

***THE PREDICAMENT OF THE DALITS IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE AND
NARAYAN'S KOCHARETHI: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS***

(Dissertation submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English)

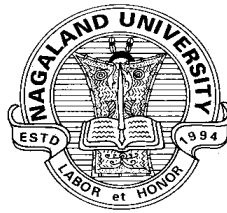
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DECLARATION

I, Ms. Puspanjali Dolay, hereby declare that the subject matter of my dissertation entitled *The Predicament of the Dalits in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Narayan's Kocharethi: A Postcolonial Analysis* is the bonafide record of work done by me under the supervision of Prof. Nigamananda Das and that the content of the dissertation did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship, associateship, etc. in any other university or institute. This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled *The Predicament of the Dalits in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Narayan's Kocharethi: A Postcolonial Analysis* is the bonafide record of research work done by Ms. Puspanjali Dolay, Regn. No.34/2019, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2018-2019. Submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English, this dissertation has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other title and that the dissertation represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my supervision. This is again certified that the research has been undertaken as per UGC Regulations May 2016 (amended) and the candidate has fulfilled the criteria mentioned in the University Ordinances for submission of the dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The term Dalit means 'scattered' or 'broken' in Sanskrit and Hindi. The lexical meaning of the term is ground or broken to pieces generally. The word Dalit can be traced back to the Varna system of the Hindu society. The Varna system divides the Hindu society into four varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Brahmin's were the priests, Kshatriyas were the warriors, the traders belonged to the Vaishyas and the labourers were regarded as the Shudras. The Brahmins have established the proposition that the caste system is modeled by God and is not man-made, where they considered themselves as the superior and the Shudras as inferior. The Shudras are not considered as twice born like the other three varnas. It is believed that they were meant to serve the three varnas. They were subjected to social oppression, discrimination and exclusion by the rigid traditions of this country. The Dalits were not included under this four-fold caste system. Communities belonging to one of the varnas or classes were called Savarna. The Dalits do not belong to any of this varna so they were called avarna. The rigidity of the caste system has confirmed the Dalits to be polluted, marginals, outcaste and downtrodden.

Dalits encompasses all depressed people irrespective of their caste. The Dalits are the suppressed groups of India who have been kept depressed by subjecting them to untouchability. Etymologically the term Dalit is inclusive of meanings such as: downtrodden, disadvantaged, underprivileged, dispossessed, abused, prostrate etc. Prior to 1935 the term Dalit was in use to designate the oppressed sections of the society. Later the Government of India, Act 1935 renamed them as Schedule Castes. Today Dalit encloses broad communities including nomadic tribes: an

official classification that was originated with the British Raj positive discrimination efforts in 1935 being the Scheduled Tribe. These caste and tribes are subject to discrimination and social disadvantage, relegated to menial labour and has no possibility of upward mobility.

The Brahmins imposed social, economic, religious restrictions in their religious text which were implemented by the kings. So, it was an obligation for the lowest caste to follow the royal order. Both the religion and the state confined them into multiple slavery and later into untouchability. They were mere animals and a puppet under/for the high caste. The Dalits are poor, deprived and socially backward. Their most basic needs are not fulfilled. Dalits are shunned, insulted, banned from temples and higher caste homes, made to eat and drink from separate utensils in public places, and, in extreme but not uncommon cases are raped, burned, lynched, and gunned down. They led a life of wretchedness and could hardly dream of independence. This condition prevailed till the British came to India.

The arrival of the British in India had changed the social scenario. They brought in new knowledge, technology, new codified legal system which replaced the traditional religion. As a result a group of literates grew under the tag 'social reformer'. They voiced protest against child marriage, superstitious beliefs that prevailed among the high caste society that is the Brahmins. The era saw the rise of great personalities like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1828-1890) and B.R Ambedkar (1891-1956). They ruthlessly examined the Hindu religion, attacked those who supported caste superiority and maintained that the backward classes, untouchables and women in the country must be freed from slavery and must be allowed to live a life of dignity. B.R Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule started a political movement to bring equality and freedom for the untouchables. The Mahar movement under the leadership of B.R Ambedkar emerged. The Mahar movement of Maharashtra rose against the upper caste domination in the twentieth

century. This movement reflects a total rejection of the religion of the caste Hindus, which was identified with hierarchy and inequality. The Mahars supported and belonged the religion that stands for egalitarian values hence they are superior to the caste Hindus. This movement became a shaping spirit for Dalit literature. Dalit literature took up the Dalit as its subject matter. It provided a new space for the Dalits. They rejected traditional literature, eastern and western critical theories and established a literature of their own to reclaim their identity. Before Ambedkar, attempts were made by few writers to represent the miserable condition of the Dalits. It was written in a very small way before Ambedkar's movement. Among them were writers like Gopalbaba Valangkar, Pandit Kondiram and Kisan Phagoji Bansod.

The origin of Dalit literature can be traced back to Buddha (6th century BC), Chokhamela (14th century AD), Mahatma Phule (1828-90) and Prof. S.M Mate. The pioneer of Dalit Literature was B.R Ambedkar. The first Dalit writer was Madara Chennaih, an eleventh century cobbler saint who lived during the reign of western Chalukyas. He was a Vachana(sayings) poet.

Chokhamela and Eknath are a vital figure in Warkari Sampradaya (Tradition of Pilgrimage). Chokhamela was a fourteenth century Maharashtrian saint in the Bhakti tradition. He belonged to the Mahar caste. Eknath was a Brahmin from the holy city of Paithan. The lives of both Eknath and Chokhamela are enveloped into legends and sung by the devotees on the pilgrimage to Pandharpur. Both stand as a role model to fight against untouchability. Eknath though a Brahmin believed that equality should exist among the true devotees of God. Chokhamela was famous for his *abhangs* and it carries a deep sense of protests.

It is true that though Chokhamela used his abhangas to give voice to his feelings against untouchability, his protest is subdued and overshadowed by his devotion to Lord Vitthal. The

Bhakti movement in Maharashtra helped in driving home the truth that in the eyes of God, all people are equal. The movement advocated for equality and brotherhood. But Ambedkar had more faith in political means to raise the status of the untouchable than with religious means.

B.R Ambedkar the father of Dalit literature founded People's Education Society and established the Siddharth College in Bombay for the Dalits (Deivasigamani 23). The first batch from this college Ghanashyam Talwatkar and others set up a literary body, the Siddharth Sahitya Sangh. Later the Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangh was formed from this body. Dalit literature did really flourish under the influence of B. R Ambedkar. Its beginning took place in the Marathi language in Maharashtra. *Prabuddha Bharat* acted as the mouthpiece of Scheduled Caste Federation. During this period Dalit literature was dominated by Brahmanical writers like V.S Khandekar and N.S Phadke. Dalit writers imitated the Brahmin writers. Later an attempt was made by the writers to create a literature of their own free from Brahmanical influence. Such writers include Anna Bhau Sathe a Dalit writer influenced by Marxism gave voice to the hopes and aspirations of the Dalits.

Jyotiba Phule expressed his opinion that the Non-Dalit writings lacked the adversities and troubles the Dalits had faced. He felt the need for a separate conference. As a result the first conference was organized in Bombay in 1958 by the Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha.

The term Dalit literature came to be used after a stormy discussion organized by the periodical Marathwada in its Diwali issue of 1969. But in fact, 1958 conference discussed Dalit literature in detail and passed the following resolution: that the literature written by the Dalits and that written by Non-Dalits about the Dalits in Marathi be accepted as a separate entity known as 'Dalit literature'(Prabuddha Bharat, 4-3-58) and realizing its cultural importance, the

universities and literary organizations should give it its proper place. The inaugural speech by Anna Bhau Sathe spelt out the purpose of Dalit literature but it failed to set into motion any literary activity. Its centre was established in Marathwada in the Milind College. Both students and the Non-Dalit staff exchanged ideas about literary and Cultural Revolution.

The sixties saw the rise of Narayan Surve and Baburao Bagul who gave momentum to Dalit literature. The period was also characterized by the emergence of Little Magazine Movement which claimed they were fighting against the establishment. Bagul's short story collection *Jevha Mijaat Chorli Hoti (When I had concealed my Caste)* took entire Marathi literary world by storm. Bagul's stories paved the way for the emerging writers to shape their experiences creatively. The Little Magazine Movement was a fight against the establishment, a system and an established technique of writing. Leading writers of this movement were Satish Kalsekar, Tulsi Parab and Raja Dhale related their literature to the Dalit and toiling masses. Landmarks like *Kosala* by Balachandra Nemade and *Fakta* by Baburao Bagul appeared in the Little Magazine.

Progressive Literature Movement grew under the influence of Marxism. Literature became a mirror of existing social realism and was presented from sociological perspective. The critical theory of the Progressive Literary Movement not only augmented the strength of criticism of social realism but also gave it a kind of respectability.

The centre for Dalit literary movement was established in the Milind College, Marathwada. Major contribution came from the principal M.B Chitnis and M.N Wankhade. M.N Wankhade brought back from the US the mordancy of Black literature, its feeling of revolt, the shocking experience reflected in it, the forms in which it manifested itself. The Milind College

launched a new quarterly journal *Asmita* (now *Asmitadarshan*). It broke the feeling of suffocation which the Dalit writers faced and also encouraged the new generation of creative Dalit writers.

M.N Wankhade made a comparative study of the Dalits and the Blacks. The Maharashtra Bauddha Sahitya Parishad was formed in 1967 and held its conference in Bhusawal. Wankhade raised some fundamental questions. He believed that Dalit writers should revolt and produce their own literature through which they could present their problems. The first meet of the Maharashtra Bauddha Sahitya Sabha produced its first representative collection named *Akar* a collection of poems written by Baburao Bagul, Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Chokha Kamble, Hira Bansode etc. The poems revolved around traditional, white-collar experiences. The white collar writers portrayed life in the slums artistically from white collar point of view. Baburao's second collection of short stories *Maran Swasta Hot Ahe (Death is getting Cheaper)* won the state award in 1968. He presented the harsh reality for the first time in Marathi literature. Baburao spoke for change, denied the tradition they upheld and held up revolt, negativism and loyalty to science as his values, and opposed the communal, reactionary philosophy. They rejected the mainstream literary tradition and revolted strongly. Both the educated Dalits and the upper caste reviewers to Dalit literature viewed the literature very negatively. The Dalit Brahmins felt that Dalit literature was something dirty which had tarnished the image of their society. They wanted to speak, write, and live like the Brahmins and missed no opportunity to ridicule Dalit literature. The propaganda against Baburao Bagul's novel *Paushya*, then being serialized in *Amhi*, and against *Athvaninche Pakshi*, an autobiographical serial by Prof. P.E Sonkamble, was the result of this attitude of the 'Dalit Brahmins'(Dangle 34).

Negative reaction could not affect the Dalit writers. They confidently expressed their feelings in the literary journals like *Satyakatha*, *Pratishthan*, and *Marathwada*. A Non-Dalit periodical *Magova* took the most balanced view. The Dalits also felt a feeling of oneness with *Magova* as its views were based on sound sociological principles. The emergence of *Golpitha* by Namdeo Dhasal was a landmark in Dalit literature. It expressed the acute pain of the Dalits and raised a number of questions about values in Marathi literature and language. Similar other journals appeared like the *Doha* and *Gaokusabaheeril Kavita*.

The dominant Maratha caste took control over the banks, sugar factories, marketing federations-in the name of the co-operative movement which is being controlled almost in a capitalist-monopolist manner. The rich farmers and the bureaucracy controlled by them initiated a series of atrocities on the Dalits. But education played an important role in the rural areas. There began to develop a class of educated Dalit youth. Their association with the workers of the leftist movements in rural areas gave them the ability to understand the entire system. The young generation of writers like Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Namdeo Dhasal, J.V Pawar, Umakant Randhir were influenced by Baburao Bagul. They realized that there was no point in merely writing provocative poetry against the injustices. They had become familiar with the Black movement and literature in the USA and were greatly attracted to it.

The result was that youths Namdeo Dhasal, Arjun Dangle and J.V Pawar took initiative and established the Dalit Panthers in Bombay on 9 July, 1972. The Dalits of Maharashtra got acquainted with the Panther and the discontent of several years began to explode. The period between 1972 and 1978 was regarded as the second stage in the Dalit literary movement. The period also saw the split of Dalit Panthers which led to strife and an internal conflict about Marxism vis-à-vis Ambedkarism. But at the collective level the movement appeared stagnant.

There were two reasons for this. Firstly: the initial team spirit and action were being eroded and internal conflict substituted for these. Secondly, as some Dalit writers got recognition, new vested interests came to the fore. Dalit Panther movement championed the cause of Dalit in creative interests and hobbies for writers like Namdeo Dhasal and Raja Dhale. The movement borrowed its support from Dr. Ambedkar who believed that the root cause of untouchability lies in a pronounced cultural or racial difference of the inferior on the superior race.

Between 1978 and 1986 Dalit literature reached its zenith. Writers received state award. Dalit literature came to be included in schools and university textbooks and was translated into number of Indian and foreign languages. It was the period of autobiographies. It was not only restricted to the life of a Dalit writer, infact it was a delineation of the social system, communalism, injustice, exploitation and of the lives of people who had been subjected to these evils. *Baluta*, *Athvaninche Pakshi* and *Upara* was some of the well known autobiographies.

Alongwith literature mass movement organized by the leaders like B.R Ambedkar came into prominence. A struggle to free the untouchables from the clutches of upper caste took place in Maharashtra under the leadership of B.R Ambedkar. The Mahars loyally supported Ambedkar. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956 was a revolutionary change in the life of the Dalits, which was conspicuous in their socio-cultural life and also in their mental make-up. Ambedkar was not a fierce opponent of Marxism. He believed that Buddhism and Communism were similar. To him Marxism does not reject violence to achieve power; Buddhist philosophy emphasizes non-violence, mercy and love. Ambedkar believed that only education could bring change in the lives of the Dalits. So he opened many schools and colleges exclusively for Dalits. Education gave Dalits a lot of self confidence and propelled them to fight against their oppressors.

Dalit literature is a protest literature against all kinds of exploitation. It aims to highlight the disabilities, difficulties, atrocities and the inhuman treatment meted out in the society and strives hard to create social awakening among the downtrodden. It is completely based on individual, culture, social burden and Dalitness. Dalit literature makes an attempt to define and assert Dalit identity. An important aspect of Dalit literature is self-criticism or self-protest. The writers of Dalit literature do not hesitate to attack the inferiority and superiority complexes of Dalits and caste Hindus respectively. Dalit literature is ultimately a declaration of a revolution of the suppressed class of Indian society. It is not properly understood by the people to whom writers reflect their self-experience and burning indignation in their works. The condition of Dalit woman is worse than that of Dalits. She has suffered much and still suffering. She must walk through the burdening desert of casteism in search of some oasis.

It also exposes the limits of post-colonial mobility and hybridity by revealing tenacious persistence, even exacerbation, of binary forms of identity under conditions of uneven globalization. The chief influence is as support, as proof that a group similar to the Dalit can become militant, creative, and progress in a hostile society. Emerging at the unstable intersection of the local, the national, and the transnational, Dalit discourse thus enacts a contestatory affirmation that is expressed not in terms of a grim determination to take responsibility for the given dwelling.

Dalit literature has been spontaneously emerging in revolt of localized expressions of the pan-Indian caste – based atrocities on the “outcastes”. The various forms of genres have been brought under varied analysis. Dalit literature is viewed today through sophisticated lenses of feminism, environmental consciousness, subaltern perspective, intra-stratum dynamics, post colonialism and marginalization. The Dalit while demanding socio-political equality and a

dignified also challenge the epistemologies of the nation and demand its historical narratives to be egalitarian and inclusive. It aims to recover the histories of struggles for human dignity and caste discrimination by highlighting Dalit intellectual and political activism. It is a branch of subaltern literature which stands for the writings on Dalit by Dalits from an insider perspective. It is also a literature about Dalit by outsiders. In the modern context, the latter is questioned and its authenticity is contested. As a postcolonial nativist movement, Dalit literature voices the concerns of various subaltern castes and communities, the question of identity, resistance within the Hindu caste hierarchy. It has become a defiant generic presence in most of the regional languages. The different and distracting Dalit voice has always been muted within the contextual confinements of Humanism. Dalit literature is an attempt to contain the Dalit identity within the paradigms of Marxism, Gandhian and nationalistic framework. Hindu society constructed the Dalit subaltern as its other. It has always followed a policy of exclusion with regard to the representation of the voice of this subaltern other, corresponding to their social exclusion by treating them 'untouchables'. Modern and contemporary literature denied the voice of the untouchables as subject. They are treated as mere objects. Hence Dalit literature attempts to regain their voice by appropriating the Dalit through their representations.

India is a land of diversities in terms of values, traditions and cultures. Thus its literature represents the hybridization and multiple identities. The subaltern has become a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse. The writers portray the difference between the oppressor and the oppressed in their works and to re-establish or regain their identity through their literary texts.

The word subaltern as a referent for the marginalized masses took its origin from Antonio Gramsci in his book *Prison Notebooks*. To Said colonial discourses of Orientalism helped the

European colonial powers to establish their control over the Orient is parallel to the Gramscian view of how dominant classes establish their hegemony over the subaltern classes. In a similar vein, the subaltern histories in India attempted to rewrite the elite versions of Indian historiography, giving the subaltern agency its own space, doing away with misrepresentations. The subaltern studies collective tries to reclaim the Indian national history from the perspective of the people rather than from the viewpoint of the state. This is well evident in Mahasweta Devi's writings. To them the national history is produced from the bourgeoisie perspectives with the elitist intentions and interests. Elitism just as in History is also identifiable in Dalitist cultural representations. The bourgeoisie elites in particular subordinated the localized resistance of the peasants to the larger national project of decolonization. In both the colonial and the bourgeoisie historical representations, the complex social and political histories of the subalterns in India are not adequately recognized. Dalit and Dalitist writing is an attempt to rewrite such histories and bring to the forefront.

Gramscian theory of the subaltern is preferred to the Marxian proletarian discourse in the context of Dalit Subalternity. Marxian proletarian discourse excludes the socially and culturally underprivileged. He idealizes the proletarian-working class. Whereas Gramsci in *The Prison Notebook* emphasizes the resistant nature of the subaltern consciousness. Though the Dalit are subjected to the hegemonic influence of the ruling classes; the peasants and other subaltern classes have retained their dynamic and revolutionary consciousness. Such consciousness is well reflected through Dalit literature. The disintegrated and subservient Dalit consciousness is also akin to the dynamic revolutionary resilience.

Dalit literature started being mainstream in India with the appearance of the English translations of Marathi Dalit writing. The two books that popularized this genre throughout India

were *An Anthology of Dalit Literature* edited by Mulk Raj Anand and Eleanor Zelliot, and *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*, originally published in three volumes and later collected in a single volume, edited by Arjun Dangle, both published in 1992, were perhaps the first books that popularized the genre throughout India. Before these translations trace of the Dalit was evident in the mainstream epics like *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. After the appearance of dalit literature in the mainstream several writers started taking up the Dalit as its issue. Few of the Non-Dalit writers contributed immensely to Dalit literature. Significant among them are writers like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Prem Chand, Mulk Raj Anand, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Pratibha Roy and others. But, Traditional mainstream literature was mostly concerned with the upper classes and caste and the tradition was to accept the values set by them as standard. Portrayal of ordinary man was somewhat distorted. It was Dalit literature which gave a new voice to the exploited masses. Their fight for their rights, their exploitation and insults under the upper caste got expressed in Dalit literature. Dalit literature rejected the tradition of portraying the upper caste as the subject while the Non-Dalits maintain that tradition cannot be rejected and only what is not required should be thrown out. This rejection of the Dalits was viewed as a separatist step. But this step has given a proper due to the lowest stratum of the society. The difference between the works of Dalit and Non-Dalit writers is not just because of their caste but due to differing experiences and their ways of interpreting them. The Non-Dalit writers questioned the mainstream literature. Baburao Bagul rejected the mainstream literary tradition on the ground that it was based on Varnas and Varnashramas (Bagul 57). Any brahmanic text begins with the depiction of Dharma and ends with moksha or salvation. The story of kings and queens and the glorification of their lives is the main theme of mainstream literature.

Dalit aspect has yet to take the shape of a movement in Indian English literature. While the Dalit writers have rendered an authentic and autobiographical picture of the Dalits, the Non-Dalit writers did present an imaginary and fictional plight of the Dalits. The Non-Dalit outsider does not have access to the universe of thought and experience of the Dalits and therefore, he or she tends to construct the image of the subaltern from imagination. They employ certain stereotypes of their own to probe the Dalit experience. The pioneering writers of Dalit empathy are the Non-Dalit writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Premchand, Gopinath Mahanty, Padmini Sengupta, Tare Sherka, Kanhu Charan Mahanty, Babani Bhattacharya, Mahasweta Devi, and K. Shivram Karnath, T. Shivsankar Pillai, Parasuran Mund, Rajendra Avasthi, Shashi Deshpande, Pratibha Roy, Arundhati Roy etc. Though there are a few novels centralizing on Dalit issue, quite a good number of novels are empathetic towards the oppressed/marginalized sections of the society including the Dalits. A narrative is seen as incomplete without the Dalit characters. Indian English novels became relevant with Gandhi's mass movement in the 1930s. Many novels were ideologically involved with Gandhian movement for the upliftment of the Harijans. One such novel is *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand. It is one of the pioneers in taking up the Harijans as its subject matter. It provides us with the plight of the untouchables/ marginalized sections of the society in the traditional framework of social hierarchy. The novel is a classic one in Indian writing in English as it describes a single day in the life of Bakha, an untouchable boy. It is one of the fictional representations of Dalit life and issues in Indian literature. *Untouchable* describes a place, a society, and certain persons who cannot be forgotten: a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy. His other novels which delineate

the plight of the marginalized are *Two leaves and a Bud*, *Coolie*, *The Old Man and the Cow* and *The Road*.

In other Dalit literatures by Non-Dalit writers the Dalit characters are portrayed not as stock characters, but presented with understanding and empathy. In Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Shadow From Ladakh*(1988) details the courage and boldness of a Dalit women fighting for her rights. Romen Basu's *Outcaste: A Novel* (1986) documents the prevalent of traditional power structure and the revolution of Sambal against the established social order. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*(1997) is a story of isolation and oppression of several dimensions in different contexts: women, children, Syrian Christians, Dalits and so on. It portrays the unequal treatment of a Dalit under the high caste people. It details certain norms for the Dalits prescribed by the high class society. Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) shows the most heart rendering picture of imbalanced societies in India. The novel refers to the cultural and social issues of marginal groups in the early free Indian Villages. Similarly there are other novels that show the distinction between the upper caste and lower class sections of the society. *Samskara*(1965) by Anantha Murthy presents a vivid picture of a society, which has accepted caste discrimination as norms. It has unquestioningly accepted the Brahmin eminence, and pushed the lower caste people to the periphery. Brahmins are supposed to be the spiritual and temporal guides, teachers and exponents of law, whereas the Dalits perform menial services only. They are denied equality. They depend upon manual labour for their livelihood. Dalitist writing represents the cause of the oppressed downtrodden caste and communities.

A contrasting image between the Dalit and Non-dalit writers can be established. Writers like Sharankumar Limbale, a Marathi Dalit writer, Bama, a Dalit woman writer in Tamil and

Omprakash Valmiki, a well known Dalit writer in Hindi argue that dalits alone can voice the concerns of Dalits. Sharankumar Limbale's views on Dalit literature.

Only that literature written by Dalit writers can be called Dalit literature which concerns Dalits which is inspired by the Dalit Movement and which is conscious of the ideas of Phule and Ambedkar... the consciousness underlying it are of the utmost importance.

(Limbale 126)

Mainstream Indian Literature uses idioms that have traditionally represented culturally elitist experience. It is seen that mainstream literature has failed to represent the depth and subtleties of Dalit experience. At the same time Indian subaltern experience has a tradition starkly alien to the mainstream due to centuries old social isolation due to caste system. A common identification between the Dalit and Non-Dalit writing is visible. The Dalit writers' access to hegemonic culture and familiarity with the oppressors' literary tradition make partly identify with the centre. In addition the centre has welcomed the marginal voices in order to subsume them. But this identification remains incomplete, as the margin does not inherit the value system of the centre by tradition. The Dalit- insider often borrows theme, imagery, symbols from the mainstream. Narayan's *Kocharethi* has a similar thematic concern with Mahasweta Devi's tribal novels. The subaltern writers depend upon native elite tradition. Potheri Kunhambu's *Saraswativijayam* is replete with citation, repetition and quotation from dominant canonical texts like *Manusmriti*. Each chapter begins and ends with high tradition.

The Non- Dalit writers, having no access to subaltern consciousness employ characters and situations drawn from classical sources to represent the consciousness of the caste subaltern

and gendered caste subalterns. Mahasweta Devi's short story 'Draupadi' from *Breast Stories* employs classical sources. Patriarchy is dominant in this story. In "Draupadi", the protagonist, Dopadi Mejhen, is a tribal revolutionary, who is arrested and gang raped in custody. The attribution of the name Draupadi to the tribal girl Dopadi Mejhen by an upper caste woman-who, it can be argued might stand for author herself- is very significant. It helps Mahasweta Devi to mythicize her heroine, inviting comparison with the classical Draupadi of Maharashtra. Devi's Dalit female, too, is stripped naked by the patriarchal authority. The Dalit woman is isolated and most gruesome atrocities are committed against her. Devi's writings focuses on the gendered subaltern. The Dalitist representation highlights the pitiable plight of the subordinated caste and their victimization under repressive social structures as seen in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

Dalitist writing draws its sources from classical tradition and cultural mythology. It relies on the fictional, historic and objective modes. While Dalit writing has nothing to do with mythology. He/she creates imagery from the concrete experience of exploitation and violence. The Dalit writers draw its sources from folk and oral tradition. There is a heavy emphasis on narrative and aesthetic excellence in literature is deemed irrelevant in the Dalit – insider narratives since their goal is self-expression, authenticity and truth in representation.

India is one of the world's largest democracies, but ironically it remains as caste based society. The workings of varna or caste system has segregated thousands of Dalits from its mainstream and has compelled them to lead a life of dejection, subjugation and insufferable sadness. Their existence is subhuman and debased. Keeping this in mind Dalit literature rejects the degraded Hindu social set-up which promotes the caste system. Dalit literature is about the exploited and oppressed masses. It is the literature of social consciousness and social

commitment. It is directed against the epistemic violence of Brahmanism against the marginalized caste both on ideological and aesthetic grounds. Today Dalit literature not only expresses the concerns of Dalits alone, but it has also taken into account all those who have been exploited politically, economically in the name of caste, religion race and gender. Baburao Bagul has opined that Dalit literature takes man as its centre. It participates in sharing man's joys and sorrows and leads him to a change and revolution. Dalit literature also teaches equality to the mass of humanity.

CHAPTER 2

Subalternity and Mimicry in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable

The world is a world of inequality and difference between the west and the rest. This difference was made absolute in the 19th century when European countries colonized the Non-Europeans mostly Asia, Africa, Caribbean Islands, South America and the other Third World Countries. Nearly nine-tenths of the land surface was controlled by the European powers. The colonial and imperial rule defined the third world countries by using some adjectives such as childlike, inferior, feminine and passive. To them the Non-Europeans are incapable of looking after themselves and they need a greater power like the Europeans for development. The relationship between the Europeans and Non-Europeans was thought in terms of race. The Whites versus the Non-Whites. The Whites as superior and the Non-Whites as the inferior race. The whites regarded themselves as the store house of knowledge and their culture was considered as the base for legitimate government, literature, law, economics, science, music, art- in a word civilization. East was identified as the 'exotic' the 'other' far more inferior to the west.

East is seen as a fascinating realm of the exotic, the mystical and the seductive. It also tends to be homogenous, the people there being anonymous masses rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions (lust, terror, fury etc) rather than by Conscious choices or decisions. (Berry 187)

During the colonial rule, the colonized people revolted against this domination through both active and passive resistance. The Third World countries revolted against the administrators, law makers, politicians of European powers who ruled the countries with utmost

sovereignty. It was at the end of 19th century the rebel became successful to some extent. The Europeans withdrew from most of the countries. Decolonization began after the First World War had ended in 1918 and continued till the Second World War in 1945. By 1950 almost many countries were liberated from the colonial power. But the Non-European countries were able to achieve triumph at the cost of life and resources. When the countries achieved national sovereignty the colonized countries moved from colonial status to autonomous, a postcolonial position. The movement from direct to indirect, from colonial domination to independence was minor. Despite decolonization in the 20th century the same ex- imperial countries continued to exert control over the countries that they formerly ruled as colony. After granting independence to its colonies, there arose inequality of power. The European countries required more additional labour and they fulfilled it through immigration.

The disparity between the west and the East was contested, and a new way of anti-colonial struggle of the past was continued and renewed by a body of theoretical approach called Postcolonialism. Postcolonialism is the reinterpretation of the colonial period: what life was like. Postcolonialism is also a body of writing developed in the 1980s. Its arise can be traced back to as early as the colonial period when writers began to write emphasizing their culture and colour. It is historically placed after colonialism. It studies the unequal relationship between the Western and Non-western countries. In a way it offers a position to see things differently, to question back the dominant voices, provides a language and a politics in which the subjugated voices comes first. Postcolonialism is: The critical study of the history, culture, literature, and other mode of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France and other European imperial powers. (Abrams 245)

This study focuses only on the Third World Countries. It not only talks about equality of status to Non-European countries, but also for equal access to resources, material well-being, the dynamic power of their cultures: the cultures that are now intervening in and transforming the cultures of the west.

The ancestry of Postcolonialism can be traced back to Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*(1961), *Black Skin, White Masks*(1967) and *Toward The African Revolution* (1967) and Edward Said's *Orientalism*(1978). For years the Black Man has been dehumanized and lost its culture. Since, the colonial period they have seen themselves through the eyes of the White Man. The White Man has constantly portrayed the black as less- than human, an object without a soul, an animal and years of indoctrination have made the black man believe this to be true. For the West the native is always the 'primitive other' who are in need of the west to civilize themselves. The black man is always the darkness inside the white man that the white man seeks to expel and deny. Fanon in his book *Orientalism* expresses his belief that this view of seeing oneself through the west should be rejected. Infact, the first step for the colonized people in finding their voice and identity is to reclaim their own past and begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued.

Said's *Orientalism*(1978) inaugurated postcolonial studies as a discipline and postcolonial theory as a critical method. Orientalism is defined as the theory, practice, poetics of representation, by the Europeans, of the Arab world, Asia, China and Japan. Said's book is a specific expose of the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or western and inferiority of what is not. The European cultural tradition of orientalism is identifying the east as the other, a surrogate and underground self. The projection

of East by the west is never acknowledged by the west. Thus, postcolonial criticism lays emphasis on the representation of the Non-European as the exotic or immoral other.

A postcolonial identity was well evident in the decolonized countries. This identity was the result based on cultural interactions between different identities: cultural, national, ethnic, gender and class based which are assigned varying degrees of social power by the colonial society. So, the emphasis on identity as doubled, or hybrid, or unstable is one of the other characteristic of postcolonial discourse. Postcolonialism can be well understood through the three phases. The 'Adopt phase': where the postcolonial writers adopt primarily the African or Asian forms, supplemented with European derived influences. They believed that such adoption has universal validity. The second is the 'Adapt phase'. It aims to adapt the European form to African subject matter, thus assuming partial rights of intervention in the genre. The third phase is a declaration of cultural independence whereby African writers remake the form to their own specification, without reference to European norms. This phase is called the 'Adept phase'.

Postcolonialism has eclipse terms like Postmodernism, Post structuralism, Deconstruction and so on. It is not a unified movement with distinct methodology. It encloses several other central and recurrent issues. The theorist Gayatri Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha holds an utmost position in Postcolonialism. In her critical work *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987) and in the essay *Can The Subaltern Speak?* She introduces the term subaltern, essentialism and strategic essentialism. Here she widens the scope of subaltern literature and makes a harsh comment on the male dominated society where the women are marginalized, inferior, doubly exploited. The women are the subalterns in patriarchy. In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak the female as subaltern is even more deeply in shadow. Spivak is a postcolonial feminist critic.

Another significant figure in postcolonial criticism is Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture (1994)* introduces the concept of hybridity in defining the vision of postcolonial theory that all cultures are confluence in each other and it cannot be separated. He also raises the other concepts like cultural identity and mimicry to indicate the Westernization of native cultures.

The other important key concepts to understand postcolonialism are Discourse, hegemony, Marginality, Diaspora, Multiculturalism, Periphery and so on. Thus postcolonial theory- as epistemology, ethics, and politics- addresses racism, gender, resistance, alienation, feminist and political themes. It combats the residual effects of colonialism on cultures and discusses how a colonized people's knowledge about the world is generated under specific relations between the powerful and the powerless, circulated repetively and finally legitimated in service to certain imperial interests.

The postcolonial theory of the West as superior and the East as 'the inferior' and 'the other' is well applicable in Indian context especially in Dalit Literature. In India the lower caste people, the tribals, and the poor peasants live in the outskirts of the village and the town. The upper class society considers these communities as 'inferior'. They are dominated and subjugated in the hands of the dominant groups. A parallel line can be thus established. The domination and indifference of the West towards the East is similar to the domination of the upper caste towards the East. The co-relation between the Postcolonial theory and Dalit picture can be comprehended in Sharankumar Limbale's passage

...the village becomes the metropolis and Dalits exists literally on the periphery. Dalit settlements are not only apart from the upper caste Hindu settlements; They are actually

outside the boundary of the village. These physical separations signify other separations.

Dalits do the work, live the life, eat the food and wear the garment that the upper caste

Hindu will not. They draw water from a separate well and cremate their dead in a separate

space. Dalits are upper caste Hindu's other. But this other is not only separate and

different like the member of another ethno-cultural, religious or linguistic group. This

'other' is a part of Hindu society, and yet apart from it inscribed in that apartness and

difference is inferiority. (Limbale 2).

This co-relation between the postcolonial theory and Dalit literature paved the ground for both Dalit and Non-Dalit writers to question back such disparity. They used literature as a tool to deconstruct and reconstruct the society on grounds of fraternity, equality and liberty. They expose the system inhumanly looting them in the name of religion, caste, inferiority, untouchability, customs, traditions, ethics, moralities, superstitions and so on. Writers of Dalit literature question the subalternity of the peripheral.

The Indians are subaltern through the process of colonization to a superior group the Western. But the Indians are also guilty of the same process by making subaltern categories among their own community from the ancient past and even now. This creation of the subaltern is seen in every strata of society where they make the lower class as Dalits, women as marginalized subaltern and even Indian states are marginalized.

History of the dominant groups was accepted as official history. It was realized in the state. Antonio Gramsci was interested in the historiography of the subaltern groups. He coined

the term 'subaltern' meaning 'inferior rank' to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. The term 'Subaltern' was adopted by the postcolonial theory from the Subaltern Studies group of historians who produced five volumes of essays relating to the history, culture, beliefs, ideologies, economics, politics, and attitudes of the subaltern. The members include Ranajit Guha, Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman and Gyan Pandey.

The subalterns exist socially, politically and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure. They are excluded from the society's established institutions and thus denied the means by which people have a voice in their society. Subaltern studies originated as a Eurocentric method to study the non-Western people of the third world countries. Subaltern as a subject is most influential in both Postcolonial and Dalit literature. Its impact has spanned across many disciplines like feminism, women studies, anthropology, sociology, history, and human geography.

The subaltern as a subject matter is taken up by many Indian English writers. Subalternity becomes a paramount concept in literature when the marginalized has no voice of its own. Indian society is divided into four-fold caste system. The Brahmins hold the highest position and the Shudras belong to the lowest stratum of the society. Since, time immemorial the highest class dominates the lowest class and caste. The shudras are assigned with filthy jobs, suffers greatest humiliations and are segregated as untouchables from the mainstream society. Untouchability-Dalitism has been India's grave societal evils and is still practiced in various parts of India. Indian English Writers have been voicing such inequalities and disparities that exist in Indian society. They have given voice to the marginalized 'other'. Rohinton Mistry in his novel *A Fine*

Balance gives a picture of untouchability. The novel exposes class and caste disparities that are observed in Indian society.

Mulk Raj Anand is one of the significant novelists in Indian English Writing who writes for the untouchables and the lower class people. Most of his novels delineate the plight of the underdogs. He is the advocate of the downtrodden and the underprivileged. Mulk Raj Anand was a coppersmith's son and his mother came from a peasant family. His father later joined the army for a living. From his mother he derived his sense of throb for the humanity, and his understanding compassion for the waifs, the disinherited, the lowly and the lost. Not only the peasant folk that inspired Anand. During his childhood Anand had many friends belonging to the lower caste like the sweepers. His early playmates and friends were a great source of inspiration for Anand. They provided him necessary imaginative idealization and transformation.

Anand was born in Peshawar present day Pakistan in the year 1905. He got his education from many prestigious institutions at Lahore, London and Cambridge. Instead of choosing other professions he chose instead the hazardous profession of letters. His early books were *Curries and Other Indian Dishes, Persian Painting, The Hindu View of Art and The Golden Breath (1933)*. *The Golden Breath* is an introduction to the work of Tagore, Iqbal, Puran Singh, Sarojini Naidu and Harendranath Chattopadhyaya. He is credited with many prominent novels. They are *Untouchable, Coolie, Two Leaves and Bud, The village, Across the Black Waters, The sword and The Sickle, The Barber's Trade Union, The Big Heart, The Tractor and the Corn Goddess, Seven Summers, Private Life of an Indian Prince, Morning Face*. Anand is more interested in writing about the pariahs, bottom dogs, rather than the sophisticated and high profile society. He ventures into the territory of the lowly people which was largely neglected till then by the Indian writers. When Anand decided to write he preferred the familiar to the fancied, the bylanes of the

outcaste and the sepoys, the peasants and the working people. Thus, we have characters like the waif Munoo in *Coolie*, Gangu the indentured labourer in *Two Leaves and a Bud* and Bakha in *Untouchable*. Mulk Raj Anand is a social realist and humanist who can deeply feel the pangs of the underdogs. He is the first Indian writer in English to write about the minority. The main aim behind his writing is to create awareness among the people about the cruelty, inhuman practices of untouchability and social class distinction that is prevalent in the Indian society. Through his writing he strives to bring progress, equality and modernity in the society. His first three novels were explosive because truth is explosive at times, and the open expression of truth can be an incitement and rebellion. For such writings he came to be identified with the same spirit that in politics, in the person of Jawaharlal Nehru, thundered in 1929 at the Lahore Congress.

Anand's *Untouchable* is an eye-opener to the rigid follower of caste system. He writes for the sweeper class. E.M Forster in his preface to the *Untouchable* describes them as:

The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and And where he is excluded from all intercourse and the consolations of his religion. (Forster 6)

Postcolonial theory is applicable in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. In fact the novel explicitly mirrors some aspects of colonial and post-colonialism by presenting the stark realities of the untouchables. The central character Bakha is a subaltern figure. The novel is about caste discrimination, inequality, exploitation and suffering of the untouchables, social identity and struggle for independence and so on. The upper caste parallels the colonizers and the lower caste

can be taken as the colonized-the inferior lot. The native upper caste people treat the untouchables as the 'other'. The untouchables are devoid of any voice of their own. The untouchables are the subject of colonization under the Savarna Hindus. One can witness a binary relation of dominating and dominated classes and caste and can also be studied under the lens of colonial structure.

Untouchable covers a single day in the life of Bakha. Anand has formed a novel out of a single day by linking up many events in the course of twelve hours. His narration is creative and imaginative that the readers are able to visualize clearly every single events and incidents that Bakha goes through. The sufferings and anguish is revealed through stream of consciousness technique. The story is set in an Indian town called Bulashah. Bakha is the son of Lakha the Jemadar of all the Bulashah sweepers. Bakha lives with his father Lakha, brother Rakha and sister Sohini. At the very beginning of the novel Anand begins with the description of the outcaste colony. He details the unhygienic living condition of the untouchables. The wind of the outcaste colony carried the odour of the hides and skins of the dead carcasses left to dry on the bank. The soil was filled with the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses' cows and buffaloes. The absence of drainage system turned the place into a marsh during rainy seasons which gave out an offensive stink. The outcaste colony comprises of scavengers, leather- workers, washerman, barbers, water-carriers, grass cutters, sweepers and other lower castes from the Hindu society. Among them the sweepers were of the lowest status compared to the washerman, leather-workers and so on. Bakha's day starts with the wakeup call of his father Lakha. Bakha begins his work by cleaning the latrines at the British Barracks. After completing his work at the regiment he goes to the town for begging. Instead he is asked to clean the yards and drains of the houses in exchange of food. Throughout the day Bakha had to bear abusive words and insults under the

upper caste people. Bakha is treated not as a human, but as a polluting agent. He receives rejection at every step. Not only Bakha who is the sufferer. His sister too is physically abused by the so called Hindu priest –the God’s Man Pandit Kali Nath. At the end of the novel Anand offers three solutions to untouchability. The first is to convert into Christianity; the second is that Gandhiji regard the untouchables as the Harijan Man of God. For him it was Satanic to think that anybody was polluted or could pollute other. So everyone should be considered as equal. The third is the Modern Flush toilet as suggested by poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar. Anand in expressing certain evils of the society has been as effective as Dickens. He had first seen his heroes as pieces of trembling humanity and loved them before he sought to put them into his books.

Bakha is a subaltern figure. His subalternity is due to his birth. By birth he belongs to the sweeper class so he is obliged to do and continue the work done by his forefathers and father, inspite of his dream to go to school and become like the English Man. Bakha would work earnestly that “his capacity for active application to the task he had in hand seemed to flow like constant water from a natural spring” (Anand 7). In the morning he would clean three rows of latrines single handedly. Soon after cleaning the latrines Bakha goes home for water as he was very thirsty. But he could not get even a glass as all the pitchers were empty. Sohini offers herself to get water from the caste- well. The untouchables were prohibited from touching the village well. The upper caste Hindus believed that touching the well would pollute it. So, the untouchables like Sohini, Gulaboo Ram Charan’s mother, Waziro, the weaver’s wife had to wait for hours in cue for some gentleman taking pity on them and giving the water they need it. Sohini and other outcaste members are helpless.

The real suffering of Bakha as a subaltern starts when he goes to the town for sweeping the streets as a substitute for his father who complains that he was not feeling well. Bakha was very

fond of the town and its sights. While on the streets he was attracted by the rasgulas, gulabjamuns, ladoos and jalebis. He bought four annas worth of jalebis. But the confectioner threw the jalebis wrapped in a newspaper like a cricket ball. The confectioner's assistant splashed water to avoid pollution. Bakha was ashamed yet happy. The sweepers and other untouchables were often deceived by the shopkeepers. They were charged with high prices; as if to compensate themselves for the pollution they courted by dealing with the outcaste. Being an outcaste they do not dare to complain. Bakha enjoying the jalebis, munching and looking at the sights touched the Hindu Merchants unknowingly. The man insults and scolds Bakha with unbearable abusive words. He shouts:

Why don't you call, you swine, and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, you cockeyed son of a low-legged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself. And it was a new dhoti and shirt I put on this

Morning. (Anand 38)

Bakha's senses were paralyzed. He did not know what to do at that particular moment. He was embarrassed, deaf and dumb. Mixed feeling of fear, humility and servility gripped his soul. But Bakha was used to being spoken so roughly. He bent his forehead to apologise and tried saying something by mumbling. But the man did not pay any attention. He was angry; his eyes were flaming and red hot. Pedestrians gathered they too joined the aggrieved man in his denunciations. He pleaded in vain. The man slapped Bakha and went away. So such was the domination of the upper caste towards the lower class. Even though they were not mistaken, the untouchables were forced to remain silent and bear everything patiently. Through this incident Anand delineates the idea of colonialism. Here the gentleman acts as the colonizer and Bakha

represents the colonized. Bakha is the subaltern 'other' who realizes his status as an untouchable "For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-Untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable" (Anand 43). Realizing his position Bakha later on shouts his alarming word to announce his approach. 'Posh, Posh, sweeper coming' (Anand 45). The cruelty of the Hindus towards the inferior folk is well focused.

There are several other incidents that show the inhumane treatment of the upper caste. As per Lakha's order Bakha goes to the back street for begging food. He stops at a house and calls for food but no one responded. Penetrating further into the alley, and standing near a point where the doors of four houses were near each other, he shouts for food again. No one seems to hear. Feeling too tired by the day's work he sat on the wooden platform of a house in the lane and felt asleep for a while. The housewife came out at the call of a Sadhu. Finding Bakha sitting on the platform of her house the woman shouted at him. She offered to give Bakha food only in exchange of cleaning the drain. The women considered that his touch and presence has made her home impure.

Bakha was a generous, kind hearted and helpful person. But his kindness brought dejection and miserable to him. To get rid of the women's abusive words Bakha goes to the playground to play hockey. During the hockey match between the 38th Dogra Boys and 31st Punjabi Boys an upper caste boy was hurt by Bakha's friend Ram Charan. Ram Charan, Chota and Bakha belong to the Dogra Boys. But the match turned up into a fight throwing stones at each other. A bad throw from Ram Charan hit the small boy's skull who stood there witnessing the fight. The boy fell unconscious. Not worrying about his untouchability, Bakha picked him up and took him to the hall of the house. The women instead of thanking Bakha shouted at him "You eater of your masters, you dirty sweeper!" she shouted. What have you done to my son?"(Anand 106). Bakha

was afraid at such insults. He was humble and silent as a ghost. Confused Bakha withdraws from the place.

Bakha is not the sole sufferer. Sohini is physically assaulted by Pandit Kali Nath the priest of the temple who is supposed to preach good things to the people. He was attracted by the youthful beauty of Sohini and he molests her. When Sohini shouts he very cleverly handles the situation by claiming that he was touched by the untouchable and now that he is polluted. Bakha was deadly pale and livid with anger at the incident, but he was helpless. Here Anand shows the hypocrisy and artificiality of the so called high caste Hindus who are corrupted to the core. It is only Havildar Charat Singh who is portrayed as sympathetic towards the untouchables. He does not mind sharing tea with Bakha and allowing him to enter into his kitchen. He even offers Bakha a new hockey stick.

Untouchables like Bakha were also prohibited from entering other public places like temples and schools. A temple is meant for all stratus of society. God never discriminates between the poor and rich, high caste and low caste. But the Savarna Hindu society considered an untouchable going into a temple polluted it past purification. Bakha had never seen the interior of a temple. He was unaware of the snake image under the Banyan tree. He had no idea about who was Goddesses Kali and God Ram, Hari Narayan and so on. Bakha was subjected to many physical and mental tortures. He wanted a change in his life and rebel against the unfair treatment of the upper caste. But subalternity stood as a barrier. He was a victim of the caste system bound to follow the rules prescribed by the upper caste Hindus.

Mimicry is an important term in postcolonial theory that describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Mimicry is a process where the colonized

subject 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values. The result is never the simple reproduction of those traits; rather it is the blurred copy of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. Mimicry is never varying from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. Mimicry is crucial in Homi. K Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. To him mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 86). He further added that copying of the colonizing culture, behavior, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace' (Bhabha 87).

The idea of mimicry is found in the character Bakha. He mimics the British Sahibs in the novel *Untouchable*. He imitates the British sahib's culture and mannerisms. He dreams of living like the British-The Tommies. Working in the British barracks he was caught by the glamour of the 'white man's life. The Tommies treated Bakha quite compassionately as a human being compared to the upper caste men. This treatment led Bakha feel that he was superior to his fellow- outcaste. Thus a liking for the Tommies developed. Bakha dressed like the tommies. He wore overcoat, breeches, puttees and ammunition boots of the military that he accommodated somehow. Bakha was a child of modern India. He could sacrifice good many comforts for the sake of 'fashun': by which he understood the art of wearing, trousers, breeches, coat, puttees, boots etc. worn by the British soldiers. He was so fond of the knot patloon suit made of woolen cloth that he thought of purchasing the cloth in installments. The clear-cut styles of European dress had impressed Bakha so much that he never minded sleeping with a thin cloth even in the coldest nights.

'You lover of your mother', his father had once abusively said to him, 'take a quilt, spread

a bedding on a string bed, and throw away that blanket of the gora white men; you will die of cold in that thin cloth. But Bakha was a child of modern India. The clear cut styles of European dress had impressed his naïve mind. (Anand 2)

The tommies were individuals of wonder and amazement for Bakha. He would admire the English way of sleeping on low canvas beds, eating eggs, drinking tea and wine in tin mugs, going to parade and then walking down to the bazaar with cigarettes in their mouths and small silver-mounted canes in their hands. So, he tried to copy them in everything. He managed to get a pair of breeches by begging from one of the tommies. He was so obsessed with the Tommies that he said: 'I will look like a Sahib', he had secretly told himself. And I shall walk like them. Just as they do, in twos, with Chota as my companion. (Anand 3)

But his fantasy was often disturbed by his status as an untouchable suffering in poverty and rejection. Bakha was ashamed of the Indian way of performing ablutions- gargling and spitting, because he knew that Tommies disliked it. The Tommies abused the natives for such behaviour. They would say: 'Kala admi zamin par hagne wala' (black man, you who relieve yourself on the ground) (Anand 10). The Tommies on the other would run naked to their tub baths. In spite of this, Bakha believed that whatever the Tommies did was 'fashun'. He was amused as an Englishman might be amused to see a Hindu loosen his dhoti to pour some water over his naval and then down his back in a flurry of ecstatic hymn-singing.

Apart from dressing like the Englishman, Bakha tried every possibility to live like the Sahibs. He was able to accumulate a broken cane chair of European design which he had placed in the veranda of his house. Bakha had accepted the English custom and followed it implicitly. Implementation of such customs led to menace. He drank tea without blowing the tea to cool it

as he heard from his uncle say to him that goras didn't enjoy the full flavor of the tea because they did not blow it. This idea struck his mind and tried practicing the same. As a result his tongue got slightly burnt with the small sips because he did not blow the tea as his father did. He considered that his father and uncle's spattering sips were natu habits.

Though Bakha was compliant to his hereditary life of the craft, he never loses hope of becoming a Sahib. He wanted to be educated like the Sahib and speak English like them. While he was in the British barracks, he had felt a burning desire to speak tish-mish, tish-mish English. For this he started self-educating himself. In spare time he often sat and read. He even brought a first primer of English. But his learning never proceeded beyond the alphabet.

Not only Bakha did imitate. It was his friends Chota, the leather worker's son and Ram Charan, the washerman's son who was obsessed with the Tommies way of living. Chota transformed himself like the Tommies by oiling his hair profusely, and parted it like the Englishmen on one side, wore a pair of shorts at hockey and smoked cigarettes like them. Ram Charan in turn, aped Chota and Bakha. So, the three friends were the mimic men in Anand's *Untouchable*

The solar topee hung on the wall of the Bristish barrack was an object of interest and curiosity to the 38TH Dogras which comprises of the sweepers, washerman and shopkeeper's son. The children admired the solar topee and had the passionate desire to wear it. They felt that the possession of something European was better than the possession of nothing European. But they were too poor to afford a complete European outfit except Bakha who tried every means to lead a life of the Tommies.

Bakha believes that dressing like the English would make him more like them and in turn lose his untouchability. By accommodating himself with English cultures he strives to identify as acceptable one among the upper caste people. The ease at which Bakha sheds his Indianess uncovers the ambivalent identity of the colonized subject, thus subverting their collective identity as well. Bakha remains a hybrid of both cultures. He does not fully become the colonizer nor he is able to overcome his barriers. He remains outside the Hindu caste hierarchy. Bakha becomes Franz Fanon's dislocated subject. He does occupy the overlapping space between the colonizers and the rest of the colonized caste Hindus.

Bakha's preference over the English clothes and his extreme extend to protect his 'fashun' connotes his inner conflict: resistance against his own identity. His resistance suggests that he is misplaced and suffers identity dilemma because he feels proud and yet on the contrary he is reluctant over the Indian values. The resistance is suggestive of the fact that the caste system is responsible for categorizing the outcaste/untouchables as the less privileged sections and underdogs of the Hindu society. Bakha's resistance and self-motivation reveals the fact that Bakha is different. His identity depicted by the caste system is contrasted with his skill, true potential and nature. It is Bakha's double-consciousness that makes him to follow the western culture. He is conscious of the westerners, disgust over the uncivilized and unhygienic Hindu lifestyle. Bakha's double-consciousness affirms the influence of colonialism which: colonialists' view of the Non-western people – as mysterious, unhygienic, and backward. This conveys Bakha's attachment to western culture, which motivates him to be disregarded as homogeneous.

The subalterns like Lakha and Bakha are common victims and they accept suppression as they are deprived of economic and political power to fight back the upper caste supremacy. Bakha is a wandering figure amidst the flux of oppression. He is clearly disenchanted by the

confines of the caste system. Lakha is a submissive figure who advises his son that the upper caste men are superior to them. He says “They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us” (Anand 71). But on the other hand, Bakha aspires to raise his dignity by apeing the Tommies. His hope gets wings when he hears about the flush system and Gandhiji’s strive to free the untouchables. The subalterns in the novel *Untouchable* have a very few chances to change their fate in the society because untouchability here is hereditary.

Through this novel Anand criticizes the Hindu society and fights for the subjugated people. Anand had echoed the real situation of the subalterns. He sympathizes with the subalterns and shares their agony and pain. Anand challenges the barriers and rules that inhibit the lives of untouchables and argues for education of untouchables through Bakha. Anand as a novelist is successful in portraying the evils of the Hindu society during the colonial period. The novel is a sociological document that focuses on the social evils, caste hierarchy and pre-independent colonial India.

CHAPTER 3

Erosion of Identity: A Discourse on the Peripheral

Postcolonialism concerns itself to the study of the colonial impact on culture and communities especially after the World War II. Almost three-quarters of the world population of today are shaped by the experience of colonialism. Even though independence has been achieved the people are still economically, socially and culturally facing obstacles and are in dilemma and crisis about their identity and culture. The colonizers used their power as tool to control, implemented imperialist policy and grabbed their land and expanded geographic or cultural boundaries. Most colonial borders were formed either through conquest, negotiation between empires, or simply by administrative action, with little or no regard for the social realities. The populations were denied of social, political, economic and human rights. Colonization created ethnic rivalries by preferring one group above the other and by maintaining unequal distribution of powers and wealth. The different groups or communities who had their distinct ethnicity, culturality and religious heritage were bound to follow a common identity.

Realization of harsh imperialist rule gave rise to Postcolonialism. Postcolonialism triggered the interpretation and re-interpretation of common history. What was foremost to Postcolonialism was seeking resistance to colonialism and seeking and struggling for cultural identity to confirm their independence. The mass population movement and migration from former colonies to colonizers country activated mixed, hybrid societies which led to clash with each other culturally and clash between the migrants and citizens. As such the binary concepts of 'Us' and 'Them', 'the self' and 'the other', 'centre and margin' etc. came into being. In the relation of self and the other —Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space or an unresolved

question in that space, between a numbers of intersecting discourses. The British government divided the societies into multiple ethnic communities and states. The postcolonial atmosphere and situation was overwhelmed with the tensions of struggling of newly independent states to achieve their cultural, political, psychological identification reflects their privacy, established by their self-determination not that imposed by the colonizer in which mimicized them for a long time.

Identity is a multifaceted word. It is a distinctive characteristic of a given individual or shared by all members of a social group or category. Oxford English Dictionary defines identity as the fact of being who or what a person or thing is or the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is. According to sociology and psychology, Identity is a person's conception and expression of individuality and group affiliations such as national and cultural identity. The term identity comes from the French word 'identite' which finds its linguistic roots in the Latin noun 'identitas, - tatis, itself a derivation of the latin adjective 'idem, meaning "the same". Identity formation occurs when one identifies with the significant other. These others may be benign such that one aspires to their characteristics, values, beliefs or malign when one wishes to dissociate from their characteristics. And when this identity of an individual or a group becomes insecure, due to change in their expected role or aim in society leads to identity crisis. Such crisis occurs in a period of uncertainty and confusion. Such individual often seem to have no idea who or what they are, where they belong or where they want to go. The term identity was coined by German psychologist Erik Erikson. To him it is the most vital conflicts that people face during the stages of development and further believed that an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and explorations of different ways of looking at oneself. His interest on identity developed in his childhood. He described identity as a subjective sense as well as an

observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image.

Postcolonial literature and criticism took shape after the third world countries gained independence. Its area of discussion was vast. It encompasses the re-examination of the rule of colonialism from colonized perspective; determine the social, political, economic, cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonized and colonizing powers, scrutinize the process of decolonization and above all to participate in the goals of political liberation which includes equal access to material resources, the contestation of the forms of domination and articulation of cultural and political identities. The discourse on the race, identity, gender, ethnicity and culture sprang up as a vital feature of postcolonial literature. From 1950s many well known writers came up to address these issues. They include: Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Homi K Bhabha, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie, V.S Naipaul, Derek Walcott, Edward Said etc.

The question of identity and culture is one of the most debatable issues of postcolonial period. The constituent of different ethnic communities, the immigration and migration of citizens from one country to another, hybrid nations have paved the ground for such controversial matter. Writers have put up different views on postcolonial identity. Edward Said's central point of identity construction, which is under the influence of Foucaultian idea of power, is the ability to resist, to recreate oneself as a postcolonial, anti-imperialist subject and this recreation of the self needs to be contextualized because it is the construction of identity that constitutes freedom and human beings are what they make themselves, even if they are subjects of repressive discourse. (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 112). Homi K.Bhabha presented the concept of hybridity and hybrid identity in his pathbreaking book *The Location of Culture*. Homi Bhabha also discusses that there is a third space which is: "in between the designation of identity and that

this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains the difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy"(Bhabha 4).

The colonized subjects lay in-between two cultures: their previous native heritage and history and the dominant culture imposed on them by force. They go through constant struggle to find a way for their identification. The theme of postcolonial novel is varied. But its chief concern is the identity issue where the native people strive hard against the difficulty to establish their identity besides the flux of economy and cultural confusion. Thus, postcolonial novelist portrays the hesitant cultural and national identities of communities that were endeavoring to construct their nations after being liberated from colonial control. V.S Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* and Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* presents the immigrants struggle for the creation and resistance of threatened identity. Tayeb Salih's post-colonial Arabic novel *Season of Migration to the North* depicts the British colonialism and European modernity in rural African societies in general and Sudanese culture and identity in particular. The crisis of identity has always enjoyed a defining significance in the thematic framework of postcolonial Indian English novels. Such Indian English novelists who exposes identity crisis and hybrid identity include Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*(1997), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*(2006), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*(2003), Amitav Ghosh's novels like , *The Shadow Lines*(1988), *The Calcutta Chromosomes*(1995) and *The Circle of Reason*(1986), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*(1981) and many other novels.

In addition to the mainstream literature, the Dalit literature too steps forward to express the identity issues. They use literature as a tool to propagate their view on Dalit identity and prevailing consciousness. The Dalits find no place in literary historiography and it was necessary to articulate and reconstruct Dalit history. For the first time attempts were made to rewrite

history from subaltern perspective and rewrite life story from firsthand experience. Postcolonial literature assesses identity in the backdrop of European imperialism and colonialism. Similarly, Dalit literature evaluates identity in the backdrop of caste system of Indian society out of which traditions and cultures, homogenic influence emerge. Here the caste system equates the European colonialism. Among the many genres Dalit Autobiography has established itself as the strong advocate of Dalit identity. It is a narrative that collages individual and community identity thereby deconstructing old identity and constructing new positive identity. It is a kind of historiography that destroys the past passive and subjugated identity of Dalits, and creates a new identity and an appropriate place for Dalits in Indian historiography.

Some of the well known autobiographies include Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*(2003) (*Akkarmashi*), Laxman Gaikwad's *The Branded*(1999), Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana*(2007), Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*(2006). The nature of author's struggle and acceptance of challenges make the basic difference while asserting their Dalit identity. Apart from autobiography, the novels are no less in presenting the predicament of the Dalits. Bama one of the foremost Dalit writer foregrounds the identity crisis of her women characters in a patriarchal structure where men are dominant sex and the cultural construction and social mechanism preserve gender inequality. This is evident in her well known novels like *Karukku*(2012) and *Sangati*(2005). Meena Kandasamy's collection of poems like *Ms Militancy*(2010), *TOUCH*(2006) and her novels *The Gypsy Goddess* and *When I Hit You: or a Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife*(2014) details linguistic identity and feminist identity in caste ridden societies of India.

One of the most well known writers to represent his tribe in the mainstream is Narayan. Narayan is considered as the first tribal novelist of India for his well known debut novel

Kocharethi (1998). He was born on 26 September, 1940 in Kadayathoor Hills, Idukki, Kerala, India. He belongs to Kerala's one of the tribes known as the Malayarayar tribe. The novel *Kocharethi* is the winner of many prestigious awards like Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (1999), Economist Crossword Book Award (2011). Narayan is also the winner of many other awards including Thoppil Ravi Award and Abu Dhabi Sakthi Award. Narayan is also credited with many other novels and short stories. His short story collections include *Nissahayante Nilavili* (2006), *Pela Marutha* (2006), *Kadakhil Narayan* (2012), *Narayante Theranjedutha Kadhakal* (2012), *Narayante Kadhakal* (2013).

Narayan's novel *Kocharaethi* has run into six editions in Malayalam a language which has been there in the subcontinent much longer than English and has been translated into Hindi as *Pahadin* and into all the south Indian Languages. A French translation of the novel is also in progress. *Kocharethi* is the first ever tribal novel of Kerala standing outside the mainstream culture which got recognition. It is the first Malayalam novel to be written by a Malayarayar about his community and its experiences. It depicts the Malayarayar tribe who inhabit the Western Ghats where they border the districts of central Kerala. Malayarayar is one among the thirty-two different groups of adivasis in Kerala. 'Mala' is the Malayalam word for hill and 'arayar' may be semantically related to 'arachar' meaning ruler. The Malayarayars as a clan enjoyed control over the western slopes of the Ghats. The land occupied by the Malayarayars originally belonged to the Poonjar or Puniyat Rajas. Narayan in his novel mentions the rule of such royal family.

The term 'periphery' denotes a marginal or secondary position in, or aspect of, a group, subject, or sphere of activity. Oxford English Dictionary defines periphery as the outer limits of an area or object and the less important part of subject or group. During the colonial rule the British government took control of many Adivasi spaces which led to the creation of the

periphery in India. Colonial revenue and agricultural policies of the British government created heavy pressure on both land in the plains and the hills. Colonial policies evicted many adivasis from their land. As a result revolt and resistance grew. The colonial rule adopted the policy of protectionism which created administrative boundaries between the mainland and the hills. This boundary brought the distinction between the mainland and the periphery. In Narayan's *Kocharethi* the Malayarayar community holds the peripheral position. They were considered as the less important subject than the mainstream. They are the 'other' and designated as the primitives who did not deserve self-rule and are marginalized at every step of their life. They occupy marginal, ex-centric position, and are often neglected and they find trouble in establishing their voice. The mainstream traders like Christians and Muslims take up the innocence of the adivasis as their tool to cheat them. The illiterate adivasis are unaware of the simple calculations like addition and subtraction. This makes the job easier for the traders like Motalali to cheat them.

The Malayarayar society is a society in transition in a country which itself was going through a period of transition from colonial domination to sovereign status and *Kocharethi* is a depiction of it. The novel begins with the depiction of the lives of a Malayalee family Varikkamakal Ittyadi Arayan and his two children Kunjadichan and Kunjipennu. As the novel progresses it goes on to describe the lifestyle and hardships of Kunjipennu and her husband Kochuraman and his clansmen. Though the novel has a hero Kochuraman and a heroine Kunjipennu, it is more of a written account of a community. The novel shows the perception and perfection of the Malayarayar Adivasi community through the life of Kochuraman and Kunjipennu. Kunjipennu refuses to marry her maternal uncle's son Narayan, because she falls in love with the orphan Kochuraman and marries him. They enjoy their life with their children. But

their life is subdued by both natural calamities and the colonial government. They go through hardships like epidemic, small pox. Their house gets destroyed by forest fire. Kochuraman and Kunjipennu lose their first child in the forest fire. Things come to normalcy only when their second child is born. *Kocharethi* chronicles the hegemonic presence of the landed upper classes during colonial domination; the shadowy presence of an ineffectual monarchy which appears in the form of bureaucratic greed; the manipulatory presence of missionaries; reverberations of the end of the freedom struggle; India's Independence, the changes brought about by it; and the growing awareness of the need to assert their identity as a community. The first half of the novel is an ethno historian's delight, with particulars of beliefs and rituals unique to a set of people who live in close communion with nature. The various social or cultural codes – 'verbal codes' (phonological, lexical, syntactical), 'bodily codes' (physical orientation, appearances, facial expression, gestures and posture), 'commodity codes'(clothing, food, accessories, equipments, gadgets), and 'behavioural codes' (rituals, role-playing, games) are detailed minutely. The second half of the novel is a painful narrative of personal loss and loss of identity. Various forces of acculturation in different guises led to their loss of identity which Narayan has depicted very precisely.

Kerela was invaded by the Muslims, Christians and Hindu people. As a result the community became unorganized and a large scale of dispersal had taken place. So these people had their own innate culture, customs and rituals which they considered as sacred to them. They preserved and reared their culture through day-to- day practices. Narayan presents a true picture of the adivasi life regarding their rituals. A group is known by their customs, traditions and rituals. Social practices, rituals and festive events structure the lives of communities or groups and that are shared by and relevant to many of their members. They are important because they

reaffirm their identity as a group or community. Through *Kocharethi* Narayan shows the importance of rituals and customs that are deeply ingrained in the Malayarayar tribe. Their culture is their identity.

Rituals are ingrained in the cultural ethos of ethnic groups and are passed on from one generation to another. Narayan brings forth certain set of rituals to the mainstream including marriage ceremony, birth ceremonies, death rituals and certain taboos observed by the members of the society. The Malayarayars practiced endogamy. They observed strict regulation regarding marriage. Marriage was regulated through clan exogamy or illam. They even practiced cross cousin marriage. In the novel Ittyadi gives a list of their clan names to Kunjadichan- Valayillam, Poothaniyillam, Modalakkattillam, Nellippullillam and Chokkayillam. Vala and Nellipulli were related; likewise Poothani and Modalakkattu. Someone belonging to Modalakkattu could marry from either Valayillam or Nellipulli ilam. Poothani and Nellipulli could marry from Vala. The Chokkayillakar were considered as cast out of their original clan. The house always belonged to the woman, son. Kochuraman the main protagonist belonged to Valayillam. According to tradition he should marry a girl from Poothaniyillam. But against custom, he marries Kunjipennu who also belongs to the Vala clan. With the passing of generation from Ittyadi's generation to Kunjipennu the Malayarayar tribe sees erosion of their identity. The younger generation no longer desires to preserve the old order. Ittyadi is reluctant to break the custom by marrying his daughter to the same clan. But his son Kunjadichan says without care: 'Oh, who cares about customs these days! If you're against it say so...' (Narayan 15). Moreover marriages were arranged by negotiations between the elders of the clan. Gifting of clothes was the mode of sanctifying a union. There was no system of dowry among the Malayarayars.

The Malayarayers had their own belief system to be observed during pregnancy and child birth. There were some ceremonies to be performed during the seventh month of pregnancy. The woman's ammayi (mother) and sister-in-law would come with a basket of sweetmeats and brought her back to her parents' home. Since Kunjipennu was in her father's house the ceremony did not take place. Instead Mundan's wife Chakki- a sister to Ittyadi through family ties did the ceremony. As per ceremony Kunjipennu unwrapped the packets. A crack in the rice meant danger. But the rice remained intact. Everyone was relieved. Chakki also brought a small piece of iron and stone wrapped separately. Kunji was asked to touch one among the two identical packets. The touched packet contained the piece of iron which means the child was a boy. If Kunjipennu touched the stone the child would be a girl. This was their belief system. All the responsibilities of the first childbirth were borne by the girl's family. But in case of Parvati Kochuraman's daughter no such ceremony was organized.

In the novel the death of Kadutha gives us an insight into the funeral rites among the Malayarayers. Cooking was not allowed where a death had occurred. Kadutha's eldest daughter swept the floor in a northerly direction. It was the dead man's children who bathed the corpse and placed it on a plaintain leaf in the front yard near the door with its head facing towards the east. People who came spread clothes over the corpse. The eldest son performed the funeral rites. Relatives would respectfully place pinches of rice, vaykari, on the mouth of the corpse and the eldest male among the gathered people would pour oil into a cupped leaf and place rice and grain in it. Chanting praises to the spirits, he would dip a jackfruit leaf in the oil and sprinkle it on the children, nephews and nieces who were to observe pula or death related pollution. The corpse was buried in a pit which dug into six feet long and six feet deep. The corpse would be placed with its head pointing in a southerly direction, and then covered with leaves. Kadutha would

chant the mantras and put in fistfuls of mud. After the prayer, everyone helped in filling up the trench with mud. They would pat it down firmly, placing sticks of the murikkin tree over it and stones all around to keep away dogs and foxes. All those who were part of the funeral ceremony took bath in the stream, before leaving. The following day close relatives shared a meal of rice gruel. Death related pollution was observed for fifteen days, during which period it was taboo to touch weapons. Liquor and contact with women were also strictly forbidden. On the fifteenth day a ritual bath took place and on the sixteenth day, a festive meal for relatives and friends was organized.

Social taboos hold a significant place in the lives of the Malayarayers. Taboos related to menstruation were highly conspicuous among them. Each house had an eettappera. The menstruating women retreated to the eettappera and childbirth too took place in the eettappera. The women were not allowed to touch anyone and would not appear in the front yard of the house for seven days. These were strictly followed in the velichappadu's home where the tribal deities were consecrated. Kunjadichan's wife followed these rules very strictly. Moreover food was brought to the eettappera and was served on a leaf. On the fourth day they washed themselves in a special place on the river bank.

The Malayarayers had their own deities. The eldest son performed the pooja to satisfy the deities. Ittyadi took over the responsibility of offering grain and rice when his father was bedridden. Each deity was offered with different food and things to satisfy them. The offerings were provided to the lowest deity, Marutha followed by the higher deities. For instance in the novel

A one muzham long branch of the ezhuku tree, dark green in colour with the skin scraped

off at both ends, was smeared with a mixture of powdered coal and turmeric. This was for the lowly deity Marutha. The stick with skin scraped off in the middle and turmeric smeared over was for Chathan. The branch of the ezhilam banyan smeared red with a mixture of turmeric and slake lime in the middle and at both ends, was for Puliambulli Thampuran. The cane was for Khandakarnan.(Narayan 57)

Thus, the Malayarayar tribe followed their own way of worship. Institutionalized religion was unknown to them. They had their own system of treatment and this treatment was centered on religion and nature. They depended upon the natural herbs to cure illness. Both Kochuraman and his father-in-law Ittyadi were expert vaidyan (medicine man) and velichapad (one who performs the rituals necessary to propitiate the divine spirits and ensure that they protect members of the clan). But their traditional treatment underwent changes from generation to generation with the coming of modernity. Ittyadi's father Valiyamundan was a mantravadi (one who performs magical rites) who used magical elements to cure illness. Ittyadi shifted his treatment from magic to religion. His treatment had connection between religion and medicine. He uses a sprig from the pepper vine, some pebbles, and a pinch of ash as curatives. It was believed that spirits could possess a person as was assumed in the case of Kadutha, and Ittyadi tries to drive out the spirit through ceaseless beating. Though he often faced failures, people of his age group had complete faith in his abilities. Again Kochuraman solely depended upon herbs to cure diseases and natural products like animal fats to cure wounds, sprains, diarrhea and migraine. He represented the next generation with a more sophisticated method of offering medication. The approach of modernity brought a dynamic change in the lives of the Malayarayars. The treatment through incantations, ash and animal sacrifices were replaced by

modern medicine. There is an incident in the novel where Kochuraman is admitted to the medical college hospital for treatment. Instead of herbs he resorts to soda water, syrup and tablet.

Kochuraman underwent blood, urine, and x-ray tests. The doctor told Padmanabhan that Kochuraman's blood count was low. They would wait for weeks as he had to undergo a major Operation.... The duty nurse gave Kochuraman a tablet and A syrup and left.

Kunjipennu sat near the cot, leaning against the wall, chewing betel. (Narayan 203)

Arrival of colonial modernity changed the perspective of tribal, destruction of old order and on set of new, created an identity crisis among tribal of this region. Moreover transition in belief system of tribal uplift their culture in new world which also led to identity crisis.

For indigenous people around the world, the ancestral land holds meaning beyond ownership. Tribal communities see themselves as stewards. Their particular place in the living world is linked to identity, culture, and history. It is both physical and spiritual- an ecosystem of earth, water, plants, and animals as well as supernatural beings and the skies above. For the Malayarayers to work and hold the land is deeply meaningful. Kochuraman and his clans' men were the original inhabitants of the hills and were part of the kingdom of the Kaarikottu kings.

The kings and the Arayar were on cordial terms. The Arayar had titles like "koramban" and "Kaanikkaran". There were many Arayar in the king's army. They are a strong and sturdy people by birth....The Arayar lost the battle... Those Arayar who survived fled to the hills and forests. After a while they came to be called Mala Arayar-Arayan or king of the hills. (Narayan 118)

But the Adivasis do not have the system of acquiring individual rights over their land. To them land was not separable from their sense of collective identity; they were one with it and

celebrated this union in all rites of passage. The steady process of modernization introduced by the colonial administration brought a rapid change. The Malayarayers were geographically and culturally isolated people. They lived in the hills had their own way of living far from the mainstream. They lived in close communion with nature and enjoyed their lifestyle. But the close communion was disturbed by the colonial government. The British robbed them off their land; which is their identity. The British government was in need of large quantities of teak for shipbuilding and the laying of railway lines. This need was fulfilled by Kochuraman and his men. The British government forcefully took away great stretches of land living the Malayarayers in the middle of the sea. Large number of hardwood trees like rosewood and teak were cleared.

A huge rosewood tree stood just next to the house. One of the elephants was chained in Kunjadichan's yard, the other in Mundan's. The elephants destroyed the coconut palms and plantations. The woodcutters took Away Shankaran's tapioca and a bunch of bananas. Furious, Shankaran went to the shed where the men were staying, chopper in hand.

(Narayan 122)

The men cut off the trees at its base thereby impacting all over the terrain, disturbing mud and rock alike. The contractors and other forest officials believed that the land belonged to the government so the adivasis did not have right over their land. The officials did not even care for the houses. They not only fell the trees, also destroyed their houses. They took away honey, tapioca, coconut palms and other resources which was build up with great labour and hard work. Men like Shankaran stood dazed, not knowing what to do. On complaining in the police station the policemen refused to help people like Shankaran. The policemen threatened to beat them up and imprisoned them. They were slapped and kicked and forcefully asked to make a thumb

impression. Instead the police frightened them that they would be punished for obstructing government work. They were not given any compensation for loss of dwelling.

Such act of the government made the Malayarayers feel dejected and alienated from the mainstream. Shankaran said “They won’t allow any of us to live in these hills. They think we are some crushed tribe that came from God knows where and settled down in their forests and hills... we won’t perish either” (Narayan 126). Shankaran also complains to the contractors that the trees are falling. But the contractors burst out laughing as though he had heard a joke and says that it is not his land, it is the land of the government. Earlier they were the men of the forest and the forest and its resources belonged to them. With the coming of colonization they became strangers in their own land. They were the isolated lot residing on the periphery. Their hearts were heavy with the awareness that the land they stood on was not theirs. The clearings of the forest areas also brought changes in the mode of cultivation. Monocropping was introduced over great areas of land obtained by evicting the adivasis, leading to depletion of the rich biodiversity that the Malayarayers enjoyed.

The Malayarayers had to safeguard the land from both the government officials and animals. They had to safeguard their land as well as their identity. They protected their crops from elephants and wild boars. Kochuraman builds ‘erumaadom’ in the tree as a look out to watch the animals. Kochuraman had to protect the fields from animals in the daytime and from birds during the night. They practiced shifting cultivation and had no irrigation facilities. Whatever they cultivated with great labour was easily robbed away by the traders. They were hard working people who did not depend upon the government or the money lenders. It was the money lenders who manipulated them.

The Arayars are not only cheated in the name of money and land but also in the name of God. The extortioners cheat them in the name of their beliefs. Paathathil Kunjunni Pilla one of the notorious extortioners takes the charge of Sasthan Temple and Devaswam activities. He enjoys the right conferred upon him by the Maharaja. He says that the hills and the forest are Lord Ayyapan's garden.

The Malayarayers had their own traditional means of worship. They worshipped and offered to several deities like Puliambuli Thampuran, Ganapathi and Chathan. The most significant feature of the Malayarayer's worship is that their day-to-day life is inseparable with their deities. They believe that the Gods keep close watch over them and also that the natural calamities in the hill are the signs of anger of ancestral spirits for the mistakes they have committed. They give offerings to the spirits to get rid of from the spells and spirits. With the coming of Christianity there came a change in religion. Deities like Puliambuli, Chathan and Ganapathi was replaced by Jesus Christ. The Christian missionaries made the arayars believe that there existed only one savior Jesus Christ and it was wrong to worship the trees and stones. They further added that to gain freedom from sin and go to heaven one must be baptized. The Christian missionaries motivated many adivasis. Several of them got converted into Christianity. They wore good clothes, cut their hair short. They even changed their names. Kunjaapa says: Didn't you know? My name has been changed. We got baptized. Now my Name is Daniel; the wife's name is Chinna, the children Isaac and Anna. (Narayan 154)

Their acceptance of Christianity was a shift towards a more proficient spiritual power that they assumed would help them to negotiate the deep crisis of self-belief in their native traditions. The missionaries sought to erase from the minds of the adivasis all traces of 'devil-worship',

maintaining that Christianity offered a sure way to heaven. Even the smallest act or symbol carrying memories of the primordial gods were wiped off.

Kunjaapa's conversion deeply moved Kochuraman. He felt sad to see the courageous man of his clansmen was slowly fading away. It was Kochuraman who realized that conversion into Christianity was leading to the loss of their own identity. He believed that 'antichristu' was born to destroy them as a community. Conversion of the Malayarayar into Christianity led to hybrid identity. They are not acknowledged whether they are Christians or Hindus. They remain in-between the two religion. In their service records their religion was Christian but the caste, Mala Arayan converted.

Some of my colleagues asked whether I was a Nair or an Ezhava. When I said I was a Mala Arayan, they said "But they are all Christians" ... John Samuel, Susamma John... There are so many of them... I said "That's true but check their service records; you'll see their religion is Christian but the caste Mala Arayar converted"... Then came the Question "who are Mala Arayar?. (Narayan 200)

Though the Christian missionaries offered them access to education which equipped them to handle trade and commerce better, but it took away their belief system which was deeply rooted in their religion.

Not only the Christian missionaries that changed them. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad(VHP) came and did the same. They motivated the people to worship Vishnu and Durga and ochre robes replaced the gowns of the priests and nuns. No one cared them as a community and no interest was taken on them as a people. The Hindu orthodoxy made attempts at civilizing them. Kochupilla Ashan the teacher who arrived at the village was a true representative of Hindu culture in the novel. He attempted to wean the adivasis

away from their 'primitive' ways of life and erase their marks of identity through a process of sanskritization. Ashan's preaching on Ramayana and Mahabharata is a deliberate attempt to mask their own myths about their origin and to appropriate them into a brahmanical system of belief. But the Arayars had their own apprehensions of the Brahmin dominated religion and are suspicious of the benefits it would bring, though the personal qualities of Ashan win him unadulterated respect.

Education plays an important role as an agent of social change, rather than as an agent to conserve traditions and culture and produced intellectual personalities to document the history and culture of the Malayarayers. Education brought new languages, new values and practices new languages were learnt. But the search for employment and education opportunities distanced them from the older tradition. The names of the Malayarayar community were obtained from the trees and rock. But such names underwent change. The teacher taught them that their names were incorrectly pronounced. Ashan says: "Child it isn't Kallani, it is Kalyani. Similarly it's not Paruthi but Parvathi". (Narayan 145).

Parvati, Kochuraman's daughter no longer resolves to the old order of marriage. Education made her an independent girl, bold enough to take her own decisions. Parvati slowly estranges herself from her community. She rejects the traditional system of marrying through clan exogamy or illam. Infact she elopes with her lover Padmanabhan dashing all her father's hope. Narayan assumes a nationalist identity by which he sees education of subaltern women as necessary but not at the cost of losing the essence of their identity, dignity and culture.

Thus, *Kocharethi* is a documentation of a unique life system of the Malayarayar community that is slowly losing its identity and fading away into history. The novel details the complex situation in which the Arayars identity is trapped. The colonial modernization, the

advent of Christian missionaries stands as an obstacle which the Arayars had to overcome. These forces alienated them from their land and nature thereby leading them to fading away of distinct tribal identity and culture. From proud farmers, practitioners of traditional medicine and guardians of the land, the tribals became displaced and dispossessed, dependent on the largesse of the State to protect their lands and, most importantly, their cultural identity. The government took away their land which was their livelihood. They were forced to live in their own land as a tenant. The Christian missionaries used tools like baptism and Christianity to convert the adivasis. The Muslim and Christian traders robbed their resources and Modernization brought a huge transition in their culture.

As a result they witnessed erosion of their identity, realized by men like Kochuraman. The innocent adivasis struggle for native identity is visible in the novel. They are the suppressed lot alienated in their own land. The novel also reflects the ethos of people in transition. The Malayarayers lead a life of poverty due to economic and land exploitation. It depicts the oppression faced by the tribes to various socio-economic and political forces. The novel is about the Malayarayar community and their plight in the modern days under colonial government. The novel is set in a period when erosion of their cultural identity has begun. Narayan belongs to the first generation literate tribe. His writing is not adorned with literary ornaments. He represents his novel in a simple manner, yet empowering and utterly unique.

Chapter 4

Dalit Writing by Dalit and Non – Dalit Writers: A Comparative Analysis

Comparative literature deals with the study of the relationship between two or more literatures and encompasses cultural expression across linguistic, national, and disciplinary boundaries. Rather than examining only one nation's literature, literary works or writers, Comparative literature embraces literary works and cultures in multiple languages from a comparative perspective. Studying or comparing writers of only a national literature will be a literary research on that country. Whereas, studying on different languages, cultures or literatures will be a comparative study.

The word 'comparative' is derived from the Latin word *comparativus* from *comparare* which means an observation or judgment of similarities or dissimilarities between two or more branches of science or subjects of study such as comparative literature, comparative religion, and comparative language and so on. The term comparative was first used as adjective by William Shakespeare in his play *Henry 4* part 1 in 1597. Again in 1598 Francis Meres used the term as adjective in the section titled "A Comparative Discourse of our English poets with the Greek, Latin and Italian Poets" in his book *Palladis Tamia* subtitled as "Wits Treasury". In this article Meres compares the great Greek poets like Homer, Orpheus, Linus and Musaeus, the Italian poets Plautus, Andronicus, Livius and Ennius, the Latin Poets Jovianus, Pontanus, Politianus, Marullus to the forerunners of English literature like Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate. This article is considered to be the first article of studies of comparative literature. Later the term was used in several captions of seventeenth and eighteenth century books. In the nineteenth century France the word 'comparative' and 'literature' was used together as a phrase in several course book. In English the phrase 'comparative Literature' was first used by the significant writer Mathew

Arnold in the year 1848 in an unpublished letter. Mathew Arnold uses the phrase 'comparative literature' in his letter to his mother in the year 1895:

How plain it is now, though an attention to the comparative literatures for the last fifty years might have instructed any one of it, that England is in a certain sense far behind the Continent. In conversation, in the newspapers, one is so struck with the fact of the utter insensibility, one may say, of people to the number of ideas and schemes... (Arnold 10)

Arnold defines the term in a conference, dated 14 November 1857, titled "On the Modern Element in Literature," printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, February 1869, in these words "Everywhere there is connexion, everywhere there is illustration: no single event, no single literature, is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures". (Arnold 456)

As a published book comparative literature first appeared in the year 1886 under the title *Comparative Literature* by The Irish scholar Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett. This book arose as an academic discipline in the nineteenth century. Some of the vital books of comparative literature of today's era include Rene Wellek's *The Crisis of Comparative Literature; Concepts of Criticism* (1963), Henry Gifford's *Comparative Literature* (1969), George Steiner's *What is Comparative Literature* (1995), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *The Death of a Discipline* (2003), Jacob Edmond's *A Common Strangeness: Contemporary Poetry, Cross-Cultural Encounter, Comparative Literature* (2012), Susan Basnett's *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (1993), Claudio Guillen's *The Challenge of Comparative Literature* (1993) and so on.

Comparative literature paved the ground for the researcher to notice the similarities and differences and developments of languages, literatures and cultures of two or more nations by comparative approaches and the common themes of literary texts of different nations is often

made clear. Thus a comparatist get the chance to know the influences of the texts and writers on each other by means of comparative literature. Comparative literature is interdisciplinary in nature. It exhibit acquaintance with sociology, history, anthropology, translation studies, critical, theory, cultural studies and religious studies. Comparative literature had its roots in nation-based thinking and much of the literature under study still concerns issues of the nation-state. In the West comparative literature is experiencing institutional constriction, there are signs that in many parts of the world the discipline is thriving, especially in Asia, Latin America, The Caribbean, and the Mediterranean.

The beginning of Comparative literature in India can be trace back to the comprehensive and integrative three volume-histories of Indian literature where Indian literatures were studied not as discrete units but in dialogue with one another, brought out by Sisir Kumar Das, a faculty member at the department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, with support from other members of the department and the Sahitya Akademi. The focus on Indian literature within the discipline of Comparative literature surrounds many areas of engagement. Comparatist analysis in Indian literature look at the interplay between the mainstream and the popular, the elite and the marginalized, and also to some extent foreground intermedial perspectives as different forms existed together in a composite manner, particularly in earlier periods in which textual and performative traditions existed simultaneously. Indian literature from a comparative perspective looked at the interactions taking place with literatures in regions beyond geo-political boundaries of nation state.

It is observed that before the twentieth century literature of the era was marked by the overwhelming dominance of those in power. The less fortunate remained under shadow in the mainstream literature. It is the Dalit literature that brought the marginalized to the forefront. In

the present era both Dalit and Non-Dalit writers have transformed the literary space with their powerful writings. They have given voice to the oppressed sections of the society. Literature of Dalits depict the assertion of human rights, self- pride, revolt against social injustice, chronicles the personal and collective suffering and hopes and aspirations for a new society devoid of discrimination.

Dalit writers question the workings of caste system in India, how caste system divides between the high and the low caste. It details the oppression and pain witnessed by the Dalits. The Dalits were denied of education and basic amenities. As such their history was oral. The introduction of Dalit literature as a movement has given the Dalits a written history and a recognition in the mainstream. Dalit literature is indigenous and deeply rooted in the history, culture and politics of Dalits. Apart from addressing the sufferings of the Dalits, Dalit writers started writing about identity, humanity and reclaiming their personhood. The Dalit also included in their genres: explanation of suffering, displaying of rejection and rebellion, developing social commitment, denying God and soul, focusing on self-realization, advocating independence, equality and rights and opposing Brahminism and varna system.

The Dalit writers try to built an identity of their own and establish an egalitarian social system. The Dalit autobiographies are the best form of literary genre to assert Dalit identity for two reasons. Firstly, the form is completely based on the author's life that encapsulates the Dalit identity which emerges out of social discrepancy; Secondly, the form provides a strong pitch to assert Dalit identity in a positive sense and this identity gains authenticity publically. The autobiographies help the writers to establish individual's and community's true life incidents. By forging the two narratives the writers have deconstructed the old negative identity and reconstructed a new positive identity of the Dalits. The pathbreaking autobiographies in this

regard are Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana*(2007), Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*(2003) and Laxman Gaikwad's *The Branded: Uchalya*(1999) and Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*(2006). These autobiographies portray their identity struggle. In *The Branded* Laxman Gaikwad violate social norms by going to school. Laxman Gaikwad's struggle with abject poverty makes him poorer, wretched and miserable untouchable. He suffers from the humiliation created by his torn and worn stolen dress. Throwing away the Bharat blade and hereditary profession of thieving Gaikwad dares to take a slate and pencil with the help of his father. He and the Uchalya community live a life excluded from the mainstream and individual opportunities. Later he secures government position and dedicates his life for the betterment of the untouchables. *Government Brahmana* celebrates Dalit identity by portraying the human sufferings and victory over human sufferings. It shows the precarious situation of social identity and the identity crisis of Malagatti. Limbale's *Akkarmashi* translated into *The Outcaste* beautifully portrays the brutality of upper caste Hindus and landlords who make the situation worse by strengthening the caste boundaries through untouchability. Throughout the autobiography Limbale raises many issues like untouchability, class divisions, education, reservation, political gambling, unsettlement of religious harmony, and Dalit women's security. These autobiographies reveal the identity crisis of the authors. The writers through their autobiographies have created a rich mosaic of national consciousness and ethos by exploring the dialectic binaries of rich-poor, privileged-underprivileged, upper caste-lower caste and male-female. The genre unravels the atrocities and discrimination that they underwent. It also fortifies their existential awareness and confidence against the backdrop of oppression with its wide ramification on the social system.

In addition to assertion of identity, Dalit writers express the issues of racial segregation and injustices prevalent in the upper caste community. Baburao Bagul's short story collection 'Jenvha Me Jat Choral Hote' and fictions *Maran Sast Hot Ahe*(1969) and *Sood*(1970) dwells heavily on the social economic deprivation enforced by the caste system, as well as the revolt of those oppressed by the system. Urmila Pawar a well known activist in the dalit and feminist struggles is often an outspoken critique of Savarna exploitation. Her autobiographical work *Aaidan (The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs)* is a metaphor of the writing technique employed by Pawar, the lives of different members of her family, her husband's family, her neighbours and classmates, are woven together in a narrative that gradually reveals different aspects of the everyday life of Dalits, the manifold ways in which caste asserts itself and grinds them down. The another contribution made to dalit literature is the works of Daya Pawar. Pawar belonging to the Mahar community deals with the atrocities experienced by the Dalits and the Untouchables under Hindu caste system. His pioneering autobiographical novel *Baluta* (1978) recounts experiences of an untouchable struggling for a peaceful existence, mentally tormented but incapable of retaliation in word and deed.

Annabhau Sathe's upbringing and identity is central to his writing and political activism. Sathe's novel *Fakira* is revolutionary in spirit. In *Fakira*, Sathe portrays Fakira, the protagonist, revolting against the rural orthodox system and British Raj to save his community from utter starvation.^[1] The protagonist and his community are subsequently arrested and tortured by British officers, and Fakira is eventually killed by hanging. Bama's novels like *Karukku*(1992), *Sangati*(1994), *Vanman*(2002) too raises the question of caste and gender discrimination. They portray caste-discrimination practiced in Christianity and Hinduism. Bama's works are seen as embodying Dalit feminism and are famed for celebrating the inner strength of the subaltern

woman. Thus, the Dalit writers voices out the unequal treatment, criticizes the caste system of Indian society, questions the exclusion of the dalits from the mainstream society and culture. Through literature the writers aim at establishing and promoting equality and human dignity.

Dalit consciousness or Dalit Chetna is present in both the writings of the Dalit and the Non-Dalit writers. Dalit writing by Dalit and Non- Dalit writers are comparable in its projection of Dalit life in Indian society. Mainstream writer Shanta Rameswar Rao's *Children of God* (1976) focuses on caste oppression of the Dalits. Like the Dalit writers Rao's novel gives an account of the various forms of social abuse, being deprived from using the common well, being forced to wash laundry only downstream and at night, making eye contact or speaking directly to a caste Hindu considered audacious, punishment for even inadvertently touching a Savarna etc. The novel also makes oblique references to the Dalit complicity in the self-degradation of their own classes. Another novel that focuses on Dalit question is Suresh Chandra's *Baba's Tribe* (1989). It tells the poignant story of the Dalits who are exploited and terrorized by their own leaders.

The booker prize winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy demonstrate the caste atrocities committed by the upper caste towards an untouchable. Velutha, the Dalit protagonist controversies and the hegemonic norms by having an affair with a woman of his high caste and the ultimate outcome of this love affair is the tragic death of an untouchable by the 'Touchable Boots' of the police, an incident that caricatures the idea of God. Velutha, the outcast, thus epitomizes social injustice and inequality. The untouchables were: "not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed". (Roy 71)

Mahasweta Devi the receiver of Sahitya Akademi Award(1979) and Bharatiya Jnanpith Award(1996) championed the cause of the Dalits through her literary works. Her play *Water*

(1972) represents the annals of the suppression of Dalits by the so-called custodians of the social setup. This play is a dramatic account of the life of Maghai who is water diviner by the caste a dome, the untouchable. Devi's prominent play *Water* exposes and explodes the sham and fraudulence of not only big landowners but also of the government officers. *Water* not only sympathizes with those Dalits exploited lot, but also they try to perceive their desires and develop consciousness among them to speak out their demands. Her other novels like *Bashai Tudu*(1990), *Chotti Munda and His Arrow*(2002) and *Titu mir*(2000) explore the theme of quest for tribal identity, to bring out the trauma and protest by the tribals in the process of social change , conservation and development of primitive groups, to preserve and protect tribal culture and traditional knowledge.

A critical and comparative analysis of the Dalit and Non-Dalit writers needs preliminary discussions on their portrayal of the Dalits. Both the Non-Dalit writer Mulk Raj Anand and the Dalit writer Narayan presents a realistic picture of the different Dalit groups. The mainstream writer Anand is the first novelist in Indian English Fiction to highlight the poorest of the poor, their plight and sufferings of the lowly masses. Only Anand is the sole writer who dared to make the lowest of the lowly his hero, for the first time in the history of Indian English fiction. His interest in the pariahs and the bottom dogs rather than the chosen and the knowledgeable has given us the most popular novels like the *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) and *Across the Black Waters* (1939). Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* exposes and satirizes the religious bigotry, the hypocrisy and the heartlessness of the Hindus and the degraded servility of the outcastes. Anand narrates the story of the lowest caste-the Bhangi or the sweeper caste that are considered as the lowest caste even among the lower caste groups. The inhuman discrimination of Indian caste system is a major drawback of Indian society. This truth is

realistically portrayed by Anand. Through this novel Anand has not only presented the tragedy of a boy named Bakha in modern India. He has given a bleak picture of the misery of the sweeper caste under the upper caste Hindus. Bakha is only partly the prototypical 'untouchable', for he is also himself, a unique individual, even in some measure an exceptional untouchable. Anand describes the living condition of the untouchables-the outcaste colony - the filthy ghettos that the untouchables live, the hereditary job the untouchables are indulged in where they are bound to continue the work of cleaning latrines without complain, the concept of pollution practiced by the upper caste people and the abuses the tortures and the exploitation of the untouchables are clearly detailed. The reader witnesses the worst situation of a Dalit boy under Hindu caste system. Anand has given a voice to the voiceless lot through the novel. Anand believes that literature should not be meant for entertainment but for social reform. Thus, his novel *Untouchable* strives hard to bring social reform to the caste dominated Hindu society.

Like Anand, the Dalit writer Narayan in his debut novel *Kocharethi*(1998) projects another Dalit group known as the Malayarayar tribe inhabiting the western ghats of Kerela. *Kocharethi* is the first novel in Malayalam written by an adivasi`is considered as 'authentic'. It describes the sufferings and the marginalization of the Malayarayar community by the state, organized religion and the establishment in the early 20th century through the lives of Kunjipennu and her childhood love, and later husband Kochuraman. The adivasis like Kochuraman are a hardworking, close knit community and their life has been close to nature. To them their history, culture, myths and rituals are of utmost importance. But the presence of bureaucratic greed, colonial domination and the forces of modernity lead to exploitation of both men and nature. The tribals are tricked, robbed and utilized at every step of their life. The novel is about the plight of Kerala's (the southernmost state of India) indigenous people in a postcolonial nation and shows the growing

gap between the centre and the periphery. The legacy of colonial modernity, language, education, nationalism, gendered subalternity and cultural history is discussed in the novel. Both Narayan and Anand illustrate the wretchedness and the plight of different Dalit groups of India. Anand's untouchables suffer due to caste hierarchy, whereas Narayan's adivasis misery is brought by the centre's different dominating forces.

The 'Tribals' or 'Aboriginals' and 'the lowest caste' or 'the lowest class' of Indian social system are suppressed and marginalized by the so called dominant groups or the upper caste people. This domination is not only found in India, but is prevalent in other parts of the world such as the whites dominating the Black Africans. British Colonialism was responsible for such inequality. During the British rule the White Civilization marginalized the tribals. During the Pre-Independent and Post-Independent India the upper caste like the Brahmins dominated the lowest caste like Shudras or the untouchables. They are the most anguished people in the world. Depending on the countries and cultural backgrounds, the oppression is crude or paradoxically sophisticated. The plight of the sweeper class in Anand's *Untouchable* is deplorable in that they suffer in the hands of the higher caste. On the other hand, in Narayan's *Kocharethi* the Malayarayar tribe- the black untouchables of India- particularly Kerala are tortured under the Aryan settlers, the Oppressors. Therefore a parallel study can be established between the two novels.

India's independence struggle, colonial rule and the colonial modernity are present in the novels *Kocharethi* and *Untouchables*. The setting of the two novels is during the colonial period. The adoption of colonial culture and conversion into colonial religion is itself representative of the presence of colonial rule in the two novels. In the novel *Untouchable* the protagonist Bakha's obsession on wearing clothes like the Sahibs, on their lifestyle and way of living speaks about

how colonial culture was deeply ingrained in the common people like Bakha. The British world was a dream world for Bakha. He believed that possession of something European was better than nothing European. The clear - cut styles of European dress had impressed his naïve mind. Thus, he was able to accumulate a pair of trousers, breeches, coat, puttees, hat and boots from the Sahibs which he wore during the days and nights. He and his friends Chota styled their hair like the Englishmen by oiling their hair and parting it like the Englishmen. Moreover he adopted the English way of drinking tea and sleeping with the day clothes and the thin blanket of the gora even in the coldest nights of Bulashah. He never minded smoking cigarettes with his friends. So, Bakha was so obsessed with the Sahibs that he tried every possibility to become like the Sahibs. The active role of the Christian missionaries during the colonial rule can be seen in the last part of the novel. Colonel Hutchinson, the chief of the local Salvation Army had unflinching devotion to duty and loyalty to the cause of converting the Indians to Christianity. It is observed that amongst all the stratus of people the untouchables were the ones who were easily convertible. “The number of conversions to his credit for the last twenty years being not more than five, and those five mainly from among the Dirty, black Untouchables”. (Anand 112)

Colonel Hutchinson remained marvelously active for three score years and five. He laid himself in hiding as of yore in deep pits of filth or behind heaps of dung, to wait for some troubled outcaste who might be tired and hungry and would listen in his despair to the gospel of Christ. The condition of the untouchables made them the victim of foreign religion like Christianity. Though Hutchinson was able to convert few untouchables, he was unsuccessful in converting the main protagonist Bakha. He could only preach his Christianity and make familiar to Bakha about ‘Yessuh Messih’.

Narayan's *Kocharethi* falls prey to the project of colonial modernity and colonial religion, which the new Indian state sets out to continue in order to prove its capability to self rule. *Kocharethi* depicts the plight of the native subaltern caught in the regulative politics of the infallible nation state, and betrayed by the promise of the participatory citizenship, struggling to find voice amidst the homogenized Babel of nationalist discourses.

In the social sphere of colonialism, colonizers claimed to bring 'modernity' or 'civilization' to the so called 'savages' through political technologies, missionaries, educators and etc. Colonial modernity can be considered as the colonizer's policy of using a combination of rational thought, European liberalism, capitalism and technology to enact reforms in the traditional, so called barbaric and unenlightened third world states. These forces of colonial modernity are well evident in the novel for which the novel is said to set during colonial India. Another passage from the book proofs the colonial rule.

Now local leaders and their goons do not trouble them. India is ruled by the English king.

We have become the citizens of that king. Whatever be our needs we tell the estate

Superintendent of Malankara Estate, Mathai Saar. Saar will tell the Englishman. (150)

The Christians missionaries' message to the Adivasis about the authoritative book giving the word of God was comforting to the minds looking for some spiritual anchor to secure their faltering souls. It was easy for the missionaries to lure them with good dress, education and lifestyle. The innocent adivasis were moved by such offerings and as a result many got converted into Christianity. Christianity wiped all sorts of 'devil-worship', maintaining that Christianity offered a sure way to heaven. Kochuraman recalled the dramatic incident that took place in his village due to arrival of Christianity. Men in the previous day talked respectfully to his grandfather, behaved like one of his family, joined them in beheading a fowl for Puliambulli,

suddenly began to act as superior, adopted a patronizing tone, and advised them to give up traditional practices. They even changed their identity from Kunjaapa to Daniel and his wife's name changed to Chinna and the children are now called as Issac and Anna. Both the novels *Untouchable* and *Kocharethi* speak about the colonial rule and the advent of Christianity in colonial India. Though many characters get converted into Christianity, the main characters Bakha in *Untouchable* and Kochuraman in *Kocharethi* remain true to their own caste and religion. Bakha and Kochuraman are unaware of Christianity. Kochuraman believed that 'antichristu' was destroying them as a community because Kochuraman's clansmen were slowly departing from their traditional practices and customs. Kochuraman realized that things were falling apart.

The inequality between the centre and the periphery is brought forth in both the novels. The upper caste in *Untouchable* and the bureaucrats, British government and missionaries in *Kocharethi* hold the central position. Whereas, the untouchables like Bakha and adivasis like Kochuraman and Kunjipennu are the peripheral. The disparity between them is reflected in their settlements and the treatment of the dominant towards the margin and so on.

In *Untouchable* the sweepers, the leather-workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society reside in the outcastes' colony situated in the outer limit of the town of Bulashah. The periphery is always considered to be on the margin, outer limit, borderline or boundary. As such the inferior groups or the less privilege groups are expected to reside on the periphery. Hence, in *Untouchable* Anand very clearly picturizes the outcastes' colony.

The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that Clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town And cantonment, but outside their boundaries

and separate, from them...And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that Lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery Which lay within it, made it an 'uncongenial' place to live in. (Anand 1)

The untouchables are bound to live in an unhygienic condition. The odour of animal dung hides and skins of dead carcasses filled the atmosphere. There is no drainage system to carry the dirt away. Whereas, the upper caste people situated themselves in the middle of the town. On penetrating into their alleys one could find their multiple storey buildings and well structured drainage system. It was the sweepers who cleaned their alleys. In spite of such service they were tortured and abused.

Similarly, the Malayarayers inhabit the Western Ghats where they border the districts of central Kerala. Here too the Arayars settle in the bordering districts of Kerala. They were scattered through the length and breadth of the country. European anthropologists after making taxonomical listings of their physical features and living conditions titled them under the name 'tribe'. Today they are also termed as 'aborigines'. Living on the margin the Malayarayers are treated as marginal objects. They were geographically and culturally isolated from the mainstream. The Arayars often faced natural disasters like forest fire and drought and epidemics like smallpox. The drought was so terrible that Kunjipennu was not able to make gruel or curry to feed her child. She struggled with fistfuls of rice. The plains were totally responsible for the disasters like forest fire which is clear through the lines. "When the grass on the hill slopes dried up, some rascals from the plains would set fire to it, not minding the consequences". (Narayan 59-60)

The forest fire burnt down the huts and the crops of the Arayan and Uralis. Kunjipennu shouted and screamed for help. But she was helpless and could not save her home and child.

Though the Arayars were geographically isolated from the civilized world, they were not free from the ruling authority. The Christians and Muslims traders cheat the men of the forest. Their lack of knowledge about calculations makes them highly vulnerable to be cheated by the non-tribals merchants. Other than this the steady process of modernization under British colonial administration affected them. So, the untouchables in the novel *Untouchable* and the Adivasis in *Kocharethi* are the peripheral who are denied of human dignity, respect and equality. In *Untouchable* the caste system stands as a barrier whereas, in *Kocharethi* the greedy traders, bureaucrats and the forces of modernization stand on the way of the Arayars. Both the novels shows how the peripherals are inhumanely treated and marginalized and are perceived as the 'other' or the 'objects' rather than the 'subject'.

Kocharethi and *Untouchable* give a hint of India's freedom struggle and the presence of Mahatma Gandhi. In *Untouchable* Gandhi himself appears as a character. Gandhi despised the practice of untouchability by the caste Hindus especially by Brahmins. He considered untouchability as a sinful and contemptible act to be condemned by all. Gandhi believed that untouchability is the greatest blot on Hinduism and the untouchables are the Harijans meaning 'man of God'. Hence, Gandhi remarked that the Harijans should be equally treated. The gatherings of Hindu-Mussulman, Sikh, Harijan and the ardent devotees in the Golbagh to hear Gandhi's speech implies that Gandhi appears as an epitome of unifier and a great savior of mankind. In *Kocharethi* though Gandhi as a character is totally absent, but his presence and influence is well observed in the novel. Influenced by Gandhi's freedom struggle Parvati's friend Kochumadhavan joins the Congress shouts the slogan 'Bharat Mata ki Jai'. They demand that Swaraj is their birthright. In spite of the punishment meted to the students they continued their satyagrahas under the congressmen. Though Gandhi's presence is seen in both the novels the

presence of Gandhi is brought forth for two different reasons. In *Untouchable* Gandhi appears as an emancipator advocating for the cause of the bhangis and chamars. Gandhi's speech for the Harijans is a solution to untouchability as depicted in the novel. Whereas, in *Kocharethi* Narayan emphasizes on India's freedom struggle under the guidance of the Mahatma.

The issue of identity is one of the dominant features in the two novels. Both individual and community identity crisis is seen in the novels. The restrictive and sometimes the oppressive role played by the society in relation to individuals make one's life tragic. Bakha in *Untouchable* is humiliated and discriminated many times because he is an outcaste. He cannot walk on the streets as a free citizen. Someone comes in contact with his body would defile the individual belonging to higher caste. So, he was obliged to give the untouchable call. The second humiliation is at the temple. Bakha is enchanted by the elegance of the temple architecture and grandeur of the rituals carried on the temple. Forgetting his position Bakha mounts the temple steps but he is taken aback by the shouts of pollution. The third humiliation takes place in the silversmith's lane where food is thrown at him like a street dog. The upper-caste folk make use of the service that only the sweepers can do, but reward the sweepers with inexcusable contempt. Such humiliation and unequal treatment make Bakha feel that he does not have any other identity other than what is imposed on him by the society. He feels dejected and alienated which results in identity crisis. His alienation occurs in every stratum of his life that leads him to rootlessness and loss of identity.

During the British rule land were explored, regions conquered and maps redrawn with roads, rails and concrete structures without ever consisting Nature. The land that was exclusively secluded from the external forces was open to the outsiders. The state's coercive allocation and management of natural resources, a postcolonial version of ecological imperialism, accelerated

the forced march to industrialization with disastrous cultural as well as ecological effects. Tribals are natural worshippers. They worship the trees, sun, moon and other natural deities. But the Christian missionaries manipulated the innocent adivasis. As a result several of them got converted. *Kocharethi* is an exploration of these issues. The Malayarays lived in union with nature, sharing its bounty and preferred to forge through the forest. But this union is disturbed by the outsider. They cut down their land and crops for construction purpose. They were exploited by the merchants and traders and were lured by the Christian missionaries. All these factors contributed their feeling of alienation and isolation from the plains which resulted in identity crisis of the community. Though both the novel shows the identity issue the treatment is different in both the novel. Identity crisis develops in *Untouchable* due to caste hierarchy and hypocrisy of the people. It is the identity crisis of a sweeper boy that is detailed. Whereas, *Kocharethi* is about the communal identity that is slowly fading into history due to the authoritative British rule, the Christian missionaries and the corrupt bureaucrat and traders.

Anand's use of language is heterogenous and it is correlatable with various situations, context, events etc in the novel. Influenced by James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* Anand also uses stream-of consciousness technique in his novel. The stream-of-consciousness of the hero Bakha in *Untouchable* runs throughout the novel, with the undercurrents of reminiscence, reverie and intuition indicated in certain phrases, symbolic words and truncated thoughts. Anand puts into the middle of the day a dream sequence which was culled from the hero's imagination as a fable of his pilgrim's progress. Anand like Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* narrate single day realistic events of the character. His use of narrative flashbacks, reverie, reminiscences, symbolic words and phrases make the novel a modern novel in a real sense. Whereas, Narayan's *Kocharethi* is a fusion of fiction and non-

fiction. It also serves like an encyclopedia of the Malayarayar world. His novel is simple, plain and evocative. He does not use any stylistic and structural literary techniques. But he uses many Adivasi words throughout the text.

Anand's novel is based on mere observation that turns out to be shallow and stereotyped. During his childhood he had many friends from the lower class community. During his childhood he was quite familiar with the bylanes and streets. His playmates inspired him the most to write a novel like the *Untouchable*. It is a detailed portrayal of the plight of the untouchables. Anand's aim was to bring forth the evils of caste system to the society and its workings: how inhuman a society can be. Whereas, through *Kocharethi* Narayan aims at producing a distinctive subaltern historiography and to reverse the biased representation of the mainstream literature. The adivasis have been represented as a monochromatic figure; like the rakshasan or nishacharan of mythological stories. It was always a negative picture depicted as apathetic, unable to react to injustice or worse, inhuman or sub-human, vicious. He existed for the sole purpose of being defeated and/or killed by the forces of virtue and goodness, represented by the upper castes. Through *Kocharethi* Narayan alters such representation by showing that they have their own distinctive way of life, value system and that they are not demons lacking in humanity but a strong, hardworking and self-reliant community. Moreover Anand's novel is based on imagination. *Kocharethi* on the other is semi-autobiographical filled with rebellion and rejection. Autobiographical in the sense that specific incident and characters, the background, some description of the terrain, etc are based on memories.

A comparative study of *Kocharethi* and *Untouchable* makes it clear that in the Indian social system the social hierarchy is given an utmost importance. The marginal or the subaltern groups are always looked down upon by the so called upper class people. They are 'the

primitive', 'the objects' and 'the other'. The upper caste treats the lowest group in whatever way they want to. In *Untouchable* the sweepers are meted out with the worst treatment that humanity can ever imagine. Caste system had brought the distinction between the orient and the occident amongst themselves. The sweepers are seen as the disquieting as well as a disgusting object of pollution to the orthodox Hindus.

The aborigines are fooled, exploited and humiliated both by the colonial government and the officials. Maintaining good connection with land is essential for all of the Indigenous groups because it will help them in maintaining their identities and will help them in remaining healthy both physically and mentally. So land rights are an important dimension of the Aboriginal health. But this maintenance and preservation is disturbed by the modern forces in *Kocharethi*.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The Brahmins have established the postulation that the Shudras are the lowest caste and they are meant to serve the twice born that is the Brahmins. To the Brahmins the caste system was modeled by God. It was not man-made. This distinction between the low caste and high caste created the Dalits in Indian social system. The Dalits were considered as the depressed classes during the British census. Later scheduled caste and scheduled tribe were also included under the Dalits. The Brahmins imposed several social restrictions on the Dalits. Many abnormal and unnatural practices were observed and reserved for the Dalits. Their condition got deteriorated day by day. After the coming of the British rule several changes took place. They brought with them education, technology, new rules and regulations. Education gave rise to many social reformers who worked for the upliftment of the marginal. Reformers like Jyotiba Phule, B.R Ambedkar aimed at emancipating the lowest groups from the clutches of slavery.

The Mahar movement grew under their leadership and this movement became a founding ground for Dalit literature. Dalit literature provided a ground for the Dalits where they could voice their heart out, where they could protest at the same time rebel and a space was provided where they could claim and reclaim their identity. Consequently many Dalit writers emerge in the field like Anna Bhau Sathe, Baburao Bagul, Narayan Surve, Raja Dhale and many others. Literature became a mirror of the stark social reality and it did paved the way for the emerging writers to shape their creativity. Dalit literature was not limited to one form of genre. Poems, novels, short stories, plays, autobiographies and periodicals projected the Dalits. Dalit literature was criticized on many grounds. The Dalit Brahmins felt that Dalit literature was something dirty

and it was tarnishing the image of their society. The Dalits who imitated the elite writers viewed the literature as negative.

Dalit literature is compared to African-American literature especially in its depiction of issues of racial segregation and injustices as seen in the slave narrative. It is a protest literature aims at creating social awakening and highlighting the difficulties and disabilities of the downtrodden. Dalit literature is studied in relation to feminism, environmental consciousness, subaltern studies and postcolonialism. As a subaltern literature it stands for the writings on Dalit by Dalits from insider's perspective and as a postcolonial it encompasses the studies on resistance, identity and subalternity. Dalit literature has become a mainstream literature with the translations of the books *An Anthology of Dalit Literature* and *Poisoned Bread*. Since then Dalit as a subject occupied its position in many novels written by a Non-Dalit. Difference exists between Dalit and Non-Dalit writings. Dalit writers render an authentic and autobiographical portrayal of the Dalits. Whereas, Non-Dalit's portrayal of Dalit is imaginary and fictional. Representation of the Dalits by the Non-Dalit is emphatic and presented with understanding. Moreover a contrasting image can be established between mainstream and Dalit literature. Mainstream literature has failed to represent the depth and subtleties of Dalit experience. On the other the Dalit writer's access to hegemonic culture and familiarity with the oppressors literary tradition make partly identify with the centre. It is a literature of social commitment and social consciousness and directed against the epistemic violence of Brahmanism against the marginalized caste both on ideological and aesthetic grounds. Thus, chapter one introduces the term 'Dalit'. It traces the emergence and the origin of Dalit literature. Moreover it discusses the various aspects of Dalit literature and the recognition of Dalit literature in the mainstream. It

further explores the various writers in this field and differentiates between the Dalit and Non-Dalit writings.

In the chapter 'Subalternity and Mimicry in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*' Anand's novel *Untouchable* is analysed from postcolonial perspective. It introduces the concept of postcolonialism and its emergence. It gives special importance to the postcolonial theorist and throws light on their contribution towards this field. This chapter interprets the two postcolonial key concepts of 'subalternity' and 'mimicry'. 'Subalternity' and 'mimicry' is applied to understand the novel from a different perspective.

Postcolonialism is the critical study of the history, culture, literature and other mode of discourses that are specific to the Third World countries. It encloses several central and recurrent issues. It has concepts like hegemony, mimicry, diaspora, multiculturalism, periphery, subaltern etc. The postcolonial notion of the west as superior and East as inferior or the other is applicable in Indian literature especially in Dalit literature. The domination of west towards the east is similar to the domination of the upper caste towards the lower caste. Indians are subaltern through the process of colonization to a superior group - the western and at the same time they are guilty of the same process by making subaltern categories among their community. These subaltern categories are the Dalits who are marginalized and suppressed. In the novel *Bakha* is a subaltern figure. His subalternity is due to his birth. By birth he belongs to the sweeper class so he is obliged to continue his hereditary job. As a subaltern Bakha faces several humiliations at every step of his life. The concept of mimicry is found in the character Bakha. Bakha mimics the sahib's culture and mannerisms. He dresses like the Sahibs and live like the sahibs. Through Bakha Anand portrays the deteriorating conditions of the untouchables. The subalterns like Bakha and his father Lakha are victims of caste system and they accept their position as

subaltern as they are deprived of economic and political power to fight back the upper caste supremacy. Anand has echoed the real situations of the untouchables and he sympathizes with the subalterns and at the same time shares their agony and pain.

The discourse on race, gender, identity, ethnicity and culture sprang up as a vital feature in Postcolonialism. Among them the issue of identity has become the most debatable issue in postcolonial novels. Like other genres Dalit writers take up literature especially autobiographies to advocate Dalit identity. Dalit literature challenges the subjugated passive identity thereby creating a new positive identity. In “Erosion of Identity: A Discourse on the Peripheral” the identity issue of the Malayarayar tribe is discussed in relation to the novel *Kocharethi*. The novel is about the Malayarayar community and their plight in the modern days under colonial government. The Malayarayar tribe is designated as the peripheral living on the bordering districts of Kerela. They are geographically and culturally the isolated community of Kerela who have their own lifestyles. Rituals, taboos, customs have a special place in the life of the Arayars. They are rich in traditional practices. They lead a life of hardship and are prone to several natural disasters and epidemics. They are the marginal subjects who are often robbed by the Christians and Muslims traders. They also lead a life of poverty due to economic and land exploitation. They live in union with land and nature. For them their land holds meaning beyond ownership. But this unity is destroyed by the establishing government. The British government cut down their land for construction purposes. As a result they are displaced and dispossessed from their own land and they are bound to live in their own land as a tenant. The Arayars are worshippers of trees, and several other deities. But with the advent of Christianity Puliambuli and Chathan is replaced by ‘antichristu’ and ochre robes replaced the gowns of the priests and nuns. Education brought changes in the minds of the children. Parvati no longer resolves to traditional system of

marrying from the same clan. She independently takes decision to marry the person of her own choice and with the passing of generations the Arayars live their traditional way of curing illness infact welcomes modern medicine. They are robbed by the government, tricked by the traders and manipulated by the Christian missionaries. As a result they feel alienated and dejected which further leads them to identity crisis. Thus, the chapter discusses how the Malayarayar community witnesses the erosion of identity under the impact of colonial modernity. It is a society in transition and the natives struggle to preserve their identity.

In the chapter “Dalit writing by Dalit and Non-Dalit writers: A Comparative Analysis” makes a comparative study of the Dalit and Non-Dalit writers. It not only compares the writers but, at the same time differentiates them and critically analyzes their works. Comparative literature studies two or more literatures across linguistic, national and disciplinary boundaries. Comparatist literature in India studies the interplay between the popular and mainstream, the elite and the marginalized and foregrounds intermedial perspective as different forms existed in a composite manner.

Both Dalit and Non-Dalit have transformed the literary space by giving voice to the oppressed sections of the society. They also aimed at asserting their identity and reclaiming personhood. Dalit writers like Laxman Gaikwad, Sharankumar Limbale, Aravind Malagatti assert their identities through their autobiographies. Other writers like Urmila Pawar, Meena Kandaswamy, Bama, Baburao Bagul, Annabhau Sathé expresses the issues of racial segregation and injustices prevalent in the society. Like the Dalit writers the Non-Dalit writers too project the various forms of social abuses, exploitation and terrorization of the lower classes.

Like the other writers both Mulk Raj Anand and Narayan discuss the sufferings and marginalization of different Dalit groups. One being the sweeper class and the other is the Malayarayar tribe of Kerela. *Kocharethi* and *Untouchable* gives a hint of the British rule in India and India's struggle for independence. The influence of Gandhi is present in both the novels and his appearance as a character is seen in the novel *Untouchable*. Moreover the distinction between the centre and the periphery is taken up as an important subject matter in both the novels. The inequality is reflected in the upper caste treatment of the lower caste in *Untouchable* and ruling government's domination of the adivasis in *Kocharethi*. The unfavourable settlements of the peripheral too contribute towards the understanding of the binary concepts of centre and periphery. The untouchables living in the outcaste colony and the Arayars living in the bordering areas of Kerela in the mountainous regions makes the readers clear. In addition to this, the impact of colonial religion is seen in both the novels. The Christian missionaries' message about the authoritative book giving the word of God seems to be comforting the minds of the characters in both the novels. Apart from this the issue of identity crisis is evident in the novels. In *Untouchable* the main protagonist go through several humiliations in every step of his life which forces him to feel alienated from the society which further culminates into rootlessness and loss of identity. Again in *Kocharethi* the erosion of communal identity under the colonial government and Christian missionaries is projected in detail. Alongwith the similarities certain differences are also observed among the writers in their styles and forms of expression. Anand's aim is to give a picture of the workings of caste system and he writes emphatically. Whereas, Narayan's aim is to reverse the biased representation done by the mainstream literature thereby asserting a new positive identity of the Malayarayar tribe.

Through the novel *Untouchable* Anand highlights the workings of caste system in India. He shows the cyclical oppression of the untouchables. Cyclical because from generation to generation they are bound to do the job of a sweeper because they are born as sweepers who cannot change their position. Their suffering is cyclical, perpetual and generational. The Hindu caste system and the stigma it cast upon the lower caste ensure that they remain poor and destitute while the upper castes enjoy a better lifestyle. The untouchables are restored with certain responsibility. They are to give the untouchable call while walking on the streets. They were to maintain distance so that the upper caste men do not touch them and vice versa to avoid pollution. The special responsibility entrusted on the untouchables is the other way of suppressing them.

Inter-caste inequality in the novel is fueled by a set of rules that limits the rights and lives of the outcaste specially the sweeper class. Such inequality is observed in day-to-day activities. They are prohibited from draining water from the caste well since, draining water from the well would pollute the well. So, the untouchables had to wait for hours for some high caste men who would feel pity over their condition and pour them water. Anand not only details the inter caste struggle. He exposes the intra-caste struggle that exist between them. Gulabo, Ram Charan's mother is washerwomen. She is also an outcaste like Bakha and his family. But she believes that she occupies the higher status within their shared outcaste status. The rejection of Indian root is well evident in the novel. The character Bakha develops a strong distaste for Indian lifestsyle. He dislikes the way Indian perform ablutions and the way they drink tea. His rejection of Indian way is directly correlated to his embracement of British culture and lifestyle. The rejection of Indian roots is closely intertwined with Britain's colonization of India and extends far past Bakha to Indian society as a whole.

Anand and Narayan has portrayed the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe of India residing in the different parts of India. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe are designated as the disadvantaged and depressed sections of the society. Residing in the plains of India the Scheduled Caste faces oppression under the so-called high caste people. Anand in his novel *Untouchable* has given a detailed description of it. Whereas, in *Kocharethi* Narayan has depicted one of the Scheduled Tribe of Kerela and has shown how life is like in the hilly terrains of Western Ghats. Narayan has detailed the lifestyle of a tribal community in the hills and their hardships due to natural calamities and exploitation by the outsiders and the plains. So, the research is a discussion on the plight of two oppressed groups under different forces. Moreover it brings together two different writers belonging to different period of time to discuss the life of the depressed sections of the society.

Research on Anand's *Untouchable* is not only limited to postcolonial analysis. It provides wider field for a researcher to interpret the text from a different perspective. A Marxist interpretation and a psychoanalytic approach to the stream of consciousness phenomenon can be taken up for further research. Apart from this the importance of Gandhian ideology in Indian English fiction can be taken up as the vital issue of discussion.

Like Marx, Anand saw class oppression as a hindrance towards the progress of society. Bakha is oppressed both as an untouchable and a proletariat. He is doubly oppressed both economically and socially. Anand is sympathetic towards the downtrodden and he attacks the capitalist society who cannot see the progress of the lower caste or class. Class system and caste system is inseparable in the novel. Bakha is aware that he is an exploited class entity. Bakha achieves what Lukacs describes as the class consciousness. So the novel can be explored from Marxist lens.

Anand uses stream of consciousness technique in the novel. Anand explores the inner being of his character. His novel begins with the thinking trance of Bakha. He thinks uncongenially of his home as he lay half awake in the morning of an autumn day, covered by a greasy blanket. The suffering and the anguish of the untouchable is revealed through stream of consciousness technique. It reveals the inner mind of the character. The readers are taken back to the past and suddenly to the future. He not only emphasizes the action of the hero but, emphasizes the way the mind of his character works.

In addition, the impact of Gandhian ideology in the novel *Untouchable* could be studied. Anand belongs to the Gandhian era and his novel reveals prominently the deep influence of Gandhi. He keeps an eye on Gandhi's philosophy and vision of harmonious integrity and emphasized more on social problems of the oppressed and downtrodden people of Hindu society. The novel has become a great success in projecting Gandhian ideology on casteism.

Narayan's *Kocharethi* is about the history, traditions and the true lives of the Malayarayar community. Through the protagonist Narayan shows the Malayarayar struggle for land and the challenges to preserve their myths and customs. The various themes like struggle for identity, colonial domination, bureaucratic greed, freedom struggle and survival struggle is visible in the novel. Narayan depicts the innocence of the Malayarayar tribe. Man and Nature was inseparable and were integral to each other. The novel is filled with particulars of beliefs, rituals, rites and customs of their community. Apart from this, the picturization of the landscapes and the sources of herbs, natural products, their method of medication were specially explained in various occasion. They were isolated tribe in the pepper rich border areas of Kerela unknown to the outside world. But with the coming of modernity their society underwent transition.

Through *Kocharethi*, Narayan writes back at all the misrepresentations of the Arayar tribe in popular fictions. He expresses his dissatisfaction with the policy of protective discrimination as it is practiced. He also vehemently opposes the granting of reservation- related benefits to tribals who have converted to another faith and enjoy the educational and other benefits that they gain in the process. He sees the converted tribals as traitors to their native ethos and is not afraid to say so. This feeling of his is expressed through the main protagonist Kochuraman.

Kocharethi is not only a hidden poetry of marginal lives but, it can also be researched from different angles. The novel opens up further possibilities for a researcher. One can analyze the folkloric elements in the novel. Tribal life is described in the novel with all folkloric elements like what are their rituals, ceremonies, faiths, institution of marriage and their food, clothing and shelter in accordance with the period prior to the renaissance in Kerala.

Besides, an Ecocritical reading of the novel could be done. In *Kocharethi* Man's natural brush with the forces of nature is portrayed. The forest is not merely life generating but, also life consuming. The reaching of colonial modernity converts the woods into reserved woods and plantations. Kochuraman the medicine man had ever used carnal fat resorts to soda water and moves to medical college for intervention. Thus, the novel is about the strife between man and nature, about man's retreating from nature and these issues paved the ground for ecocritical analysis.

Dalits are the downtrodden and the oppressed sections of Indian society and despite laws to protect them they still face widespread discrimination in India. Various researches on Dalits have offered new perspective for the study of Dalits in India. Research on the predicament of the Dalits will set awareness among the entire generation of educated Indians to think about India's

social evils that were perpetuated in the name of religion and tradition and expand the horizons of the readers. It will be a window into the day-to-day lives of the Dalits. The research will paved the ground for other researcher working on Dalits and the research itself will be a contribution to Dalit literature.

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