

The struggle of Munoo in Mulkraj Anand's Coolie

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Abstract

The present paper puts across the suffering of working class people through the protagonist of the novel *Coolie*, which is written by the foremost writer MulkRaj Anand, who is one of the stars shiniest in the firmament of Indian Writing in English. His novels are the best vehicle to convey the state of present Indian society. Most of his themes around the working class people like a sweeper, coolie and so on as well as he takes an ordinary or poor man as his protagonist. Anand's notable work *Coolie* furthermore presents the theme how the destitute lose their identity in India. This novel exhibits the tragic life of fourteen years old orphan boy named Munoo. Munoo lost his parents and he asserts are taken by the landlord for the debt of his father. Munoo's life presents the needy's miseries to acquire the basic needs like food and sheltering. Moneyless people did not try to be an opulent; just they want to lead a peaceful life like ordinary people. Mostly, untouchable people work as a coolie in Railway station and anywhere. They treated like animals. In this embarrassing situation, the protagonist tries to seek his identity in his cruel society.

Keywords: Poverty, Untouchability, Landlordism, Rural areas, Working class people

Introduction

Munoo, the fourteen-year-old orphan boy comes from the small village named Kangra. Munoo lost his parents and so he is longing for love and affection. Munoo does all works whatever he knows; at last, he becomes a coolie. Through the Green revolution, India reaches the complacency in food production in 1967. It makes a great effort in rural areas to take to the next level. But, still so many people live under the poverty line. Those people's aims are only to get food and sheltering. As a result, they cannot live in a particular place. They migrate place to place for the job and the basic needs. In this critical situation, education is a hallucination to their children.

Economically downtrodden people have the reasoning and thinking capacity as same as opulent people. But, the cause of displacement and lack of the platform hide their talents. Moneyless people tolerate the cruelty of opulent people only for the sake of money and welfare of their family. Even, destitute people are willing to be a loyal servant to their masters forever. On the other hand, poverty does not consider the age and gender. For example, Munoo, the protagonist of the novel *Coolie* who is the best example of the working class people.

As a child, Munoo has marched ten miles with bare feet. The cause of pain he cannot put a single step again. On the other hand, Munoo is the nephew of Daya Ram. Perhaps, he does not show love and affection to him also considers the pathetic condition of Munoo. As a poor, Munoo is shirtless and he has no slippers. Like, Munoo many penniless children live shirtless and walked bare feet. At the same time, Anand gives an account of the moneyed people's lifestyle through Babu Nathoo Ram. Munoo already lost his parents and ancestors asserts. Eventually, he becomes a coolie. The treatment of his Uncle Daya Ram and Aunt Gujri breaks him mentally and emotionally. Munoo is longing for paternal love and affection. But, his Uncle and Aunt forced him to do the work. He is not allowed to continue his studies. Munoo just completed the

fifth standard in the small village Kangra. But, by the fate, he becomes as a coolie at the age of fourteen. He wants to break the slavery chain of poverty, but he cannot do that until his death.

Mostly, untouchability people lead their life as a needy. They are wandering for food. They take a food twice in a day; sometimes it's not to be. But, opulent people take hygienic food in restaurants and hotels. They waste food and water in the name of food festival and God or Goddess. Contrast, in *Coolie* Anand, describes the food of rich people through Mrs. Mainwaring. "She took Dr. Stephenson's advice and adopted apples, pears, grapes, almonds and Force, as a menu for breakfast. And, relishing the taste of fruit, she felt she was curd" (C, 260). The landlord is the reason of Munoo's impending misfortunes. He seized five acres of Munoo's father because his father did not pay the interest on the borrowing money from the landlord. The landlord does not consider the drought and bad harvest of the land. His attention is to take the five acres of Munoo's father. Hence, he cannot take care of his son. He also loses his wife.

The continuation of bitterness and miseries Munoo's father falls ill and confronts slow death. Munoo becomes under the control of his Uncle. On the other hand, the landlord is the father of Munoo's friend Jay Singh. But, he does not concern Munoo's misfortunes. This is the best example of destitute's life, especially in villages. Hari is a friend and companion of the protagonist Munoo in Sir George White Cotton Mills. The aforementioned lines do not convey the state of Hari it also explains the life of other penniless people as a coolie in the factories and other field works. Hari cannot fight for his own money. If he fights with the foreman, he must be throwing out the mill.

The rise of the population makes people as jobless. If Hari leaves from his job, they are many men like Hari waited for his job. Already, the mill wanted to remove the old aged labors. As an old man, Hari cannot rise against the foreman. Being a father and husband, he has an obligation to take care

of his family. Mostly, poor people live this hell like life as Hari. On the other hand, poor people are uneducated. They search jobs based on their physical strength. Moneyed people use their weakness cleverly. As a hill boy, he starts his journey from the hill and so ended at the hill. Anand cleverly puts across the development of India via the hill boy Munoo. The life of Munoo does not reveal the pitiful story of the destitute boy as well as it reveals the story of other coolies like Varma and Lehn. Munoo travels with a lot of dreams from his motherland. His travel is from hamlet to town, town to city and city to metro city. Hence, he cannot enjoy his life instead of that he affected by the caste system and poverty. Munoo has tried to empower from the imprisonment of poverty and slavery. Eventually, he gets freedom from the all the social conflicts through the eternal sleep only.

Even, Munoo does not want to be a rich man. He just wants the warm of mother and father. But, till his end, he cannot fulfill his desire. Munoo comes across the boyhood and enters the adolescent age gradually. Hence, he understands the state of society and his position in the society. As an orphan boy, he only confronts frustration and displacement. At the end, Munoo thinks as:

My father died when I was born, and then my mother, and I brought misfortune to Prabha, and, it seems, I have brought misfortune to Hari now. If I am ominous, why don't I die? My death would rid the world of an unlucky person. I would like to die. It was to be dead. Yes, better to be dead, because this town has turned out wrong. It is so hot working here and my aunt's mud hut in the hills was better than the damp straw hut in Sahib's Lane. (C, 189)

Being a coolie Munoo, who has in an alien place until he treated merely like a slave. For example, Munoo is abused by Bibiji any time without a reason in Babu Sahib's house. He cannot eat within the right time. He is not allowed to touch the utensils in the kitchen of Babu Sahib's house. He is a servant boy; perhaps his works are not limited. He works for his master whenever they called him. Munoo's heart falls in the self-pity about himself. Even the children show their discrimination on Munoo. He is the just a fourteen-year-old boy. He wants to play with Sheila, who is the daughter of Babu Sahib. She is kind hearted. But the guidance of her parents and Bibiji she refused to accept Munoo as her friend. As a result, these people are deeply affected by the frustration and loneliness. According to Mother Teresa, "We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty" (n.p).

Munoo is also discriminated by the caste system. Opulent or destitute, they have the same feeling like hungry, happiness and sadness. But, rich people treat the poor people as slaves. In the name of the caste system, opulent people treat the moneyless people as animals. They do not mind that poor people have a soul. Daya Ram becomes irritated and beats Munoo. Naturally, Munoo is a hard worker. He has no time to take rest in the house of Babu Nath. Even, Bibiji does not provide a proper food to Munoo. Munoo believes that his uncle Day Ram is the only person, who upbringing the paternal affection in the town. In contrast, Ram beats Munoo. He thinks that he will be lost, his job by the activities of Munoo. Hence, he beats him and throws out of the house.

Anand affords equally important to the society and the individual in his novels. The society is like a family. The family has a small amount of members merely of four to ten members. Likewise, the society has so many families who belong to the different culture, customs, language and the like. The society's impact is reflected in every individual's behavior. At the same time, the society based every individual, who belong to that society. From the classical age to the present age Indian society confronts so many changes. Because the society is not a static it is the dynamic one. It acquires and transmits the culture and civilization age to age. Decades passed, the Indian government realized the importance of children and announced the laws for children. Those acts protect the children from the landlords and provide the basic education. Constitution of India's article 24 reveals the basic rights of children. This law prohibits the children, who under the age of fourteen to work in the mines and mills. The article 39 (f) gives preference to the health of children and it protects the children from the exploitation of landlords and opulent people. The article 45 is compelling to give the basic education to the children, who under the age of fourteen.

Coolie explores the life of opulence and needy, the flow of corruption, caste system, untouchability and the like through the innumerable characters. Human being is the highest creature of the Almighty in the world. They give higher importance rather than any other creatures of God. For example, they are blessed with the sixth sense. In spite of, using their abilities for good things, they treat some people from their own group as slaves. Mostly, poor people or working class people treat as slaves by the upper-class people. They fail to show mercy towards the poor people. Money differentiates the people as poor and rich. Thus, now and then, poor people are treated as illiterate by the moneyed people. Education is the only weapon to destroy the cruelty of poverty. According to Periyar, "Only education, self-respect and rational qualities will uplift the down-trodden" (n.p). If needy, gets the education they can easily analyze the cheating of landlords and businessman.

As a slave, the poor cannot get proper basic needs like rich people such as shelter, food, and clothes. But, they also have the same feeling like rich people such as pain, joy, hunger, and soul, etc. even, poor people do not need any charity from the moneyed people, they want that their masters should kind enough to them. Then, the masters avoid the suppressing activities and should not exploit the income of working class people.

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