

CLASS, IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN INDIAN FICTION: A MARXIST LITERARY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Indian fiction accomplishes the task of an enormous and partly literary elucidation of class conflict, economic inequality, ideological contradiction and power structure. Through writings of marginalised individuals and communities, the Indian writers reveal how class, caste, gender, and economic conditions influence human relationships and social identities. This paper “Class, Ideology and Social Conflict in Indian Fiction: A Marxist Literary Analysis” examines some Indian fictional narratives as they are read from a Marxist literary perspective which unearths the connection of literature with existing material conditions. Moreover, the relation that exists between class relations and also the reigning dominant ideologies. They explore caste-based exclusion, poverty, social hierarchy, economic power and ideological control with particular reference to Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*. According to the study, Indian fiction does not only represent the class structure as it exists but also questions the systems that perpetuate inequalities and oppression. The selected novels show how the marginalised get embroiled in the struggle against social exclusion but also navigate respectability, identity and change. The article argues with the help of Marxist criticism which connects literary representation with material and ideological conditions to show social conflicts in Indian fiction.

Keywords: Indian Fiction, Marxist Literary Criticism, Class Conflict, Ideology, Social Inequality, Caste, Economic Power, Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*, Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, Social Conflict

I. INTRODUCTION

Fiction from India has always dealt with social realities (the inequality, poverty, caste, class, power and social exclusion) that shape everyday life. Many Indian writers depict society not as a harmonious entity but rather a complex field of competing interests where individuals and communities occupy unequal positions. Literary characters' experiences often centre on the question of wealth, labour, social status, access to resources and institutional power. Fiction thus provides an essential way of exploring how social divisions are created, perpetuated and contested.

Class doesn't simply refer to an economic category in Indian society; it is closely linked to caste, gender, education, occupation, family background and access to social opportunities. These overlapping structures shape the ways we experience dignity, freedom, exploitation and belonging. We find in Indian fiction these relationships highlighted through characters who are impacted by conditions like poverty, discrimination, social expectations, and unequal power relations. This indicates that individual difficulties are often linked to broader social and material circumstances.

Marxist literary criticism provides a valuable analytical framework that can be applied to these dimensions of fiction. Drawing on Karl Marx's thinking about economic structures, class relations, labour, ideology, and power, Marxist criticism relates literature to the material conditions of the society that produces it. It gives a close examination of the ways that powerful social groups maintain their power and how cultural beliefs might support existing systems of inequality. Marxist criticism addresses resistance, class consciousness and the possibility of social transformation, at the same time.

A Marxist approach to Indian fiction needs to pay attention to the specific historical and cultural conditions of Indian society. Class relations cannot be completely disconnected from the caste system and colonial history, patriarchy, the rural-urban divide, or the changing nature of capitalism. Indian authors often portray these forces as interconnected, not separate forms of oppression. As a result, a Marxist reading will reveal not just economic differences but also ideological devices through which social hierarchies are normalized.

Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* powerfully illustrates the oppression of caste, poverty, labour and social humiliation through the life experiences of Bakha, a young sanitation worker.

The book reveals the material and ideological bases for an unequal social order and raises questions around dignity, work and human equality. A painting of an oppressed person demonstrates how social status determines access to respect, opportunity, and recognition as human.

Much the same way, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* depicts a social world shaped by caste, class, gender, family authority, and political ideology. The novel portrays how social hierarchies impact personal relationships and personal choices. As it treats the marginalised and socially forbidden, it shows what happens in a society where those with power decide who gets privilege, freedom and social acceptance.

Thus, the paper looks at class, ideology and social conflict in Indian fiction from a Marxist literary perspective. It analyzes the depiction of unequal social relations, the link between ideologies and material conditions, as well as the explicit forms of resistance to these inequalities. The paper, through selective texts, seeks to argue that Indian literature performs not just the role of a reflector of social reality but also as a site of questioning regarding inequality, domination, and existing structures of power.

II. MARXIST LITERARY THEORY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF CLASS, POWER, AND IDEOLOGY IN INDIAN FICTION

Marxist literary theory is that which relates literature to the economic, social and political factors that shape human life. The major ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels form the basis of the approach which takes into account class relations, ownership of resources, labour, exploitation, the distribution of power etc. Literature highlights the material conditions and ideological struggles of a society and is not considered to be an artwork.

The relationship between economic base and ideological superstructure is a key idea in Marxist criticism. How the production of goods and services is arranged is likely to influence

the institutions, politics, culture and ideas of a society. As a result, literary works can disclose how dominant economic and social arrangements are incorporated into daily attitudes and relationships. In fact, literature can challenge this by shedding light on the lives of those who are typically not visible or heard.

Conflict of class is another essential aspect of Marxist literary analysis. Marxist theory differentiates among groups, on the basis of their connection to production; on the basis of control of resources. The gap in the allocation of wealth and power results in domination and subordination. In fiction, these tensions may manifest in the form of class or economic tensions such as those between landlord and workers, employer and labourer, rich and poor families, socially privileged and marginalised communities, etc. A character's opportunity, relationship and ambition is determined by where the character is positioned.

The term ideology is important because social inequality arises not only from control of resources and power but also through beliefs and values that make existing hierarchy appear natural. The existing power relations can be recreated through perceptions related to social standing, respectability, gender, caste, occupation and individual success. Thus, Marxist critique examines how literary characters may accept, negotiate or resist these. Through narrative, we can illustrate and put on trial the ideological mechanisms which enable oppression to become normalized.

In the Indian context, Marxist criticism assumes an added complexity as economic class intersects with caste, gender, religion, culture, and geographical location. One's economic position never transcends their experiences of class altogether. A person may be economically disadvantaged due to their inherited caste status, limited choice of occupation, unequal access to education, social discrimination, etc. Indian literature can encompass these overlapping inequalities, making class relations available for investigation within the social hierarchy.

Indian authors used fiction to depict the experiences of workers, peasants, lower-caste groups, economically disadvantaged families, and those who exist outside mainstream social structures. These stories challenge literary traditions constructed by the elite. Marginalized characters demonstrate how one is a function of the other – poverty and power. Being poor due to one's own fault is a not-so-smart way of thinking. One must not blame the poor when they are in distress because they have little sustenance and no money to buy food.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* Essay is staying clear about this relationship. Bakha performs a task of a sanitation worker which has put him at the lowest level of a rigid hierarchy. The work of this person is essential for society to work, but he is humiliated instead. Attention is drawn with a Marxist reading of the novel to the contradiction between the social necessity of labour and the low status of the labourer. Caste ideology justifies this disparity by making the social division of labour all-powerful.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* also illustrates the relationship between material and ideological power. The novel portrays a society that is shaped by caste, class, gender, family authority, and political systems. As a worker of low-caste, Velutha reveals the way exclusion works by economic as well as cultural means. He shows that the exercise of social

privilege is not only an outcome of control over material resources; but also, of deep-seated beliefs about status and boundaries.

Marxist critique highlights the potential for resistance. Marginalized characters may not always be passive victims; their actions, desires, relationships, and attempts to gain dignity may challenge. At the very least, literature can become a space where silenced voices find articulation and social contradictions become visible. The conception of resistance can exist from mere acts of individual defiance, class consciousness and demands for social change.

As such, Indian fiction can be understood through a Marxist literary lens as a site of economic determination, social hierarchy, ideology and resistance. This lets us make literary analysis that transcends the singular character experience, but rather helps to abstract the structure. Seeing the Indian fiction in this manner, it is a reflection of social conflict and an intervention in the unequal systems that organize society.

III. CLASS STRUGGLE, SOCIAL HIERARCHY, AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN INDIAN FICTION

Class struggle appears again and again in Indian fiction because social life is affected differently on account of unequal access to wealth, property, education, employment and social opportunities. Literary narratives commonly depict societies that contain privileged groups with access to economic and social resources, and marginalized groups whose labour sustains these structures, yet receive neither equivalent power or dignity. Representations of fiction reveal the inequality in the distribution of material resources and the effects of economic dependence.

In many Indian fictions, the class hierarchy is connected to caste and inherited social status. The Indian social context involves historical systems in which caste, birth, social esteem as well as economic position often overlap, unlike a purely economic understanding of class. Restricted access to education, property, respectable employment, and social mobility was faced by lower-caste communities. Fictional representations of such communities therefore expose how economic inequality can be reinforced by cultural beliefs and social institutions.

The portrayal of class struggle particularly features the relationship between labour and power. Essential forms of labour are performed at insufficient pay, social recognition and security by workers and economically disadvantaged characters. This dependence on their landlords, employers, upper-caste groups, or economically powerful families makes them vulnerable. Indian fiction illustrates these contradictions through a focus on the quotidian lives of people whose labour is essential but social worth is consistently under-acknowledged.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is a significant example of this relation between labour, caste and social hierarchy. The work of Bakha is that of a sweeper and since his job is considered useful by the larger community, one would think otherwise but that is not to be. Bakha's job becomes a source of social ridicule as well as exclusion. His experience shows that it is not the social necessity of labour that gives its value. Rather, ideological structures may assign

different degrees of dignity to different work forms. The position of Bakha shows how caste hierarchy and economic marginalization reinforce each other.

Economic inequality also affects the access to basic opportunities and the limits within which characters can operate freely. Characters who are well-off have greater power over education, ownership, social relationships, and institutions, characters who are poor often have no choice. Indian fiction often employs these distinctions to illustrate the interconnection between personal ambitions and material conditions. Being poor not just limits your finances but also things such as mobility, relationships, and expression.

Social hierarchy is maintained through everyday practices of exclusion. The differences in where people reside, their occupation, language, literacy level, dress, food and mode of socialising can reproduce social distinction created by the privileged and marginal groups. Several practices may seem commonplace in fiction but together reflect the extent of social inequality. Marxist criticism focuses on those particulars because they show how power functions through economic structures and through everyday social relations.

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy is a complex representation of social hierarchy. Within the social environment of Kerala, the novel brings together caste, class, gender, family authority, and political ideology. Velutha's as a lower-caste worker shows how vulnerable people are in a subordinate position within economic and social structures. Despite having useful skills and putting in hard work, he is not protected from discrimination because caste ideology determines the limits of social acceptance. Thus the novel reveals the destructive results of a social order where inherited status can trump personal ability and human worth.

In Indian fiction, class struggles manifest in familial and community conflicts. Marriage, inheritance, education, employment, social ties can be influenced. Conflict may arise between characters of varying class backgrounds due to their expectations and aspirations. Class conflicts highlight that class is not just an external social category. Class can affect emotions, choices and identity.

The portrayal of poverty in Indian fiction is therefore often associated with larger issues of power and justice. Writers may suggest that poverty results from social arrangements that are unfair rather than individual failings. This view disputes the idea that merely not being a good worker will guarantee economic success. By calling attention to structural conditions, fiction invites its readers to appreciate institutions and ideas that reproduce inequality over long periods of time.

Indian fictional narratives often contain forms of resistance to established social hierarchies at the same time. Characters from marginal groups might challenge humiliation, reject imposed identities, seek education, demand dignity, or pursue cross-boundary relationship. Even if such resistance does not lead to social change, it exposes contradictions of the dominant. The very act of representing marginalized experiences has potential to challenge literary and social systems that exclude them.

The concept of class struggle and economic inequality as represented in Indian fiction operates through a combination of deprivation and hierarchy. Imagining workers, lower-caste

groups, poor families, and socially excluded people, reveals the unequal foundations of society. It also questions the legitimacy of inherited privilege. Viewed through a Marxist lens, these narratives are literary engagements with the impact of economic power and social status on human dignity, as well as the possibility for change.

IV. MULK RAJ ANAND'S *UNTOUCHABLE*: CASTE, CLASS OPPRESSION, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL DIGNITY

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), is one of the two novels of Indian English fiction that unveils the relation of caste hierarchy, poverty, labour, and social oppression. The focus of the novel is on Bakha, a young sweeper of the lowest order in the caste hierarchy. By focusing on Bakha's day, Anand shows us much more than what happens to Bakha in a day. He presents the big picture that status determines dignity, occupation, human behaviour and other rights. Moreover, we also learn how other people do not get equal access to what should be basic rights. From the viewpoint of Marxism, the narrative, through its many manifestations, makes evident that material conditions can be similar to ideological beliefs.

1. Bakha and the physical surroundings of the Harijans.

The status of Bakha is closely linked with his economy. Although he works in sanitation, without which the community would not function, he is not given much respect. This work is essential for his family for survival, leaving Bakha with little means to change his economic position. Accordingly, the novel portrays poverty not just as an individual condition but links it with a rigid social structure.

Everyday life of Bakha shows the contradiction between the significance of labour and the low stature of the labourer. The man may keep the town clean, but he is treated like a lesser person because he belongs to a low caste. His economic powerlessness also limits his capability to resist those who are more socially and materially powerful.

2. Caste Hierarchy as a System of Social and Economic Power

The caste system is central to understanding Bakha's experience of oppression. The work he is supposed to do and how others treat him are determined by his caste. He is not granted the usual social acknowledgment given to those of higher castes. The novel shows how caste acts as a device connecting social hierarchy with occupational and economic hierarchy.

From a Marxist point of view, this interrelationship is important because the control of the economic means affects social status. The confinement of certain peoples to the same forms of labour historically makes social mobility very difficult. Consequently, Anand's portrayal of Bakha reveals the interplay between caste ideology and material difference.

3. Labour, Exploitation, Denial of Human Dignity.

Bakha's work is one of the main tools through which Anand exposes social exploitation. The wider community relies upon his work despite it being stigmatized and physically demanding. Those who profit from his labour simultaneously see him as impure and inferior. This contradiction reveals the unbalanced link between labor and recognition.

Exploitation does not essentially work through wages or economic dependence, the novel suggests. It works also through humiliation and denying dignity. Bakha is reminded time and again that his caste decides his place in a society. Economic and ideological forms of oppression can mutually reinforce as indicated by such experiences.

4. Ideology and the Normalization of Caste Oppression

One vital thing in *Untouchable* is how social beliefs are portrayed as making inequality seem natural. Bakha is not just excluded by individual acts of cruelty, but also because of quite widely accepted ideas of purity, pollution, occupation and caste status. These beliefs the discrimination is allowed to continue as ordinary social behaviour.

Marxist criticism focuses on the impact of ideology on power relations. Material control alone cannot sustain powerful groups; it requires ideas that justify and legitimise social hierarchies. Anand's presentation of Bakha's humiliation in his own words reveals the ideological mechanisms at play in a society in which such practices have become normalized and hence accepted.

5. Socially Humiliated and Psychically Oppressed

Anand's portrayal of Bakha isn't restricted to economic deprivation but also dwells on the psychological effects of social exclusion. The desire of Bakha is clothes, cleanliness, education, and a decent life. In many respects of modern life (I think he begins to admire them) that seem to promise greater equality, but his milieu constantly reminds him of his lower status.

Bakha's dream and the limits placed on him show how a man is affected by oppression. Social inequity is becoming common knowledge nowadays. Bakha begins to realize who he is through the judgments of others. The novel portrays how prolonged social domination can affect self-perception.

6. Colonial Modernity and the Possibility of Change

Furthermore, the British presence in the novel adds another element to Anand's critique. Bakha admires the dress, habits and material culture of British soldiers. These elements reflect an alternative social world where the rigid conventions surrounding caste seem less prominent. Nonetheless, Anand does not portray colonial modernity as a panacea for social inequality.

The book instead reveals the contradictions of a society in the midst of historical transformation but retaining caste forms. Modern concepts of equality and respect for personhood co-exist with older discriminatory systems. The tension also contributes to the novel's critique of Indian social organization.

7. Opposition, Self-Esteem, and the Quest for Honor.

Even though Bakha is socially vulnerable, he gradually comes to realize injustice. Through his anger, desires, and questioning of social practices, he shows signs of a growing awareness of the injustice around him. He does not merely see what he is going through as something morally alright.

That is why the struggle for dignity is central to the novel. Bakha aspires to be given dignity of being treated as a human being which fights the social order that values him according to caste. Through his depiction of an ordinary worker, Anand makes a marginalised life a significant literary subject, confronting the invisibility imposed on oppressed communities.

8. Anand's Marxist Representation of Caste and Class

While caste is the direct cause of the oppression Bakha suffers, the novel also reveals its material consequences. In terms of both caste and economic dependence, the reversal of cause-effect and weakening of the victim's power of social vulnerability constrain the sphere of actions open to the individuals concerned as well as limit their potential interventions in the broader social sphere of humanity. Anand thus illustrates caste and class as intertwined structures rather than entirely disconnected ones.

The significance of the novel from a Marxist standpoint is its exposing relationships between labour, material deprivation, ideology and social power. Anand's decision to make a sanitation worker the central character of the narrative opposes elite-centric portrayals of Indian society. It draws attention to the people who do essential labour but whose humanity is not recognized.

9. A critique of social inequality that is untouchable.

Ultimately, Untouchable serves as an incisive critique of the social order founded on inherited inequality. Anand perceives Bakha's suffering as being connected with wider structures of caste and social domination and not an isolated personal tragedy. The book proves that disparity becomes ingrained in the same when occupations, social interactions, and economic dependence often share ideological features or characteristics with each other.

Anand crosses fundamental questions of labour, equality, dignity and justice through Bakha's experiences. The novel's therefore important for Marxist literary criticism because it shows the relationship between material conditions and systems of belief. It also reveals the importance of recognizing the humanity of people at the edge of the world of belief.

V. ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*: CLASS CONFLICT, IDEOLOGY, AND SOCIAL POWER

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) complexly represents caste, class, gender, political ideology and social power in post-colonial India. With its primary setting in Kerala, it deals with how social institutions and inherited hierarchies affect individual lives and individual relationships. Through Rahel, Estha, Ammu, and Velutha's experiences, Roy unveils a social order of intersecting caste privilege, economic position, family authority, and ideological belief. From a Marxist point of view, this novel illustrates how social power operates at both material and mental levels through deep-seated cultural assumptions.

1. Class and Caste are Interconnected System of Power.

Class is not shown as a purely economic category like the novel. Economic status is closely linked to caste, family background, education, and social reputation. The different characters hold a range of positions within a hierarchy that determines their access to privilege. The

effects on the family model and sexual relations of inter-generational status are a recurrent theme of Roy's work.

In this context, Velutha's position becomes significant. Being a skilled carpenter from a socially disadvantaged caste, he possesses skills that can become the basis for social and economic mobility. Nevertheless, it continues to define how the dominant social order looks at him. His treatment shows that personal talent can't easily surmount structures of inherited inequality.

2. Velutha: Labour, Marginalization, and Class Oppression

In the novel, Velutha is one of the best examples of the relationship between labour and social status. He is a very good worker whose work is craftsmanship and is useful to the family, yet socially he is low. Labour is only appreciated when it serves the powerful. Similarly, humanity is denied when the disempowered cross certain boundaries.

The contradiction illustrates an important Marxist concern; working-class usefulness is economically relevant but not socially relevant. Velutha is statutory but does not benefit from the perks of those above him in the caste and chiefly, class order system. His experience shows that economic exploitation can go hand in hand with social discrimination.

3. Three ideological legalities and their control

At the centre of Roy's critique of social ideology stands the novel's idea of the 'Love Laws'. These unspoken norms dictate who is worthy of love, how relationships ought to unfold, and which social boundaries are not meant to be crossed. Family authority, caste conventions, gender expectations, and social morality sustain them through time.

According to a Marxist analysis, these ideological structures are significant because they maintain power relations. The rules don't merely operate through formal institutions; they get reproduced in everyday beliefs and social practices. The characters confront the restrictions that expose the contradictions that exist within the so-called natural order.

4. Ammu and the Intersection of Gender, Class, and Patriarchy

Ammu's experiences show how class oppression cannot be understood without gender. As a divorced woman in a conservative society, her economic and social independence is limited. The family does not give her freedom in itself; they try to restrict and define her social value according to their patriarchal answers.

Her relationship with Velutha takes on greater significance as it contests caste hierarchy and patriarchal authority. This relationship is repugnant not just because of personal morality, but because it crosses social boundaries. As a result, Roy illustrates how caste and gender ideologies together curb individual freedom.

5. The Oneness of Family, Property and Power Distribution.

The Ipe family characterizes another significant aspect of social power. The inheritance, property, reputation, and social status all affect the family relationships. The characters who are more dependent, due to lesser economic privilege, become more controllable.

Marxist analysis draws our attention to the connection between property and power. Control over material resources may affect family relationships and relationships between social groups. Roy exemplifies how economic privilege is reproduced through family, inheritance, education, and social connections among the wealthy.

6. Political Ideology and the Contradictions of Communism

The novel incorporates Kerala's political environment to highlight the ideology that it explores. Roy depicts how politics of communism engender certain contradictions between political ideals and social practices. In public friendships, people can support equality and class solidarity, yet continue to participate privately in caste and gender hierarchies.

This contradiction matters because it shows political ideology has no capacity to eradicate social structures on its own. The novel raises the question of the discrepancy between the language of equality and the everyday reality of discrimination. Roy presents ideology as a multifaceted phenomenon that can either reproduce and/or resist existing power relations.

7. Penalties for Disobeying Social Norms and Power

Velutha's fate illustrates what happens when an established social norm is challenged. Ammu's relationship with him breaches the boundaries of caste and class laid down by the community, and undermines the powerful and their privileged positions. How society wields power to punish wrongdoers is also seen in response of transgressors.

As a result, his punishment is not an act that is based on individual violence or personal prejudice. It symbolizes the implementation of a larger social order. Through a process involving the institutions and individuals surrounding them, a person marginalized by society is silenced and excluded from the social network. Roy sheds light on how caste and class power destructs human life through this tragedy.

8. The Marginalized Child and the Experience of Social Inequality

Rahel and Estha face conflicts with social systems as children. Through their experiences, adults transmit social divisions and ideological assumptions to younger generations. At first, they do not have the words to understand distinctions of caste, gender, wealth, respectability and family authority.

The children's experiences also exemplify how social inequality affects psychological development. Those who have the least power sustain the consequences of the adult's conflicts. Consequently, Roy links vast social structures to deeply felt emotional experiences, recognizing how class and caste conflicts appear in the domestic sphere of family and childhood.

9. Opposition and Dismissal of Existing Power Structures.

The God of Small Things also presents forms of resistance despite the oppressive structures that it represents. Ammu's choice, Velutha's dignity, and the children's questioning of established conventions confront the authority of dominant social values. Though fragile, these forms of resistance suggest the possibility of thinking beyond the envelope of relations.

Roy's narrative gives particular importance to those who inhabit socially marginal spaces. By placing their experiences at the heart of the novel, she challenges the literary and social systems that favour dominant voices. Resistance does not just happen politically; it can also be through not accepting what is forced upon people.

10. A Marxist Reading of Class Conflict and Social Power

In the view of the Marxist critics, *The God of Small Things* illustrates how material conditions, caste hierarchy, family authority, gender ideology, political structures function together to maintain relations of inequality. The novel illustrates that dominance cannot be reduced to economic class alone, as social relations in India are interlinked with several systems of power.

Roy's depiction of Velutha is significant as it reveals the contradiction between labour and social acknowledgment. Despite his talents and contributions, he suffers from caste oppression, while the privileged characters enjoy the benefits of social and economic systems that sustain their power. The inherited privileges and the mechanisms of ideology that make inequality look normal in the novel are questioned through this contrast.

11. The Novel as Commentary on Inequality in Society

As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that social inequalities are not simply a collection of prejudices. Different characters have different choices which are influenced by caste, class, gender, family, property and political ideology. The novel shows how those in privileged positions can wield power over those whose social identities render them vulnerable.

As a result, the fiction of Roy provides ample scope for Marxist. The connection between material conditions and ideological structures is revealed along with the human consequences of social hierarchy. The novel puts into question systems that deny equality and dignity, via Velutha, Ammu, and the other marginalized characters in the novel. Further, the novel illustrates the continuous strain between social privilege and the quest of freedom.

VI. CAPITALISM, PATRIARCHY, CASTE, AND THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL DOMINATION IN INDIAN FICTION

In Indian fiction, social domination is often depicted as the result of interconnected structures like capitalism, patriarchy, caste and class. Individuals are equal before the law and have access to the law Courts. By applying a Marxist perspective, we can see how economic power is facilitated by ideological beliefs which render inequality a natural and acceptable phenomenon.

1. Economic disparity and capitalism

Ownership, employment, income, and resource access differences arise from capitalist relations. Indian fiction often displays workers and lower classes whose labour fuels society but who are afforded little economic security or social recognition. Such stories cast doubt on whether anyone has equal access to material success.

2. The subjugation of Women by Patriarchy.

Patriarchy limits women's ability to manage and choose property, work, study, or marry. Women's unpaid work at domestic and economic level is often unrecognized which makes her dependent on a male-run family and male-dominated society. Indian fiction highlights these disparities through the stories of women who defy standard norms in search of greater freedom.

3. Hierarchy of Class and Caste

Caste and class often work together in Indian society. The caste can dictate one's job, education, place in the social order and economic opportunity. Economic inequality can in turn endorse existing caste disparity. Bakha from Untouchable and Velutha from The God of Small Things starkly show how socially determined caste identity can limit material possibilities.

4. Ideology and Social Domination

The relationship between social inequality and power is more than economic, as it also encompasses ideas touching on purity, gender, family honour, respectability, and social status. Reproduced through everyday practices and institutions beliefs that shape us. Literature reveals the pain and contradictions in social order, thus contradicting this ideology.

5. Interrelated structures of power.

According to fiction in India, capitalism, caste, patriarchy, and class cannot always be examined separately. Collectively, they mould connection, possibilities and identities. By focusing on the marginalized and their lesser status, the Indian writers bring to the readers the material and ideological foundations of social domination.

VII. RESISTANCE, SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN INDIAN FICTION

Indian fiction depicts suppression but also shows resistance against oppression and the possibility of social change. Marginalised characters often move from suffering and exclusion towards a more sophisticated understanding of the structures that control their lives. According to Marxist views, the movement can originate class consciousness.

1. Going from suffering to social awareness.

Poverty and humiliation and discrimination may seem like an individual affair at first. As characters become aware of their connection to larger social systems, their private suffering becomes that of social inequality. This acknowledgement lays an important groundwork for resisting.

2. Opposition and Self-Regard.

Resistance can include questioning social norms, demanding dignity, or rejecting imposed identities. In Untouchable Bakha is unhappy with treatment because of the caste system. His yearning for a different life challenges the belief that inherited status determines the worth of humans.

3. Breaking Caste and Class Barriers

In *The God of Small Things*, Velutha signifies a rebellion against entrenched caste and class limitations. His capabilities, uniqueness and bond with Ammu confront the social system. Despite his success, his downfall shows how severely one is punished for challenging powerful structures of privilege.

4. Literature and the Voice of the Marginalized

In their works, Indian writers challenge dominant representations by locating the lives of workers, lower-caste communities, women and the poor within them. Through literature, lesser-heard experiences become visible, as well as socially accepted presumptions can be questioned.

5. Possibility of Social Change

To do social transformation, you can't merely depend on some individual act of resistance; you also need awareness of the global conditions of inequality. Indian fiction can help generate this awareness by linking individual experiences with larger structures of class, caste, gender and economic power. In carrying out these activities, this will allow literature to contribute to critical consciousness and the imagining of this more equal society.

6. Class Awareness and Transformation

The movement from oppression to consciousness and from awareness to resistance is pivotal to a Marxist reading of Indian fiction. According to *Untouchable* and *The God of Small Things*, resistance may not always be able to dismantle the structures of oppression. Literature thus provides a basis for social consciousness and transformation by questioning inequality and articulating marginalised experiences.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Indian fiction explores class divisions, economic inequality, caste oppression, patriarchy, ideology, and social conflict from an Indian perspective. Marxist interpretations of tales of lives lived in poverty reveal that experiences of humiliation, exclusion, and exploitation, are linked to broader structures of material and social power. To address human suffering and injustice through literature, Hughes coined the phrase "creative suffering." The two are intertwined.

Written with a compassionate and realistic pen, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* depicts the life of Bakha, an untouchable. His experiences exemplify how labour is essential to society, and yet the labourer is denied status and dignity. According to Anand, the ideological foundations of the caste hierarchy are not under attack. The marginalized individual appears as a subject, who also deserves equality, respect, and social recognition.

Through *The God of Small Things*, Roy expands this critique by bringing caste, class, gender, family authority and political ideology into interaction. Roy illustrates through Velutha and Ammu how social power operates through material conditions and deeply entrenched cultural beliefs.

The novel illustrates the repercussions of transgressing caste and patriarchal norms and highlights the clashes between principles of equality and the reality of social acts.

The analysis further shows that capitalism, caste and patriarchy often work as interlinked systems of domination. Inequality can give rise to systems of domination, and beliefs make unequal relations appear legitimate. Resistance emerges through self-respect, questioning, individual choice - and, at the same time, the voice of the voiceless. Although such resistance may not transform society immediately, it may challenge the assumptions on which oppression relies.

According to Marxist thought, Indian fiction is significant because it establishes a relationship between the personal and the social. A transition from suffering to awareness and then to resistance bears the potential for a developing consciousness of class and social missive. This shows that Indian writers go further than reflecting social realities; they challenge conditions of privilege and render marginal voices visible.

Both of these books are successful in their goal. That is, they have a real-world impact on the reader. These novels provoke the questioning of established social structures by unreeling class conflict, caste discrimination, economic inequality, patriarchal control and ideological domination. Their enduring value lies in their insistence on human dignity, equality and the achievable social change. A Marxist literary approach, therefore, provides a powerful lens through which one can view Indian fiction as representation or portrayal of inequality and enabling imaginative resistances and an alternative social order.

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