Comparative Study of the Representation of Marginalisation and Cultural Exclusion in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Munshi Prem Chand's Sadgati

Lilack Biswas[1], Dr. Samira Sinha[2]

[1]Assistant Professor Department of English Dinabandhu Mahavidyalaya Bongaon 24 Pgs. (N) West Bengal

[2]Assistant Professor University Department of English Ranchi University

Abstract

Caste and cultural marginalization have been central themes in Indian literature, particularly in the works of Mulk Raj Anand and Munshi Premchand. This research paper explores the true nature and types of marginalisation in India, and then, how caste oppression and systemic exclusion manifest in Untouchable (1935) and Sadgati (1931). Anand's Untouchable presents the harrowing experience of Bakha, a Dalit boy subjugated to caste-based discrimination, while Premchand's Sadgati offers a stark depiction of the brutalization of an untouchable labourer, Dukhi, under the Brahmanical social order. Through a comparative analysis, this study investigates how both texts critique the institutionalized oppression of lower-caste individuals and the intersections of class, caste, and cultural hegemony. Employing a postcolonial and Marxist framework, this paper highlights how literature serves as a socio-political tool for exposing caste-based inequities. The study underscores the relevance of these narratives in contemporary discourse on caste discrimination and social justice in India.

Keywords: Caste, Marginalization, Dalit Literature, Cultural Oppression, Social Hierarchy, Postcolonialism, Marxism, Hegemony

INTRODUCTION

The institution of caste stands as one of the most entrenched and enduring edifices of social stratification in India, its roots delving deep into the annals of history and the very fabric of cultural consciousness. Like an insidious spectre, it has cast an oppressive pall over the lives of those consigned to its lower rungs, most grievously afflicting the Dalit communities, who have borne the brunt of systemic exclusion and dehumanization. This rigid hierarchy, upheld by tradition and sanctioned by hegemonic discourse, has served as a formidable instrument of social control, perpetuating cycles of oppression that render emancipation an elusive dream.

Amidst this oppressive milieu, literature emerges as a luminous beacon, a weapon forged in the crucible of human conscience to confront and dismantle the citadels of inequity. It has long served as a potent medium through which the silenced may find voice and the invisible may be rendered starkly visible. Among the venerated literary stalwarts who have wielded their pens against the iniquities of caste, Mulk

Raj Anand and Munshi Premchand stand as towering sentinels of social critique. Their works, Untouchable and Sadgati, pulsate with the raw anguish of the oppressed and serve as searing indictments of a society steeped in casteist tyranny.

This scholarly endeavour aspires to delve into the labyrinthine dynamics of caste and cultural marginalization as illuminated in these seminal texts. Through the twin lenses of postcolonial and Marxist critique, it seeks to unravel the ways in which Anand and Premchand unveil and resist the hegemonic structures that relegate individuals to the peripheries of existence. Anand, through the modernist lens, crafts a psychological portrait of Bakha, capturing the harrowing depths of his alienation and the systemic forces that entrap him in an unrelenting cycle of abasement. Premchand, with his stark realism, unveils in Sadgati the brutal dehumanization of an untouchable labourer, exposing the merciless grip of caste oppression in its most unvarnished form.

By juxtaposing these two masterworks, this study endeavours to illuminate the multifaceted representations of caste-based subjugation, the inextricable entanglement of caste and class, and the indomitable power of literature to serve as a clarion call for social transformation. In doing so, it seeks to underscore how these literary interventions not only reflect the grim realities of casteist oppression but also ignite the embers of resistance, urging society toward a horizon where justice and human dignity may finally triumph over the dark legacies of discrimination.

Marginalisation

Marginalization, in its most insidious form, manifests as the deliberate and systemic exclusion of certain groups from the vast arenas of social, economic, political, and cultural life, rendering them invisible within the grand narrative of the dominant order (Fraser, 12). In the Indian subcontinent, this phenomenon is not merely an aberration but an entrenched historical reality, woven into the very fabric of its societal structures. Caste, patriarchy, and the lingering spectres of colonial subjugation have together forged an edifice of exclusion, where cultural norms and traditions have long been wielded as instruments of oppression rather than as organic expressions of shared heritage. The hegemonic order has, time and again, invoked the sacred and the customary to validate the exclusion of marginalized communities, fortifying hierarchies that relegate entire populations to the peripheries of social consciousness.

Yet, even within this oppressive landscape, resistance flourishes. Counter-cultural expressions—art, literature, folk traditions, and linguistic subversions—have emerged as formidable weapons against the forces of marginalization, challenging the monolithic structures of power and reclaiming spaces of identity and dignity. This study undertakes an intricate exploration of the cultural dimensions of marginalization in India, delving into the grim realities of caste-based oppression, gendered exclusions, linguistic hierarchies, and the erasure of indigenous cultural identities. It seeks to interrogate how the forces of hegemony construct and sustain these barriers while illuminating the myriad ways in which the marginalized resist, subvert, and reimagine their place within the socio-cultural landscape. In doing so, this paper endeavours to unravel the intricate interplay between oppression and agency, ultimately reaffirming the indomitable spirit of those who, though silenced by history, continue to assert their rightful presence within the evolving cultural discourse of the nation.

Types of Marginalisation in India
Caste and Cultural Marginalisation
Caste-based marginalization stands as one of the most deeply entrenched and insidious forms of social exclusion in India, shaping the very contours of access to education, economic mobility, and cultural

capital (Ambedkar 45). The caste system, an elaborate hierarchy of stratification sanctified by tradition, has long functioned as an instrument of oppression, confining Dalits and other historically subordinated communities to the peripheries of cultural and intellectual life. Denied participation in dominant religious rituals, literary traditions, and aesthetic expressions, these communities have been systematically erased from the grand narratives of cultural prestige, their voices relegated to the margins of history.

Antonio Gramsci's seminal concept of cultural hegemony offers a critical lens through which to decipher the mechanisms by which dominant castes perpetuate their supremacy. By enshrining their own cultural norms as the "universal" and "refined" culture, they delegitimize and subjugate alternative epistemologies and artistic expressions, reinforcing the exclusion of Dalit voices (Gramsci 12). This hegemonic stranglehold is nowhere more evident than in the treatment of Dalit literature and artistic traditions, which, for centuries, have been derisively dismissed as mere "folk" or "subaltern" expressions rather than as legitimate components of the so-called "mainstream" cultural canon (Guru 42).

Yet, despite these exclusionary forces, Dalit literature has risen as a formidable force of cultural defiance, dismantling the monolithic structures of Brahminical hegemony and reclaiming historical agency. The evocative writings of Omprakash Valmiki and Bama stand as testaments to this resistance, their works pulsating with the raw pain of oppression yet imbued with an unyielding spirit of assertion (Valmiki 104; Bama 87). Through their narratives, they disrupt hegemonic discourses, challenge the caste-based monopolization of cultural legitimacy, and carve out a literary space where the voices of the historically marginalized resound with an urgency that can no longer be ignored. Thus, Dalit literature not only serves as a chronicle of suffering but also as a clarion call for justice, heralding the emergence of a counter-hegemonic consciousness that seeks to overturn centuries of cultural subjugation.

Gender and Cultural Exclusion

Patriarchy in India is deeply enmeshed within cultural traditions, functioning as a formidable mechanism that perpetuates the marginalization of women and gender minorities. Simone de Beauvoir posits that culture constructs women as the "Other," defining them solely in relation to men and thereby denying them autonomous subjectivity (Beauvoir 267). This concept finds a stark reflection in Indian cultural practices, where women's roles are meticulously circumscribed within the domestic sphere, while their intellectual and creative contributions are systematically excluded from mainstream cultural production. The hegemonic narratives of tradition and duty render women's agency invisible, reinforcing their relegation to the peripheries of both historical memory and contemporary discourse.

Feminist scholars, most notably Uma Chakravarti, have illustrated how religious and social customs serve as powerful instruments in legitimizing gendered oppression. The constructs of "purity" and "honour" have long been wielded as tools of patriarchal control, reducing women's bodies to sites of cultural surveillance and moral regulation (Chakravarti 84). These deeply embedded ideologies not only sustain the oppression of women within rigid social structures but also constrain their ability to participate in cultural and intellectual life. However, against this backdrop of systemic subjugation, resistance flourishes. Women's writing, independent cinema, and grassroots activism have emerged as potent counterforces, dismantling patriarchal norms and reclaiming narrative space.

The rise of feminist literature in regional languages, particularly the works of Dalit and Muslim women writers, has been instrumental in challenging dominant cultural paradigms. Furthermore, movements like the Gulabi Gang exemplify how cultural resistance transcends the written word, manifesting in direct action against gendered violence and socio-economic inequities (Chakravarti 126; Roy 214). These insurgent voices and movements not only contest patriarchal authority but also reimagine culture as a site

of subversion, asserting that tradition need not be a shackle but can, instead, be reclaimed as a force for liberation. Through their defiant articulations, feminist cultural producers continue to rewrite the script of history, carving out spaces where women and gender minorities emerge not as the "Other" but as autonomous agents of their own destinies.

Linguistic Hegemony and Marginalisation

Linguistic discrimination constitutes a profound yet often overlooked dimension of cultural marginalization in India, wherein certain languages wield dominance within educational, economic, and administrative spheres, while others are systematically relegated to the periphery. English, a vestige of colonial rule, continues to function as a potent marker of socio-economic privilege, exacerbating linguistic hierarchies and reinforcing structures of exclusion (Thiong'o 12). Proficiency in English serves as a gateway to elite institutions and lucrative employment, while those denied access to this linguistic capital find themselves confined to the margins of opportunity and influence.

A parallel dynamic unfolds within the complex linguistic landscape of India, where Sanskritized Hindi has been institutionally privileged over regional and tribal languages, further entrenching linguistic inequalities (Mohanty 84). This hegemony marginalizes linguistic minorities, rendering their languages and oral traditions subordinate to the homogenizing imperatives of state-driven linguistic policies. The imposition of dominant languages not only erodes linguistic diversity but also erases the rich epistemic traditions embedded in indigenous and regional tongues.

However, resistance to linguistic marginalization has gained momentum through movements advocating for the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages. The struggle to protect Gondi and Santhali from extinction stands as a testament to the assertion of linguistic and cultural self-determination (Mohanty 142). These movements challenge the monolithic linguistic policies of the state, reaffirming that language is not merely a vehicle of communication but a repository of identity, history, and resistance. By reclaiming their linguistic heritage, marginalized communities not only defy cultural erasure but also forge a powerful counter-narrative that seeks to dismantle the hierarchies of linguistic hegemony and reaffirm the plurality of India's linguistic and cultural fabric.

Tribal and Indigenous Cultural Marginalisation

India's tribal communities have long been subjected to cultural erasure, their rich traditions and epistemologies systematically undermined by state-led development projects and hegemonic discourses that dismiss their ways of life as "backward" and obsolete (Xaxa 47). The relentless march of industrialization, deforestation, and resource extraction has not only dispossessed Adivasi communities of their ancestral lands but has also precipitated the erosion of their cultural heritage, severing the deeply rooted ties between indigenous identity and the natural world (Guha 132). The displacement of these communities is not merely an economic catastrophe; it constitutes a profound existential rupture, where entire knowledge systems, oral traditions, and artistic expressions face the spectre of extinction.

Yet, amidst this onslaught of cultural homogenization, tribal art, music, and literature have emerged as powerful sites of resistance and assertion. The works of G. N. Devy underscore the critical need to safeguard Adivasi epistemologies, advocating for the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems that challenge the dominant paradigms of modernity (Devy 26). These literary and artistic interventions do not merely seek to document Adivasi traditions; they serve as acts of defiance against a hegemonic order that seeks to render them invisible.

Furthermore, grassroots movements such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan have forcefully articulated the intrinsic link between cultural preservation and indigenous rights. These struggles illuminate how

displacement is not merely a material dispossession but a violent disruption of identity, community, and historical continuity (Roy 189). By resisting forced assimilation and reclaiming their cultural spaces, Adivasi communities reaffirm that their traditions are not relics of the past but living, evolving expressions of resilience and self-determination. Their defiance stands as a testament to the enduring power of indigenous cultural heritage, challenging the dominant forces of erasure and asserting the right to exist on their own terms, within their own histories.

Media, Popular Culture, and Marginalisation

Mainstream Indian media has long functioned as a potent instrument of cultural hegemony, perpetuating the marginalization of oppressed communities through both omission and distortion. Dalits, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Adivasis are frequently subjected to reductive portrayals that reinforce entrenched hierarchies and uphold dominant power structures (Guru 84). The mass media, in its quest to cater to majoritarian sensibilities, often erases the lived realities of these communities, relegating them to the peripheries of national discourse. When they do appear, it is often through the lens of stereotypes—Dalits as passive victims or criminals, women as bearers of tradition rather than agents of change, LGBTQ+ individuals as aberrations, and Adivasis as relics of a primitive past. These misrepresentations serve to entrench systemic inequalities, rendering marginalized voices inaudible within the grand narratives of the nation.

However, resistance to such hegemonic depictions has flourished within alternative media, independent cinema, and digital activism. Independent filmmakers and grassroots journalists have carved out counter-hegemonic spaces where marginalized identities can be represented with nuance and agency, challenging the mainstream's monolithic storytelling (Banaji 136). Digital platforms, in particular, have emerged as sites of radical reclamation, allowing historically silenced voices to disrupt dominant discourses. The rise of social media has democratized the flow of information, enabling movements such as #MeTooIndia and Dalit Lives Matter to gain momentum and mobilize resistance on an unprecedented scale (Chopra 204).

These movements exemplify how digital platforms can serve as battlegrounds for cultural contestation, dismantling the gatekeeping mechanisms of traditional media and fostering inclusive cultural spaces. Through viral storytelling, public testimonies, and collective solidarity, digital activism has transformed the marginalized from objects of discourse into active narrators of their own histories. As these counter-narratives continue to proliferate, they challenge the very foundations of media hegemony, asserting that representation is not merely an aesthetic concern but a crucial site of political struggle and social transformation.

Caste Based Marginalisation in Untouchable

Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable (1935) stands as a searing indictment of caste oppression and systemic exclusion in colonial India. Through the lived experiences of its protagonist, Bakha—a young Dalit boy consigned to the degrading profession of manual scavenging—Anand meticulously unveils the rigid structures of caste-based discrimination that perpetuate humiliation, subjugation, and social ostracization.

The Violence of Caste: Physical and Psychological Oppression

The novel poignantly illustrates the entrenched violence—both physical and psychological—that the caste system inflicts upon Dalits. Bakha's very existence is governed by the oppressive codes of "pollution" and ritual purity, ensuring that he remains shackled to the lowest rung of society (Anand 42). His daily life is fraught with indignities that expose the dehumanizing social norms enforced by upper-caste Hindus:

Public Humiliation and Ritual Purification: The act of accidentally brushing against a high-caste Hindu

provokes an outburst of indignation, culminating in ritual purification—a moment that epitomizes the caste hierarchy's cruel absurdities (Anand 45).

Religious and Social Exclusion: Barred from temples, wells, and educational opportunities, Bakha's experiences reflect the systemic mechanisms designed to keep Dalits perpetually marginalized (Mukherjee 184).

Caste-Determined Labor: His work as a latrine cleaner is not merely an occupation but a caste-imposed fate, ensuring that his aspirations—whether for education, military service, or social mobility—are repeatedly thwarted (Sivaramakrishnan 211).

Anand underscores this oppression through Bakha's encounters with upper-caste Hindus, whose condescension and cruelty exemplify the inhumanity of the caste hierarchy. The novel's unflinching realism accentuates how caste violence is not only physical but also deeply psychological, internalized even by the oppressed (Roy 72).

Systemic Exclusion and Institutionalized Discrimination

Anand critiques caste oppression as an institutionalized system of exclusion, with its rules deeply embedded in everyday life:

Religious Exclusion: The temple episode exposes how religion legitimizes caste-based segregation. The Brahmin priest's molestation attempt, followed by his sanctimonious denunciation of Bakha, lays bare the hypocrisy of Brahmanical orthodoxy (Anand 67; Loomba 246).

Economic and Occupational Segregation: Bakha's forced labour as a latrine cleaner, inherited from his father, highlights the economic marginalization of Dalits, who are condemned to menial, stigmatized work (Ambedkar 88).

Lack of Access to Public Resources: The water-well episode epitomizes systemic exclusion—Bakha, parched with thirst, is unable to draw water himself and must rely on the reluctant charity of caste Hindus, reinforcing his dependency and degradation (Omvedt 132).

Responses to Oppression: Protest, Submission, and Hope

Anand does not present Bakha as a passive victim; rather, he explores the protagonist's complex responses to oppression—oscillating between internalized shame, moments of rebellion, and an unwavering desire for dignity. The novel introduces various ideological perspectives on social reform:

Gandhian Reformism: Gandhi's speech advocates for the upliftment of Dalits (then termed 'Harijans'), proposing religiously sanctioned reform as a means of caste amelioration (Gandhi 56).

Technological Modernity: The introduction of flush toilets, symbolic of Western modernity, is presented as a potential technological solution that could render caste-based sanitation labour obsolete (Anand 112).

Radical Resistance: The novel subtly hints at the necessity of structural dismantling of caste oppression, as Bakha's growing awareness suggests the possibility of a more radical path to liberation (Guha 189).

Through its stark realism and deeply empathetic portrayal of Bakha's plight, Untouchable does more than expose the cruel machinations of caste oppression—it serves as a clarion call for social transformation. Anand presents caste discrimination not as an immutable reality but as a deeply entrenched system of structural violence that, with resistance and reform, can ultimately be dismantled.

Cultural Marginalization in Sadgati

Munshi Premchand's short story Sadgati (1924) emerges as a scathing indictment of the deeply entrenched caste-based oppression and systemic exclusion that pervade Indian society. Through the harrowing

narrative of Dukhi, an impoverished Dalit labourer, Premchand unveils the ruthless machinery of the caste hierarchy, which thrives on the subjugation and dehumanization of the lower castes. The tale exposes, with unrelenting clarity, the inherent brutality and exploitative nature of Brahminical hegemony, laying bare the moral bankruptcy of a system that sustains itself through the relentless degradation of the oppressed.

The Brutality of Caste: Labour, Exploitation, and Death

At the thematic core of Sadgati lies its stark and unembellished portrayal of caste oppression, embodied in the figure of Dukhi, whose mere existence is dictated by the violent structures of caste tyranny. When Dukhi approaches the Brahmin priest, Pandit Ghasiram, with the humble plea to determine an auspicious date for his daughter's wedding, he unwittingly steps into a web of exploitation. Instead of fulfilling his religious duty with compassion, Pandit Ghasiram capitalizes on Dukhi's socio-economic vulnerability, coercing him into performing arduous physical labour. This forced servitude is not an isolated act of cruelty but rather emblematic of the normalized exploitation that upholds the Brahminical order. As scholars such as Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukkai observe, caste functions through a structural mechanism of violence, relegating the lower castes to positions of perpetual servitude, both symbolically and materially (Guru and Sarukkai 76).

Dukhi's unrelenting toil, culminating in his death due to exhaustion, serves as a powerful metaphor for the intergenerational suffering endured by Dalits under an oppressive socio-religious framework. His lifeless body, discarded with utter disregard, stripped even of the basic dignity accorded to the dead, underscores the grim reality that caste oppression extends beyond life itself, denying the subaltern any semblance of humanity. The cruel irony embedded in the title Sadgati, which translates to 'liberation' or 'salvation,' accentuates the tragic truth that for the Dalit, true emancipation remains unattainable within the confines of the caste system—liberation, if it comes at all, is possible only in death (Mukherjee 184).

Systemic Exclusion and the Hypocrisy of Religious Orthodoxy

Beyond its visceral depiction of physical and economic exploitation, Sadgati offers a trenchant critique of the systemic exclusion that bars Dalits from participation in mainstream social and religious life. Dukhi's inability to cross the threshold of the Brahmin's home, despite his labouring under the scorching sun to serve him, is a potent symbol of spatial segregation, reinforcing the rigid enforcement of untouchability. This exclusion, however, is not merely spatial; it extends into epistemic and economic realms, ensuring that Dalits remain trapped within the margins of society, forever denied agency and self-determination (Omvedt 132).

Premchand also unflinchingly exposes the moral hypocrisy of the Brahminical priesthood, embodied in Pandit Ghasiram—a figure who, as a custodian of religious knowledge, is expected to uphold the ideals of compassion and righteousness. Instead, he is revealed to be a callous, exploitative figure, indifferent to suffering and complicit in the perpetuation of caste violence. His actions exemplify how religious orthodoxy is weaponized to maintain caste hierarchies, validating B.R. Ambedkar's argument that the caste system is not merely a social institution but an insidious religious ideology designed to sustain Brahminical supremacy (Ambedkar 56). Premchand's critique resonates profoundly with Ambedkarite thought, particularly the call for the annihilation of caste as a necessary step toward achieving social justice.

Sadgati as a Subaltern Narrative and a Postcolonial Critique

Through Sadgati, Premchand crafts a narrative that is both deeply realist and symbolically charged, one that does not merely depict individual suffering but gestures toward the larger socio-historical mechanisms that sustain caste oppression. Dukhi's tragic fate is not an aberration but a microcosm of the everyday realities endured by Dalits, his suffering woven into the very fabric of the Brahminical social order. This portrayal aligns with contemporary critical frameworks in postcolonial and subaltern studies, which argue that caste operates as a mechanism of both material and symbolic violence (Spivak 285).

By exposing the exploitative nexus between caste and religious authority, Premchand compels his readers to confront the inhumanity of a system that thrives on the relentless degradation of its most vulnerable. Sadgati remains an enduringly relevant text, a powerful testament to the resilience of those who, despite being condemned to the lowest rungs of society, continue to resist the forces that seek to erase them. In its searing critique of caste-based exclusion, the story not only serves as a literary indictment of Brahminical hegemony but also as an urgent call to dismantle the structures of oppression that persist in contemporary Indian society.

Comparative Analysis: Representation of Caste and Resistance

Both Untouchable and Sadgati serve as trenchant critiques of caste-based oppression, yet they diverge in their approaches to resistance and agency. Anand's Bakha, despite enduring relentless humiliation, engages in a form of self-reflection that fosters a fleeting hope for change. His fascination with Western modernity—epitomized by his admiration for English dress, hygiene, and technology—though ultimately futile, signifies an aspiration toward an alternative social order, one that appears to promise escape from caste tyranny. In contrast, Premchand's Dukhi is devoid of such aspirations; his existence is wholly dictated by the exploitative structures of caste, leaving no scope for self-determination or rebellion. His fate, culminating in an unceremonious and dehumanizing death, underscores the absolute inevitability of caste violence, wherein resistance is not even a conceivable possibility.

From a Marxist perspective, both texts foreground the economic dimensions of caste oppression, illustrating how caste and class intersect as twin mechanisms of exploitation. Dukhi and Bakha are not merely socially ostracized but also economically disenfranchised, their labour undervalued and their bodies consigned to the most menial and degrading forms of work. As Gupta argues, the caste system operates as a mode of economic subjugation, wherein Dalits are systematically denied access to material resources, ensuring the perpetuation of their subordination (Gupta 134). Furthermore, both narratives expose the complicity of religion in sustaining caste-based hegemony. The Brahmin priest in Sadgati and the temple priest in Untouchable embody the ways in which religious institutions function as instruments of social control, weaponizing notions of ritual purity and divine sanction to justify and perpetuate caste hierarchies.

Ultimately, while Untouchable gestures toward the possibility of social transformation—however ambiguous—Sadgati offers no such optimism, presenting caste oppression as an immutable, all-encompassing force. Both narratives, however, remain unflinching in their depiction of the structural violence that defines the lives of the marginalized, reinforcing the urgency of dismantling the entrenched systems of exclusion that continue to endure in contemporary society.

Conclusion

Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Munshi Premchand's Sadgati stand as profound literary interrogations

of the insidious grip of caste oppression and cultural marginalization within the sociopolitical fabric of India. Anand's novel penetrates the psychological depths of untouchability, rendering, with harrowing precision, the anguish of Bakha, a Dalit youth condemned to a life of relentless humiliation and systemic alienation. In contrast, Premchand's short story offers an unflinchingly stark and unembellished portrayal of caste tyranny, encapsulated in the inexorable suffering and eventual demise of Dukhi, a labourer whose existence is dictated by the ruthless imperatives of Brahminical hegemony. Both texts emerge as trenchant critiques of caste stratification, laying bare its inextricable entanglement with economic subjugation and cultural domination.

Through the prism of postcolonial and Marxist theoretical frameworks, this paper has elucidated the manner in which literature functions as an instrument of resistance, dismantling hegemonic discourses and amplifying the suppressed voices of the oppressed. The enduring pertinence of these literary works attests to the unbroken continuity of caste-based inequities in contemporary India, rendering them indispensable to ongoing discourses on social justice and systemic reform. In their incisive deconstruction of casteist hierarchies, Untouchable and Sadgati transcend their historical specificity, serving as impassioned appeals for the obliteration of entrenched structures of exploitation that persist in dictating the socio-political order. These narratives, suffused with indignation and moral urgency, reaffirm the transformative potential of literature as a means of contesting oppression and envisioning an egalitarian future.

Works Cited

1. Ambedkar, B.R. Annihilation of Caste. Navayana Publishing, 1936.
2. Anand, Mulk Raj. Untouchable. Penguin Classics, 2001.
3. Bama. Karukku. Oxford University Press, 2000.
4. Banaji, Shakuntala. South Asian Media Cultures: Audiences, Representations, Contexts. Anthem Press, 2011.
5. Beauvoir, Simone de. The Second Sex. Vintage, 1949.
6. Chakravarti, Uma. Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens. Stree, 2003.
7. Chopra, Rohit. Digital Activism in India: Case Studies of Change. Routledge, 2020.
8. Devy, G. N. After Amnesia: Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism. Orient Blackswan, 1992.
9. Fraser, Nancy. Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition. Routledge, 1997.
10. Gandhi, M. Harijan. Navajivan Press, 1936.
11. Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. International Publishers, 1971.
12. Guha, Ranajit. Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society. Oxford University Press, 1999.
13. Guha, Ramachandra. Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin, His Tribals, and India. Penguin, 1999.
14. Gupta, Dipankar. Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society. Penguin Books, 2000.
15. Guru, Gopal. Dalit Cultural Movements and Dalit Politics in India. Vikas Publishing, 1997.
16. Guru, Gopal, and Sundar Sarukkai. Experience, Caste, and the Everyday Social. Oxford University Press, 2019.
17. Loomba, Ania. Colonialism/Postcolonialism. Routledge, 2005.
18. Mohanty, Ajit K. "Language Policy and Social Exclusion in India." Social Change, vol. 36, no. 3,

2006, pp. 1–28.

19. Mukherjee, Arun P. "Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India." Oxford Literary Review, vol. 15, no. 1, 1993, pp. 22–37.

20. ---. Postcolonialism: My Living. TSAR Publications, 1998.

21. Omvedt, Gail. Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India. Sage Publications, 1994.

22. Premchand, Munshi. Sadgati. Translated by Ruth Vanita, Oxford University Press, 1996.

23. Roy, Arundhati. The Doctor and the Saint. Navayana, 2006.

24. The Greater Common Good. India Book Distributors, 1999.

25. Walking with the Comrades. Penguin, 2010.

26. Sivaramakrishnan, M. Caste and Colonial Modernity in India: Reading Mulk Raj Anand. Routledge, 2013.

27. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–313.

28. Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa. Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. Heinemann, 1986.

29. Valmiki, Omprakash. Joothan: An Untouchable's Life. Columbia University Press, 1997.

30. Xaxa, Virginius. "Politics of Language, Religion, and Identity: Tribes in India." Social Change, vol. 35, no. 4, 2005, pp. 1–16.