The Comparative and distinctive study of class and caste conflict in Mulkraj Anand’s ‘Coolie’ with Chinua Achebe’s ‘No longer at ease.’

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Abstract- The comparative study of class and caste conflict in Mulkraj Anand’s novel ‘coolie’ and Chinua Achebe’s novel ‘No longer at ease’, presents nothing but the class and caste conflict from beginning to the last part of the novels. In the novels we find many events and circumstances which lead towards the major aspects class and caste conflict. So, the current study aims to investigate the class and caste conflict, truly. Class conflict can take many different shapes, for example direct violence such as wars fought for resources and cheap labor, policemen beating poor blacks or the workers who try to democratically run their workplaces and economy. There is always relationship between literature and society. The social norms, the attitudes, the philosophy of life and the moral tenets reflected in the literature are an outcome of the existing social order. Mulkraj Anand gives a clear and poignant description of the poor face of India, telling the story of Munoo, who is forced to leave his village out of necessity and poverty to work in the city as a child labour, finally, dies by tuberculosis. On other hand, the novel ‘No Longer at Ease’ by Chinua Achebe tells the story of a Nigerian man named Obi Okonkwo who struggles with cultural identity and loyalty. He grows up in his native Nigeria, country that has witnessed the spread of colonialism and mingled those traditions with the traditions of native people's living in Nigeria. By major perspectives both novels represent the Caste and class conflict harshly, with the graphical situation of how people are helpless to resolve these levels of friction.

Keywords- conflict, exploitation, untouchability, Inferiority, downtrodden, Struggle etc.

INTRODUCTION

we can focus on major perspectives of class and caste conflict that’s the one of the prominent traits of the African and Indian literature. Keeping in the above in view, a study has been elaborated with the aspect of the ‘class and caste conflict’ in the fictions of simultaneously Mulkraj Anand’s ‘Coolie’ and Chinua Achebe’s ‘No longer at ease’, appropriately.
A) Coolie- The novel ‘Coolie’ by Mulkraj Anand is a masterpiece depicting the reality of life. The title aptly fits the story, as it is the story of a porter boy who comes from his village home to the city and works vigorously in various places. Finally he dies of tuberculosis. The darkness of life is competently described the author here in this novel. Mulkraj Anand gives a clear and poignant description of the poor face of India, telling the story of Munoo, 15-year-old boy, who is forced to leave his village out of necessity and poverty to work in the city as a child labour. The story is told from the eyes of the narrator and brings to light the inevitable and hidden evils of the Raj, right from exploitation, caste ridden society, communal riots, and police injustice.

B) No longer at ease – "No Longer at Ease" deals with a theme that is well-developed by Achebe, i.e. the exploration of the interaction between rapid modernization brought to Africa by colonial rule on the one hand, and tradition on the other. Achebe depicts the brutality of the outright conquest of an African society by a colonial power. As well as he shows the deep and drastic changes which occurred in society in Nigeria as colonial rule became established, and how this change warped social relations in the country. Society in the colony is no longer something created and maintained by the native Africans, but rather an imitation of the colonial power's society. It lies somewhere in between, because it's not traditional, yet the natives are treated like second-class citizens in their own country. Through the central character, Achebe does an excellent job of evoking the alienation and frustration this engenders among those Nigerians who are Western-educated and urbanized, yet not really able or allowed to participate in decision-making in any meaningful way.

II CLASS AND CASTE CONFLICT AN ANALYSIS

The introductory part depicts the core aspect of ‘class and caste conflict’ with the blend of comparative and analytical distinctive study. Mostly the study is made to emphasis on ‘how the class conflict generates by colonialism and how it impacts the social norms, the attitudes, the philosophy of life and the moral tenets reflected in the literature are an outcome of the existing social order. Class conflict is both the friction that accompanies social relationships between members or groups of different social classes and the underlying tensions and antagonisms which exist in society due to conflicting interests that arise from different social positions.

III MAKING OF AUTHORS: MULKRAJ ANAND AND CHINUA ACHEBE

Many Indian writers protest against the caste system. Mulkraj Anand’s novels also deal with some of the glaring social evils which include untouchability and the exploitation of labor. In other words-
Anand’s work is primarily a literature of protest and that he shows a deep sympathy for the working classes in his descriptions of the daily life of the oppressed. Here, also making of the author is nothing but the same of social context, rather we can say ‘social milieu’. Anand, a writer with socialist learning was greatly influenced by Karl Max and M.K. Gandhi, whose imprints could be seen in his two popular novels Collie and Untouchable. His works mirror his anger against exploitation of the poor and oppressed. He highlights the class-conflict between the upper caste people and lower caste people in his novels. The class conflict in Achebe’s fiction is the aim of current study. The body of his fiction however has its own distinguishing features characterized by its sociopolitical, cultural and geographical conditions. A brief discussion of Nigerian cultural situation and geographical conditions therefore, would helps in Nigerian writings and especially Achebe’s fiction in proper perspective. Achebe as an artist believes that an artist who turns his back to the happening in his society will end up being unimportant. According to Achebe—“A man is never more defeated than when he is running away from himself”. Questions to his fellow writers, “If writers should opt for escapism, which is to meet the challenge?” He feels that the African psyche is wounded because of domination of alien force. It is the acceptance of racial inferiority. He believes in- “what we need to do is to look back and try to find out where we went wrong, where the rain began to beat us.

IV COOLIE - CLASS CONFLICT AND CASTE CONFLICT

Mulkraj Anand deals with the theme of untouchability in his present novel. It was Anand’s revolutionary decision that he made a sweeper boy the hero of the novel. Generally, it was the literary form handled by the writer of middle and higher classes for themselves. Rather, no middle class Indian writer could have dared to write this classic because he had played with the children of the sweeper attached to his father’s regiment. Anand continued his exploration of the Indian society in the form of class and caste conflict.

Here, is best example of a masterpiece, ‘Coolie.’ The ‘Coolie’ is a life story of a porter boy, Munno that shows fingers to the reality of life. The novel holds oneself to the way the life of Munno takes on from his home in village to a role as a servant in a house, likewise as a factory worker and eventually as a rickshaw driver. Finally, he dies by tuberculosis. The characters of this story are well rounded. No one is too bad or too good. ‘Coolie’ and Chinua Achebe’s ‘No longer at
ease’ represents the class and caste conflict neatly. Anand was able to strike a chord in the hearts of the conscientious Indians with the beautiful and real to life portrayal of the down trodden masses of Indian society, the so called have not’s. By the core aspect, class and caste conflict is shown out here most saliently, especially, by inhuman and degrading treatment, Munno and Obi both represents same status here appropriately. Both novelists have social impact in their writing. As a reflection throughout their social milieu; they have depicted the right situation while making of these novels.

V NO LONGER AT EASE: CLASS AND CASTE CONFLICT

The novel ‘No Longer at Ease’ by Chinua Achebe tells the story of a Nigerian man named Obi Okonkwo who struggles with cultural identity and loyalty. The story deals with many topics including nationalism, colonialism, conflict and self-identity. The novel by Achebe focuses on a young man’s life and his lost connection with his African roots. Throughout the novel the author shares many themes of conflict and struggle. This struggle extends from his personal perceptions of what is right and wrong, but also addresses the conflict that exists within the country of Nigeria during the main’s youth. The story takes place primarily in the setting of post-colonial Nigeria. The character spends time both in his native country and in Europe. The mains character of the novel, Obi, grows up in his native Nigeria, country that has witnessed the spread of colonialism and mingled those traditions with the traditions of native people's living in Nigeria. In the novel, Obi travels to England in search of an education, and then returns to Nigeria.

The novel takes us to different places and cities showing the inhuman and degrading treatment that the poor Obi gets at the hands of the socially, economically, and politically affluent and higher classes of Indian society and how he copes with all circumstances alone. He desires that his native people recognize their own culture as something to be proud of and enthusiastic about. It seems however, that many native traditions still actually exist in Africa; perhaps this is the result of characters like Obi or people like Achebe teaching and instructing people to be proud of their native heritage. It had no prior understanding of how great influence colonialism had on the native peoples of the countries it affected. The novel also portrays the third world in a unique perspective. Interestingly, Okonkwo points out in the work that there is little resistance to push European values out, as would-be the case in a very nationalistic and proud country.

VI CONCLUSION

Chinua Achebe tried to raise the spirit of pride and his readers are also he undertakes the job of rebuilding African dignity, which is lost under the colonial rule.
He helps his people in de-colonizing their minds. The major focus of Achebe’s writing is the class-conflict between Africa and Europe. It presents sociological transformations in African society under the colonial rule. He has presented Nigerian cultural history in his novels right from the late 19th century to the present times. On the other hand, Mulkraj Anand is certainly a champion of downtrodden and oppressed. He stands first making dirty filth and wretched life in India as the subject matter of his writing and making an outcastes, untouchables, peasants his hero. It is only writing of Mulkraj Anand, which first succeed to present the contemptible ideas, which man wants to suffer in front of the world. He presents the class-conflict between the downtrodden and high-class Hindus. Anand delineates how the Indian masses faced with existential predicament and exposes to the forces of change struggled for survival in the face of inhuman conditions of existence. There is enough of such human existence in and around the society but under the pressure of survival of fittest these persons are ignored every day. This novel makes the people to think for a while about their lives who just seek only a decent living. By the way, by major perspectives, both novels depict harsh reality of society. Both novelist points out the many social issues like untouchability, racial discrimination, exploitation of labor, alien identity of human being, ignorance In other words, struggle for survival in the face of inhuman conditions of existence.

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