of divine origin, which is found in the *Rig-Veda*, which is referred to

as Purusha Sukta. According to this theory, Purusha or the creator, the primeval being sacrificed himself for the creation of the four orders of the society. Head and mouth of Purusha were responsible for the creation of the Brahman, the arms of the Purusha gave birth to Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas were originated from the thighs, and the Shudras were born from the feet of the Purusha. It is apparent that this is just a symbolic representation of the four Varnas corresponding to cultural body images of various organs of the Purusha in descending order. In this order, the Brahmans were bestowed with the highest position as they were ascribed the duties of accumulating knowledge and then disseminating it. The Brahmans also performed the duties of sacrifice. The Kshatriyas were second in rank in the Varna hierarchy. They took the responsibilities of administration, governance, and defending the kingdom. The Vaishyas looked after trade and commerce, and agriculture. The Shudras were ranked lowest with the avowed promise of serving others, practising crafts and labour.

Jatis, which enjoy higher social and ritual status, have the arduous and complex task of maintaining the rules and regulations for keeping up purity and staying away from pollution. Pollution in this regard, is related to food items and personal contact. Vegetarian foods like fruit, milk, shrubs, roots are sattvic and can be eaten by Brahmans. Water can be easily polluted by the mere touch of very low jatis. According to S. C. Dube (2015):

It is for this reason that the wells for the clean jatis and the scheduled castes are separate in most villages. If there is only one well it will be used exclusively by the “clean” castes; the scheduled castes are denied access to it. Traditional water carriers are of the fourth Varna level and water drawn by them will generally be accepted by all, except by those practicing the highest level of purity. In their

case, water must be drawn by a person of equally “pure” rank and that too in a ritually “pure” personal condition. (p. 56)

There were also social norms prescribing prohibition of physical contact between “clean and noble jatis” and “inferior jatis” regarded as untouchables. In some places, the most severe form of untouchability is practised, and it is held that even the sight of the untouchables or their shadows can pollute higher jatis.

Practice of untouchability in mild form only refers to staying away from the untouchables so that no physical contact should occur, and barring of untouchables from the entry of the household of the higher jatis.

The untouchable jatis were denied entry into temples and access to common village wells. Their living quarters had to be built outside the village, often at some distance. They had to sit separately in schools; even tea-shops earmarked separate cups for them which they had to wash themselves and keep aside. (Dube, 2015, p. 58)

An important trend amongst the rich and powerful jatis was that they supported each other and forged unity amongst themselves to subjugate the lowest placed jatis. They used to terrify the lower jatis by using their economic power and political connections.

Anand revolutionised Indian writing in English by portraying the events of a sweeper’s life in his first novel *U*. He portrayed the difficulties faced by the untouchables in the society in this novel. In this regard, E. M. Forster wrote: “The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape”

(Anand, 1981, p. 8). Anand was aware of the difficult life of the untouchables as he passed his childhood days inside the cantonments of British Indian army. The distance between the huts of menial servant and quarters of clerical staffs were not much. However, there was great social chasm in between the two classes of people. Anand's mother restrained him from mixing with the children of the untouchables, but he was unable to follow his mother's instructions in this regard. It was during that time, that he had developed admiration for an untouchable boy Bakha. This untouchable young boy had many qualities—he was handsome, a singer and a sportsman. In fact, Anand considered him to be an extraordinary human being. However, unfortunately, Bakha did not get any opportunity from the society to express his talent. Contrary to it, he faced frequent humiliation and insult at the hands of upper caste members. Therefore, when Anand decided to become a writer, he wrote his first novel on this character Bakha whom he knew in his childhood. It was his great attachment with the untouchables, which led him to write the first draft of the novel within three days.

Anand disclosed that there had been rampant social discrimination and oppression on the untouchables. He did not show the untouchables revolting against the subjugation in the novel. But, he wanted to open the eyes of the oppressors towards their injustices. He earnestly requested “for truth against the age—old lies of the Hindus by which they upheld discrimination” (Anand, 1968, p. 16). He trod on a new path when he made an untouchable like Bakha the central figure of his first novel. He remarked that even his contemporaries were also shying away from the portrayal of the untouchables in their novels:

Most Indian writers of the modern period, like Bankim Chander Chatterji, Ratan Nath Sarshar and Rabindranath Tagore, had not accepted in their novels, that

even the so-called lowest dregs of humanity, living in utmost poverty, squalor and degradation could become heroes of fiction. (Anand, 1968, p. 6)

But, the publication of *U* was not so simple and easy. Anand (1981) remarked that the novel was “first rejected by nineteen British publishers” (p.182). It was the twentieth publisher who consented to publish this classic on the condition that E. M. Forster would write the preface to it. It was his tremendous moral courage, which led him to write a novel against the caste system at the age of twenty-five years. Through this novel, Anand wanted to express through *U* how millions of untouchables were living a horrible life of exploitation. His sympathy was with the victims of this cruel system of India that still continue in various corners.

Exploitation of Labour:

According to the Census of 1931, the total population of India was 353 million, out of which 141 million were children below 15 years (as cited in Rajani, 1934, p.4). When compared to other countries, in India juveniles took the larger part in production. 31.4 million People of India were agricultural labourers, and amongst them, 23 million people were landless labourers or farm servants (Rajani, 1934). In the factory and industry of India, especially during the initial stage of the development of the cotton industry in Bombay Presidency, there were many abuses of women and children due to the lack of employment opportunities. The practice of pledging by the parents and guardians of the child for domestic service often led to the abuse of labour. Though, it was forbidden, the guardians often took resort to this practice due to their poverty. The labourers got wage payments on monthly basis in the—“Cotton mills of Bombay, the tea gardens of the Assam Valley, and some other industries in various parts of the

country” (Rajani, 1934, p. 56). But, wage payments on monthly basis had an objectionable feature—delay often to fifteen days for the payment. Such long delay in paying the labourers their wages was a grave problem as they were then forced to purchase their daily requirements through credit or sometimes they had to borrow money from the moneylenders at a high rate of interest.

The workers’ position in the factory was entirely decided by the foremen, and this led to bribery and corruption. These supervisors or foremen controlled their workers till the time they work in the factory: “Most of the workers, adults as well as children, are engaged by supervisors or foremen” (Rajani, 1934, p. 32.). The sardars and foremen were regarded very important in industrial set ups because they used to engage the workers, took the burden of training them, offered housing facilities when needed and also provided funds at high interest rates to them. They were having the power to dismiss the workers from their jobs or transfer them to better position. The workers considered them their protectors inside the industry and they went on tolerating the exploitation. These intermediaries were known as jobbers, sardars, mukadams or maistries in India. Often the sardars took dasturi (bribe) from the workers as a mark of gratitude for the engagements.

This practice of taking bribes by the foreman for engaging the labourers was a routine affair in the mills of Bombay: “besides paying fees for a job, the workers have to pay a part of their wages during the continuance of their service” (Rajani, 1934, p. 33). Such bribes to the sardars and their superiors were very common incident inside the factory system. These intermediaries never shrank away from cheating the workers of their wages. Their power used to increase when the manager of the factory happened to be a European as he usually lacked linguistic command to understand the problems faced by

the workers. As the workers were illiterate, scarcely they could get promotion to the supervisory grades. The workers were also subjected to the oppression of the sardars. They constantly suffered from the insecurity of losing their jobs because of the change in trades, choice of the consumers and the personal whims of their employers. Such an environment contributed largely to their discontent.

The tea plantation in India before India's Independence was largely owned by the Europeans. Only a small number of tea gardens were managed by the Indians. The required labour for the tea garden was obtained from distant places because local population was not sufficient for such huge requirements. Unlike the factories where men were preferred as labourers, in plantations employment was given to men, women and even children. For example, in the tea gardens of Assam, the labourers were recruited by the sardars of tea garden from distant places like Chota Nagpur, the Santal Parganas, Bihar, the United Provinces, Madras and the Central Provinces. To cover such great distance, the labourers had to take a journey of several days. To obtain labour, the plantation owners had to invest a large amount of money per labourer. Therefore, they wanted to keep the recruited labourers for a long period of time, which led to various atrocities ranging from compelling the labourers to sign a contract where physical punishment was mentioned as an important measure to curb the disrespect of the contract. The plantation owners engaged sardars to recruit labourers and the sardars adopted various unscrupulous means to bring unsuspecting labourers to the tea gardens. Due to scarcity and difficulty of getting labourers, the tea garden authority preferred to recruit families so that they could be forced to work in plantation site : "the policy of plantations has been to recruit families rather than individuals.... and immigration has been a constant source of supply of child labour to the Assam tea gardens"

(Rajani,1934, p.30). When they enlisted themselves as plantation labourers, they did so with three ambitions– they wanted an umbrella of their own, a buffalo, and a piece of land where they could cultivate something. The sardars took advantage of these ambitions of the would be tea garden labourers and lured them away from the security of their homeland.

Once the immigrant labourers arrived at the plantation areas, their fate was determined by the whims of the planters. The labourers were forced to enter into a penal contract according to which the planters got the right to arrest the truant labourers. The labourers were forced to live a life of prisoner:

They live in lines to which the public are denied access, and watchmen are maintained to observe and report all movements to and from the lines. Although the labourers move here and there, attending the local market and conducting their sidelines of business, they cannot go far, or absent themselves long, without their movements being noted. (Panandi, 1933, p. 113)

Though law was passed against such atrocities, the illiterate labourers were unable to take any advantage of such legal rights.

The tea garden labourers were paid very low wages in comparison to industrial labourers. Moreover, all the members of the family had to work to earn the livelihood. In spite of that, the labourers were unable to maintain a healthy life style. It was heart-rending to observe that many young children of four to six years old worked in the tea gardens and contributed to the family's income. Often, the sardars and managers of the tea gardens beat the labourers if they tried to show any dissent: "beating with canes was

now and then resorted to by some of the garden sardars and managers to make labourers work better” (Panandi, 1933, p. 113).

The life of the labourers in the tea gardens was very unhealthy because they were susceptible to various deadly diseases like malaria, dysentery, typhoid, hookworm etc. as the tea gardens were situated in remote areas and forests. The tea gardens were also lacking in clean arrangements for health and hygiene. In this regard, Rajani Kanta Das remarked (1934): “The result was a heavy death rate among all classes of workers, including children, and many of the gardens were classed as unhealthy” (p.41). The labourers should get the payment of their hard work on the basis of the nature, duration and place of work. As the labourers were not paid adequately, they were unable to maintain their family with the scanty wages they received. Instead of providing the just payment for the hard work of the labourers, the employers enjoyed the profit alone. The society might have run very smoothly if the labourers were not exploited mercilessly. The degradation of the quality of life was easily discernible when the capitalists received manifold advantages and accumulated their wealth, whereas the working class could not get due wages for their labour. In such a situation, the poor working class people had no alternative but to fight with full might against the injustice and exploitation.

In his novels, Anand talks about the fate of the poor labourers. Because the British Government was biased towards the traders and landlords, the poor labourers were caught in the web of debt-slavery. In such an atmosphere, the labourers could do two things—they could enrol themselves in the British army during the time of war or they could migrate to another place in search of better work and life during the time of

peace. Mulk Raj Anand beautifully explores the discontent arising out of the exploitation of the poor in novels like *C* and *TLAB and TSATS*.

Destruction of Peasantry:

In his *Letters on India*, Anand (1942) said: “The peasant...is India and India the peasant” (p. 29). Anand wrote how the British rule had destroyed the peasantry in India. The peasants were ruthlessly exploited by unscrupulous traders and callous landlords. For the peasants, land was everything but they were mercilessly uprooted from their land because of the exploitation of the Sarkar, landlords and money-lenders. The British government introduced the policy of collecting land revenue in cash. Consequently, the illiterate peasants were trapped in the web of the dishonest government officials, cunning traders and greedy moneylenders. The Indian villages lost the capacity of remaining self-sufficient unit on the burden of new economic factors.

The peasants suffered mainly because of debt. In India, according to Woolf, “it is the bonds of debt that shackle agriculture” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 220). In addition, the debts were for the most part unproductive. Before the colonial period, the capacity of the peasants to borrow money was limited as they were unable to provide security for their borrowings. The peasants could not mortgage their landed property as security. The stable nature of the British rule, Pax Britannica and agricultural advancement and profit cumulatively increased the land value in Punjab. B. S. Saini (1975) mentioned, “The average price of land rose from Rs.10 per acre in 1869-70 to Rs.451 per acre in 1938-39” (p. 221). With the enormous increase of the value of land, the peasants got new avenue to borrow money from the moneylenders by offering their agricultural land as security. The moneylenders cheated the ignorant and illiterate peasants by falsifying

their accounts and by charging excessive interest. The peasants were very extravagant in their unproductive spending on marriage ceremony, litigation and base enjoyments like drinking and gambling. Such habits and inclinations invariably led them to perpetual state of poverty and liabilities of repayment from which they could hardly relieve themselves. Along with this, the peasants also suffered from uncertain rainfall, loss of livestock due to epidemics and fragmentation of their agricultural land (Saini, 1975). They were unable to buy back their mortgaged land, as they had already consumed the borrowed amount in marriages or some other social ceremonies.

In this way, the impoverished peasants could never redeem their mortgaged land, which led to the confiscation of the land by the moneylender under civil decree. The moneylenders began to consider this a steady and very profitable investment. Therefore, they continued luring the unsuspecting peasants more and more into their grip. Such reckless borrowing by the unthrifty peasants on the strength of agricultural land ultimately turned them in to landless peasants or tenants. Colonial rulers were not against such developments, as Carver remarked: “the best agriculture in the world is carried on under the tenancy system (England)” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 192). But, in India, the situation was totally different because according to Calvert: “an English landlord is his tenant’s best friend and spends fully one-third of his rental back on the land and its needs, most Punjab landlords levy double the rent an English landlord would do and spend practically nothing back on the land” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 192). Moreover, the British Government welcomed such a development because it is thought, “the facility of transfer would place the land at the disposal of those who would bring capital, intelligence and enterprise to bear on it” (Saini, 1975, p. 223). After acquiring the mortgaged land, the money-lender in Punjab basically offered it to

his former debtors to cultivate. In this regard, Calvert remarked that the moneylender “does not invest any capital in improving it – but contents himself with obtaining the best rent he can” (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 223).

Anand stated that a situation was created in which the peasants were forced to live under the whims of Indian moneylenders and landlords. They were denied the fruit of their hard labour by the Colonial government and their agents. The tyrannical rule of British government forced them to become victims to indebtedness, which was unprecedented. The moneylenders took the advantage of the legal system introduced by the British, and invented different ploys to exploit the illiterate peasants. The pathetic condition of the peasants was not confined only to Punjab province; the peasants of other provinces were also reeling under debt and misery. Nehru mentioned the condition of the peasants in this way: “The peasantry were a blind, poverty-stricken, suffering mass, resigned to their miserable fate and sat upon and exploited by all who came in contact with them- the Government, landlords, money-lenders, petty officials, police, lawyers, priests” (Nehru, 1936, p. 48).

Anand was aware of all kinds of oppressions and exploitations of the poor and helpless peasants. He mentioned about the famous revolutionary peasant song from his mother: “Take care of your turban, O Peasant” (Sharma, 1971, p. 51). The Kisan revolt of 1907 in Punjab was stated to be inspired by this peasant song. In *TV*, Anand analysed the problems of the peasants. Exploitation of the peasants by the landlords and moneylenders gave rise to the serious kind of discontent among the peasants. In *TSATS*, the rampant exploitation of the peasants was graphically presented. They were shown as poor, starving, crushed and miserable. However, the peasants were also capable of showing their courage when they expressed their discontent through various modes

against the British government and against their agents like landlords and the moneylenders. Mulk Raj Anand's fiction helps us to have a clear understanding of the condition of the Peasantry during Pre Independence India.

Issue of Industrialisation:

Until the 18th century, Indian cottage industries and handicraftsmen were thriving satisfactorily. During the 18th century, there were various kinds of cottage industries in India as one can be find in statements as offered by Panandi (1933):

Cotton, woollen and silk textile industries, metal industries, turning out brass, copper and bell-metal wares and arms of various kinds, iron, ship-building, stone, sandalwood and marble carving, gold and silver thread, glass, paper, fine embroidery, perfumery, leather and enamelled jewellery industries. (p. 1)

However, after the Industrial Revolution, there were divergent changes in the field of production, labour, transport, and communication in England. Various factory made cheaper products were imported to India with the result that the Indian cottage industry lost its pre-eminent position. India became a source of raw material for the British industries as well as a profitable market for the factory products. The products of the Indian cottage industry were prohibited to enter into the markets of England through various decrees, and heavy import duty was also imposed upon them. Machine made products of England became very popular amongst the Indian masses due to low price and better quality. On the other hand, the patronage that the cottage industries received from various quarters like royal courts and Indian nobles were also shrinking due to the diminishing popularity of the products. It was in such a situation, Indian cottage

industries suffered from gradual decay in large numbers during the middle part of 19th century.

Small artisans who worked in cottage industries were poor and so they were unable to buy necessary raw materials for their industry. The artisans received capital from the intermediaries, and they had to sell the finished product to these intermediaries. Some moneylenders also financed the artisans at exorbitant rates of interest. As there was lack of organised marketing system for the finished products, the big merchants exploited the artisans. Sometimes, intermediaries with shops of their own procured the necessary goods from the artisans on price-wage system. The artisan had to accept the price-wage as was given to him by the shop owner.

It was a dreadful condition for the Indian economy. At that time, India was not a sovereign country. Unlike the western nations where they successfully adapted themselves to the changing situations, in India it was different. The change was shocking and people lacked adaptability and organizing capacity to cope with such necessary changeover from the cottage industry to the modern industries run on machines. Lack of scientific knowledge and shortage of capital were also the other important factors responsible for the inability of that much-needed change over. Consequently, the labourers and artisans who were once engaged in the cottage industries were compelled to turn to agriculture for their livelihood. In this way, India became an agriculture-based economy from cottage industry based industrial economy.

Such a change brought about serious repercussions in the form of extreme poverty of a large number of Indian citizens. There were also periodical famines due to such extreme poverty. The Famine Commissions in their reports opined that lack of industry

was one of the principal causes of the recurring famines in India. Thus, poverty and hunger made India a land of destitute, which was a land of prosperity earlier. In this regard, Panandi (1933) remarked: “The continuing poverty of the people and the absence of industrial careers for the educated Indians, resulting from this industrial stagnation, produced serious economic discontent, which soon allied itself with the political discontent” (p. 5). The Swadeshi Movement and Gandhi’s urge to boycott foreign goods were important events of the period, which marked a growing tendency amongst the Indians to work for the much sought after industrial regeneration in India. It was much more needed because industrial development would certainly generate more jobs than the agriculture. The wages was also higher in industrial set up which would ensure better life-style for the labourers.

Before the arrival of the British, the transformation in social and cultural structure of India was varied and drastic but superficial. The British brought with them scientific temperament and modern system of education which unfurled new knowledge, ideas and values. With the help of such new inputs, some progressive men of India began to think fresh to lead them towards new modes of analytical power. There was also an expansion of knowledge and awareness in Indian masses resulting in the growth of their prospect in different fields. The scholars, writers and philosophers were also attracted towards this conflict between tradition and modernity from the time of such developments in science and technology. Modernisation is inevitable and indispensable for any developing country, but in a colonised country like India, the decision-making was always in the hands of the colonisers and so the benefits of modernisation could never be reached to the citizens.

In *TBH*, Anand artistically delineated industrial values advocated by the western culture and their apparent contradiction with the indigenous culture. Thus, Anand showed the consequence of the colonial rule in India. He also handled the theme of the conflict between traditional values of the indigenous artisans and the inevitable modernisation of the Indian industries. He presented the discontent of some people who were attached to the old and past habits and traditions, and opposed industrialisation and modernisation, and which ultimately led to the martyrdom of Ananta, the central character of the novel.

Notion of the Subdued Spirit of Rebellion:

Along with social discontent, Anand's unique handling of the notion of subdued spirit of rebellion in his novel also invites the attention of the critical readers. Rebellion can be explained as the rejection to comply with the established order, the attempt of preventing the dominant system by action through armed or violent resistance. It is an opposing power, activity and attitude, which challenge domination and subjugation. It is reactionary and liberating and at the same time against resignation. It aims at liberating the exploited from the clutches of exploiting forces.

Mulk Raj Anand is one such novelist who introduced revolutionary socialism in Indian English fiction. However, in nearly all his fictional works, his characters are more a victim than a rebel in the true sense. An attempt has been made in this section to discuss the meaning of the term rebel and how Anand deals with the idea of a rebel and rebellion in his fictional works. One interpretation may be the fact that Anand wanted to conceptualise the notion of rebellion to be synonymous with the idea of freedom. For example, in Anand's autobiographical novel *Confession of a Lover*, commenting on the

uncertain political scenario and nightmarish situations in Pre-Independence India, the character called Krishan tell his friend Noor Mahammed:

We must learn to rebel...The important thing is to be—become rebellion itself! Free! Free! Free! Utterly Free! ‘Rebellion and Freedom’ Not acceptance and Death...It is only through Rebellion against Everything...I want to caste out my fears. I want to embrace people—even those who are illiterate and down and degraded!...We will become a big people! We will make a new life! (pp. 27-28)

However, it is equally interesting to note that in other novels of Anand, which are selected for the purpose of this study, the elements of rebellion does not fully develop to render a noticeable impact on the society. In most cases, the rebellious tendencies in the characters remain subdued and fail to bring any change in the situation of the poor desolate people. However, before exploring all these issues in detail, let us try to understand what the term Rebellion actually entails in the context of this study.

Here, in this study, rebellion is considered in affirmative terms focussing on the positive and creative forces it embodies which enable the weak to restructure an exploitative social order. It exposes the unfair practices, undermines the power of the authority, and may lead to find out an equal place for the common masses and their practices. Rebellion is the expression of the voices of the marginalised and oppressed, which brings these voices to the forefront, and at the same time, helps to confront direct and indirect structures of the dominant and the oppressive. Social, political and economic disequilibrium of power often provoke rebellion. Dominance and rebellion are oppositional, but both are linked to power. Rebellion is instrumental in bringing transformation to the existing structure by reshaping the spaces available to the

marginalised and oppressed. When power becomes depraved, it leads to suppression of the masses, resulting in restriction of the productive promises of the society, ultimately paving the way for the surfacing of rebellion. It brings change in the existing oppressive order and sometimes even destabilises it. It may not be able to disrupt the oppressive power but it can still bring about necessary space for the individuals. Therefore, rebellion against exploitation and oppression in the society is an attempt of starting a just order.

Rebellion evolves from consciousness of being wronged. This consciousness may be permanent or may stay only for a temporary moment. The potential rebel may not grasp hold of this consciousness at the beginning and so he goes on obeying what he has been asked for. At the beginning, his knowledge of freedom and right is restricted to his own understanding but slowly and gradually when this understanding of right will become common to all, he will submit himself in support of common good. The rebel in such circumstances can even dare to accept death because he understands that it is better to surrender his life for the common good rather than for his own sake. With such an understanding within him, the rebel can steer himself away from petty selfishness of everyday life and he can rescue himself from his isolation.

Rebellion is not driven by selfish motives and egoistical attitudes. Whatever little bit of selfishness is there in its aim, that is for the greater good of the community or for the sake of humanity. When there is rebellion, the rebel has to commit himself to the fulfilment of it. Another important aspect of rebellion is that the rebel may take part in rebellion not as the sole way of making an end to oppression but may be because of seeing someone suffering from oppression. In that case, the rebel is contemplating rebellion because he identifies himself with the oppressed. He does not encroach upon

other's freedom and right, but seeks to defend upon his own freedom and rights. The rebel fights for keeping intact the integrity of his own as well as his fellow-being's worldly existence. The rebel questions certain aspects of his validity of the existing system. When he finds the answer, his next step is to attempt incorporating his findings into the existing system to bring about partial or complete change to the system. His attempts to bring about such changes are necessary for elevating man to a higher order, so that man can live in dignity. Therefore, it can be said that the rebel's attempt of raising rebellion is a positive impulse to defend the essential dignity of the very existence of man.

Unity is one of the most important aspects of rebellion. Without unity, rebellion cannot flourish. It is the binding force necessary to bring about rebellion. Man takes resort to rebellion for bringing about necessary change relating to his existence in the society, but at the same time man has to accept his limitation in staging rebellion for survival due to the difficulty of connecting human minds in an exploitative social setting. Such an understanding leads to the knowledge that one man's experience of unhappiness can turn into a comprehensive unhappiness of the whole community. Therefore, the rebel must keep the noble promise of bringing about change for the greater interest of mankind. The rebel should possess the ability to contradict the existing system because such ability affirms the existence of a borderline for the oppressor. The rebel's ability to contradict confirms that he is aware of his space, which has been encroached upon, or his understanding that an unacceptable authority has been imposed upon him, which has crossed a certain limit violating his necessary rights. In this way, the rebel refuses to submit to such conditions, which he regards unbearable. He may also think that he has the right to contradict because of his absolute confidence on his justified position.

In contrast to the term rebellion, subdued spirit of rebellion is quite different. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the meaning of “subdued” as “unusually quiet, and possibly unhappy”. The same dictionary defines the meaning of “spirit” as “a state of mind or mood; an attitude”. On the basis of the meaning of “subdued” and “spirit”, it can be stated that the term “subdued spirit” refers to unusually quiet and unhappy mood or attitude relating to rebellion. However, as it has been discussed above, rebellion has nothing to do with quiet mood or attitude. Rebellion is a dynamic force bringing about just order and change in the society. Therefore, it can be said that “subdued spirit of rebellion” is not a direct rebellion; it is a passive resistance against the tyrannical order. Alternatively, it can be seen as a gesture of not conforming to the prevalent power structure of the society. People showing subdued spirit of rebellion are aware of the lacks and shortfalls of the existing system, but choose to remain silent because of the all-pervasive dominance of the system. However, the vital aspect of subdued spirit of rebellion is the knowledge of the deficiency of the system, which will ultimately bring about the necessary change. Therefore, the subdued spirit of rebellion can be equated with a kind of mild start in the desired change in the system without taking resort to any means of violence or can be equivalent to a passive resistance to the system of oppression and exploitation. It can also be regarded as the harbinger of a strong rebellion to be followed later.

Marginalisation and subjugation of the oppressed is based on their surrender and compliance to the dominant prevailing power. Peaceful opposition to oppression reveals the strength of the downtrodden and exposes the oppression of the authority. Likewise, the non-violent struggle against oppressive regime is often more effective than revolting with weapons. The oppressed can show dissent against the authoritative

rule by non-cooperation and by peaceful demonstrations leading to change of attitude on the part of the authority. Voice of dissent and peaceful opposition to tyranny are necessary in exposing the hypocrisy of the oppressors, and in shattering the delusion of the oppressive system that subjugation and exploitation can go on without check. Therefore, change in the oppressive order may take place when the subjects refuse to accept the same and raise their voice. This is an existential dilemma and the characters of Mulk Raj Anand remain so crushed that they are even unable to raise their voice against the oppressive order of history, politics and society.

However, in this regard, it is pertinent to have a clear understanding of Anand's views on the idea of rebellion. Dionys Mascolo opined that "an intellectual...could not be a communist because of the errors and crimes committed by the system, and at the same time an intellectual had to be a communist to take his path in the eradication of social injustice" (Camus, 2000, p. xvii). It is certain Anand was influenced by Marxist thinking but he was not a Marxist. Anand was enthusiastic about the Marxian concept of equality. Albert Camus was supporting 'rebellion' but he did not support revolution. Likewise, Anand was influenced by Marxism's concept of equality, but he did not support violent rebellion. Anand supported humanism; his protagonist could utter 'no' but cannot take part violent rebellion by indulging in murder. In his protagonists, therefore, moderation is noticed. They take the middle path as they have intense love for life as well as an urge to go on. There arose in their mind the spirit of rebellion because of different sorts of discontents, but this rebellion cannot turn itself into a physical or violent activity. Such a spirit of rebellion is always subdued, and Mulk Raj Anand, as a social realist succeeds in representing this type of rebellion in a very appealing manner.

In Anand's novels, immortal characters like Bakha, Lal Singh and Ananta understood the condition of the ordinary poor people around them, felt the danger of the rampant exploitations, because they were also the victims. It was basically expected that they might protest against the exploitation. However, in reality, they were unable to do so. Along with them, their companions were also mute observer of exploitation. Naturally, the question arises—what is the reason behind such subjugation? Obviously, there were many socio political issues, which became responsible for this subdued spirit of rebellion. Castes, belief in Karma philosophy, lack of education are some important issues, which are responsible for subdued spirit of rebellion observed in Anand's novels. Therefore, it is necessary to look into these issues to understand the notion of subdued spirit of rebellion. The following is an attempt at providing a thorough discussion of the concept of Caste, Karma, and system of education in Pre-independence India and how they contributed to the subdued spirit of rebellion in Anand's novels.

The Maze of Caste System:

Thousands of years ago in ancient India, the society was divided into different classes so that all the communities living within it could function properly. Such a classification might have contributed greatly to the development and prosperity of the life of man during that time. However, with the changing time, the social necessities and basis must also change. Throughout the ages, the Indian society changed in multiple aspects, but the strict structure of caste system remains dominant all the times. Such a rigid structure might have been necessary in ancient India. But, in the present situation, it lost all its usefulness. In fact, casteism had been associated with many

social and economic evils, which dampened the progress of Indian society from having modern and progressive outlook. In the Census of 1911, caste is defined as:

An endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name and having the same traditional occupation, who are so linked together by these and other ties, such as the tradition of a common origin and the possession of the same tutelary deity, and the same social status, ceremonial observations and family priests, that they regard themselves, and are regarded by others as forming a single homogenous community. (as cited in Saini, 1975, p. 47)

Therefore, caste is related to birth and therefore cannot be chosen. A Hindu can be rich and very talented but such virtues do not help him to change his caste. He is bound by social norms to accept the caste of his parents.

As discussed earlier, in ancient time, Indian society consisted of four jatis – the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The Brahmans were entrusted with the duty of imparting knowledge and performing priestly rituals. The Kshatriyas were people belonging to ruling class. The Vaishyas were the class of people consisting of tradesmen and peasants. The Shudras consisted of the lowest strata of the society. B. S. Saini (1975) commented, “In its original form it was a class system rather than a caste system. With the passage of time, various factors contributed to the inflexibility and segmentation of the original four classes” (p. 48).

In the caste system, the Brahmans were on the top of the hierarchical order. The Kshatriyas followed them. The Vaishyas and the Shudras were next to follow. Carpenters, weavers and blacksmiths were included in the artisan caste, whereas tanners, barbers, washermen, potters and oil pressers belonged to the menial caste. Both

these two castes i.e., artisans and menials belonged to the Sudras. The lowest among all the castes were the scavenger castes—the Chuhra or Bhangi and Dumna (Saini, 1975). These castes were regarded unclean and untouchable. Inter-marriage amongst the castes was prohibited and if any violation was observed it was dealt with severe punishments. Saini's remark is worth quoting in this regard: "marrying outside the caste entailed social ostracism and for this reason, the endogamous limitations were seldom transgressed. Strict notice of such breaches was taken by caste government" (Saini, 1975, p. 50).

Every society has its unwritten laws, which it enforces on its members. Most often, in the Indian society, social and religious rules have close relationship, and there were specific sets of rules for specific castes, which were to be followed with strict adherence. Sometimes, for the higher castes, the public opinion served as rules. For the lower castes, caste authority was strictly maintained by the Panchayats to obtain obedience from them for the customary rules. Panchayat acted as the standing body to look after any transgression or violation of the rules related to castes. The Panchayats were held on the basis of the appeal made by the complaint or by the accused either to investigate the allegation made or for looking after the possible mitigation of a sentence.

Like inter caste marriage, inter-dinning was also strictly prohibited amongst the higher castes and lower castes. Food items were divided into two classes—pakka food and kacha food. When food was cooked in ghee it was called pakka food, and it was regarded immune to pollution. Food, which was processed in water, was regarded kacha food and was considered liable to be polluted by a mere touch. Some high castes people used to take pakka food from the lower castes people. The caste authority like

Panchayat dealt with the breaches of caste rules for marriage, and the laws relating to eating and drinking amongst the castes. There were various punishments for the offender when the offence was established. The general form of punishment was in the mode of fine and depending on the caste status, the amount of the fine also varied. Sometimes, the punishment was delivered in the form of feast to be fed to the Panchayat or the community. Purification ceremony following the rules of shastras was also prescribed by the Panchayat. The severest punishment was social excommunication. Such a dreaded punishment was offered only when the offender was found to be rebellious and recalcitrant.

In this way, in the Indian society, the caste system nullified the right to equality and destroyed the self-esteem of the lower castes people, mostly the untouchables. It also debarred the untouchables from any kind of freedom from the ancient times. They were in constant fear of transgressing the caste rules and any violation of such rules led to the punishment. Generations passed facing different kinds of exploitation and subjugation, which imprinted indelible impression on the untouchables. Sometimes, occasional sense of resentment might arise in their minds, but that was too faint to be expressed from their dominated hearts. No help from any quarter was there for these people. They were accustomed to their lowest position in the society and never ever tried to change it. They knew that their happiness depended on their ready acceptance of caste rules and so they went on accepting in docile submission.

Most of the above-mentioned practices of untouchability are observed in Anand's novel *U* in a very poignant manner. Bakha, the protagonist of *U* suffers humiliations and insults for his caste. Apart from Bakha, other untouchables also had to accept their marginalised position in society. Bakha could not understand the meaning of social

injustice his community had to face, and often he wanted to fight against it. However, he was conditioned by the prevalent social norms and was forced to reconcile to his miserable state. Consequently, constant subjugation and humiliation of the untouchables like Bakha bred a mental attitude, which was fatal to their development as human beings. To avoid pollution, the untouchables were made to live in isolated places away from the inhabiting places of higher caste people. No public well was open to them and their children could not study in ordinary schools. Even, the doors of the temples were restricted to their entry. The severity of exclusion was such that even the mere shadow of the untouchable could pollute the high caste person. However, despite such inhuman treatment, Bakha and his likes were unable to raise their voice or to stage rebellion as they were often crushed by the inhuman caste system.

The Influence of Karma:

In the Indian religious traditions, explanation of evil is understood through the doctrine of Karma and rebirth. The suffering of an individual is construed as the result of wrongdoing of his previous birth. Such a concept is possible through the idea of multiple incarnations of man. Someone's suffering in this life is indicative of that individual's wrongdoing in his past life. Similarly, his present wrongdoing or sin will be punished in this life or in his future life. This philosophy endorses a consistent and comprehensive explanation for the punishment of evil. None but the individual himself is responsible for his sufferings. Such a philosophy of Karma and rebirth, definitely offers emotional and intellectual satisfaction in explaining sufferings of man in Indian context. It seems, this philosophy attempts to provide a plausible explanation to the

injustice, unfairness and the sufferings of innocent men and women in the Indian society.

According Hindu philosophy, life is a cycle, which goes through true self with different difficulties to reach ultimately the realisation of true self. Everything that has happened in this world is not merely due to chance or accident. According to Hindu philosophy, Dharma or Law of God governs the world, but Dharma does not predestine man to his fate. Here comes the doctrine of Karma into action because karma acts as the driving force of the moral order of the world governed by Dharma. Man is free to act but his action will be weighed upon on the scale of Dharma. Man's action is not impeded upon by any external factor. In fact, man reaps the fruit of his own action. According to the doctrine of karma:

Individuality is due to Karma...The kind of world into which we are born is just the return of the works of the doer. The individual organism is the working machinery intended to produce that requital in the form of actions and it results into suffering and happiness. (Radhakrishnan, 1923, p. 97)

In this way, the mystery behind man's suffering and range of man's conditions in life are attempted to solve through the doctrine of Karma, Rebirth and Sansara in Indian philosophy. In his life, man is endowed with social status on the merit of birth, virtues, happiness and sufferings on the basis of his action—good or evil in his past life. Doctrine of rebirth or reincarnation states that man's present condition and even his future life is determined by his actions of past life.

In Hindu Philosophy, Karma is considered a causal law, which maintains that somebody's action in past life has direct impact on the happenings of future lives, and

that soul is an immortal entity in the mortal body, which can act of its own accord and bears man's individual and moral responsibility from one life to another across the time. Doctrine of Karma embodies within itself the law of cause and effect as it claims that every action irrespective of its time of occurrence past or present has consequence, which may be immediate or remote. P. Nagaraja Rao (1981) commented:

The doctrine of *Karma* inculcates in us faith in the absolute justice, that we experience and an attitude of wise, uncomplaining acceptance of the inequalities of life. In the Indian view of life, there is the marked absence of bitterness when misfortune befalls them. There is no shouting against injustice, no railing against God. *Karma* induces in us a mood of acceptance and understanding as we know that there is no dark fate that governs us. We move by our deeds. (pp. 17-18)

According to the karma doctrine, man is architect of his own fate and therefore, there is reason behind his sufferings in life. Therefore, man's suffering bears definite meaning. Again, if man goes on doing his work (karma), sufferings may cease or he may be happy in his next life. Clooney (1989) simplifies it in this way—"people suffer because of their past deeds in this and previous lives, and likewise enjoy benefits based on past good deeds" (p.530). However, the problem with the doctrine of Karma and rebirth is that it is very difficult to find out and define the nature of wrongdoing. At the same time, when somebody commits sins, there is no way of finding out what the retribution will be and when the punishment will be meted out. In this regard, Arthur Herman's (1976) observation is worth quoting: "since rebirth solution is adequate for solving the theological problem of evil, this undoubtedly explains why the problem was never of much concern to the classical Indian" (p. 288).

The oppression and unfairness in the Indian society is justified with the doctrine of Karma in the sense that suffering masses only repaying the price of the prior wrongs committed by them. In fact, it is understood that social oppression happens because of karma. The Indian regressive caste system is also ingrained in this Karma doctrine. The people of India do not blame God for the sufferings they have to undergo because the reason for suffering can be attributed to the Karma doctrine. This is very significant because the sufferer, in such a situation attributes his suffering to past wrong doings. Oppressors are never questioned about their actions. In this way, social oppression goes on continuously uninhibited for centuries after centuries.

In Anand's novels, except Lal Singh and Ananta, other characters accepted their position in the society. Bakha questioned his status as an untouchable in the society, but he was forced to accept his outcaste status. Munoo, a boy of fourteen did not have any understanding of the outside world; he became a puppet of his immediate surroundings, a passive and muted human being. Same is the case with Gangu, who knew intuitively about his imminent danger while he was on his journey to Assam with his family in the hope of a golden future. But, Gangu did not wish to do anything regarding his impending misfortune; he resigned himself passively to his destiny. These characters were lacking in the zeal to fight—to fight for their right. Therefore, the spirit of rebellion did not even occur in the minds of these characters as they were forced to believe that they were forced to accept the dictates of their Karma.

Problem of Illiteracy:

The Pre-British Indian society was lagging behind in its socio-economic development in comparison to other modern civilisations around the world. In the Pre British India,

the caste-stratified Hindu society ascribed the duty of preaching religious doctrines and teaching to the Brahmin caste. Other castes were not entitled to get higher studies. Only Brahmins were allowed to undertake study in religious and higher secular subjects in institutions such as Tols, Vidyalayas, and Chatuspathis etc. Knowledge was imparted through Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hindus. The system of education in both Hindu Tols and Muslim Madrassas restricted and closed for the people belonging to the lowest strata of the society. The main objective of education was to make students ardent believers in religion-either Hindu or Muslim, leading them to make citizens who would be naive followers of the religion as well as the social structures approved by such religion. The pupils were made to believe in unchanging nature of authority, which ultimately dissuaded them from rational thinking. Prejudices and superstitions were accepted without any scrutiny.

There were vernacular schools for the common men. But only the sons of the traders got the opportunity to learn in such schools. Reading, writing, rudimentary knowledge of arithmetic, and religious interactions were rendered to them. The sons of lower caste people such as farmers were unable to get admission into these schools. In the religious instruction, pupils were trained to learn the teachings of Vedas, and to accept the caste system of the Hindu society. They also learnt the usefulness of moral virtue of showing utmost respect to the parents, teachers, village elders, and above all to the King. In fact, in such a learning environment, the pupils hardly got any scope and opportunity for the growth of their individuality. Consequently, from the very early stage of their life they were taught to be subdued as well as to accept the hierarchical order of the society. Muslims studied in the Madrassas where the medium of instruction was Arabic. In

some other schools, the students received the knowledge of vernaculars, Persian and other subjects.

It was in such a claustrophobic environment education in India was made available to the Indian people in the colonial regime under the British. Christian missionaries, British government and some western educated liberal Indians were responsible for the spread of modern education in India. In this regard, O'Malley (1941) said that the principal aim of the institution established by Christian missionaries was religion, but they also played vital role in spreading modern education in India (p. 139). However, the dissemination of modern education in India was made by the British government for the fulfilment of its political, economic and administrative needs. The initial move was taken by Lord Dalhousie. At that time, the British were able to conquer most parts of the Indian Territory, and established industries in the conquered land. To rule such a vast area of land, they needed strong administrative machinery. It was almost impossible for the British government to supply such a mammoth requirement of educated people with the knowledge of English to work in the administrative offices, industrial establishments, courts and other government institutions. Therefore, due to the urgent necessity, British government established schools and colleges in India to produce educated Indians who could cater to the needs of the government and commercial establishments. However, it is important to note that the educated Indians were primarily given subordinate posts of clerks, managers and agents.

Some liberal Indians also advocated for modern education in India. Gokhale, Tilak, Maganbhai Karamchand, Malaviya, Gandhi were some prominent Indians who supported modern education throughout India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy pioneered the demand for modern education as he thought that English education would inculcate

scientific and democratic thinking into the minds of the Indian people. Roy was against the indigenous system of education in Tols and Madrassas because such education only worked for the perpetuation of prejudice, superstition and the hierarchy of the society. In the words of Ram Mohan Roy:

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate their ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if that had been the policy of the British Legislature. (as cited in Desai, 1948, p. 131)

Every educated Indian of the period supported the modern education because it was anti-authoritarian and liberal, and it put stress on individual liberty, rejected blind faith and superstition, and also propagated rational thinking. However, one important aspect of modern education was that it was in English, and it brought about a chasm between the English educated Indian and the common masses. Again, this modern education was socially and culturally rooted in British life and it was unable to cope with the demand of Indian life and culture. Naturally, modern education in English glorified English life and culture, idealizing British rule and derided everything that was Indian. It also made the educated Indians to identify themselves with the life and culture of England.

It was observed that government neglected primary education for the Indian masses in village schools. They expected that educated Indians would impart knowledge and education to the illiterate masses as a duty. But such expectation was never fulfilled. In 1854, with Wood's Education Despatch, the modern education system had its formal

beginning, Woods Despatch had three objectives for Indian education system—firstly, it wanted to spread western culture; secondly it wanted trained educated persons for the public administration; and thirdly, the preparation of the Indians for the duty of the British government (Nurullah & Naik, 1943). The Despatch also stated the responsibility of the government for imparting education to the Indian masses and to women.

Thus, modern education was always disconnected from the ‘realities’ in India. The stigma of political servitude was never discussed, instead of it there was glorification of English life and culture portrayed through it. Social, cultural and economic backwardness of the Indian society was not at all a matter of concern, and the projection of India was always done in such a distorted manner that it weakened national pride. Modern education was imparted through the medium of English, which was never easy for the Indian students. In this regard, Shelvankar (1940) said that the aim of modern education system was:

To impress on middle class Indian youths the glory and grandeur of Britain and to train them to be competent servants of a foreign bureaucracy. It was vocational education with a vengeance; vocational education... which threw the weight of the curriculum on such matters as English syntax, Shakespearean prosody and the dates of the kings and queens, who had reigned over England.
(pp. 54-55)

The attitude of the government regarding mass education only confirmed the belief that they were in India not for the much-required social up-lift but to siphon the resources of India for enriching the British Empire. Education was one of the elements of such

exploitation to economise the cost of producing a class of subordinate officials in India to serve the British administration and related institutions. According to B. C. Pal it was clear that "The British Government in India has, from the very beginning, tried to shape and control the course of public education, and the motive has always been to strengthen the foundations of their political authority in the country" (as cited in Buch, 1940, p.150). Therefore, pre-British and post-British education system in India was full of limitations and shortcomings. Education in India, during that period was never sufficient to root out the evils of the society. While pre-British education system merely maintained the status quo of the social evils and authority, the modern education system introduced by the British Government was mainly for vocational education of the Indian people for the interest of the administration and the industry. In fact, modern education system was not adequate in bringing in rational thinking to the India masses.

Among the characters of the novels selected for study, Bakha and Gangu were illiterate. Munoo of *C* studied up to class five and was hopeful of further study. Bakha was a latrine cleaner but he was yearning for education. Gangu was a landless peasant in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab province. Ananta, though there was no mention of his education in the novel, worked in Bombay and Ahmedabad, and he was familiar with trade union movements and understood the value of solidarity. Only Lal Singh studied up to class eight at Church Mission High School in Sherkot. Lal Singh and Ananta were aware of their position in the society because of their exposure into the outside world. Other characters were aware of their position in the society but they lacked necessary in knowledge to give proper response to the immediate environment. In fact, as a whole, all the characters were devoid of satisfactory and complete modern education. Lal Singh could have attained complete modern education, had he not been threatened by

the landlord of his village. As they lacked systematic modern education, they were unable to interpret the reason behind their subjugation and exploitation. They accepted their position in the society without any probing into the root cause of their miserable state. Hence, this attempt to show lack of education as one prime reason for the spirit of rebellion being subdued in the characters mentioned.

Summing up:

From the analysis done above, it has been observed that in Pre-Independence India, Caste and belief in Karma played very important part in moulding character and behaviour of man. These concepts of Caste and Karma were incorporated through the vernacular education system imparted to the learning masses in Tols and Maddrassas. After the introduction of modern education by the British, hope was widespread that the concept of Caste and karma would give way to reason. However, it is observed that modern education in India through the medium of English was a political move by the British government for the sake of perpetuating their colonial regime. So, Caste consciousness, belief in Karma philosophy, faulty education system—all these factors contributed to the subjugation of the Indian people in Pre-Independent India. Exploited and dominated by the society and by the rulers, the poor Indians hardly had any strength to oppose and revolt against the exploitative forces—be it social, political, and financial.

On the other hand, Mulk Raj Anand as a novelist believed in peaceful co-existence. He was never in support of rebellion and bloodshed. He was a humanist—a true lover of human dignity. His protagonists were from the lowest strata of the society. They were living human beings with the passion and love for life. Bakha, Munoo, Gangu, Lal

Singh and Ananta all were optimistic in their attitudes. They understood the value of just and dignified life, and therefore, they remained submissive and conformist in an unfriendly society. Against the violent social, political and economic exploitation, they were ineffective to voice their revolt. In fact, they understood the futility of the revolt against violent system supported by the power of ruling class. However, they were not mute at heart as they wanted to oppose the infringement of their rights but they could not materialise it into reality. Lal Singh became aware of the power of unity at the last part of *TSATS*, while Ananta was aware of it from the very beginning. Unfortunately, though, Lal Singh understood the need of unity, he only hoped for a better future by organising the peasants, Ananta failed to organise his community members from the initial stage. The discussion of the selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand in the different chapters of this thesis shall be done against the background study on the various possible causes and results of social discontent and subdued spirit of rebellion, conducted in this chapter.

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