

Characters in Untouchable=

Bakha, son of Lakha=

An 18-year-old Indian youth, Bakha is a sweeper and the protagonist of Untouchable. Strong and able-bodied, he is fascinated by the life and ways of India's English colonizers. His position as an untouchable has resulted in high levels of self-deprecation and depression. Bakha can be judgmental and at times helps perpetuate the very system that keeps him oppressed. Paradoxically, he still questions the status quo and challenges a caste system that is supposedly "set in stone."

Chota=

The son of a leather-worker, Chota is one of Bakha's best friends. Though they are of the outcaste class, Chota is higher than Bakha in the caste system's hierarchy. Like Bakha, he is also obsessed with the English.

Ram Charan=

Ram Charan is the washer's son and Bakha's other best friend. He is also higher in the hierarchy than Bakha because his family only washes other people's clothes (an act deemed cleaner than clearing refuse).

Lakha, Jemadar of the sweepers=

Bakha's father. A lazy, abusive man that takes advantage of his children. He resents Bakha's obsession with the English and urges Bakha to be satisfied with their family's lot in life as untouchables and sweepers.

Rakha=

Bakha's younger brother. Somewhat of a foil to Bakha's character, he is described as "a true child of the outcaste colony."

Sohini=

Bakha's younger sister, Sohini is described as nubile and beautiful. Patient and resilient, she bears the brunt of her family's frustrations. Her altercation with a member of the high caste is one cause of Bakha's existentialist woe.

Havildar Charat Singh=

One of Bakha's heroes, Singh is a famous hockey player. His personality is jocular, his mood extremely changeable. At the beginning of the novel he harangues Bakha to clean the latrines but later on he gives Bakha a brand new hockey stick. His willingness to share his afternoon tea with Bakha illustrates his lack of belief in untouchability.

Ali=

A young man of Bakha's age group, Ali is the son of a regimental bandsman and Muslim. Bakha asks him questions about Islamic practices and is accused of insulting the religion.

Ramanand=

Described by Bakha as a "peevish old black moneylender," Ramanand is of a higher class than Bakha. He interrupts Bakha's morning musings by shouting at him to clean the latrines.

Gulabo=

A washer woman, Gulabo is Ram Charan's mother. She has a superiority complex because she has a high place in the hierarchy of the low castes/outcastes. She resents Bakha's friendship with her sons and hates Sohini.

Waziro=

Waziro is the weaver's wife and prevents Gulabo from hitting Sohini.

Pundit Kali Nath=

He is one of the priests in charge of the temple in Bulashah, the town Bakha and his family live outside of. He sexually assaults Sohini and then accuses her of defiling him.

Lachman=

A Hindu water-carrier, he is 26 years old and attracted to Sohini.

Hakim Bhagawan Das=

A local doctor, Hakim Bhagawan saved Bakha's life when he was a small child.

Ram Charan's sister=

Bakha's childhood crush, Ram Charan's sister is a symbol of the things Bakha is barred from because of his low status in the caste system.

Colonel Hutchinson=

The chief of the local Salvation Army, Hutchinson is a Christian missionary tasked with converting Hindus to Christianity. The face of the Christian religion in the novel, he symbolizes one facet of England's colonization of India.

Mary Hutchinson=

Mary is the Colonel's irreligious wife. Miserable about their life in India, she constantly demeans and disparages her husband's work amongst Indian peoples, who she refers to as "blackies."

Mahatma Gandhi=

One of several real-life people alluded to/featured in *Untouchable*, Gandhi was one of the leaders of India's independence movement. In the novel his purpose is to offer a religious, moral, and political denunciation of untouchability

Kasturabai Gandhi=

The wife of Mahatma Gandhi. Like her husband, Kasturabai was heavily involved with India's independence movement. In the novel she accompanies Gandhi during his visit to Bakha's town.

Miraben Slade=

Another real-life person that makes an appearance in the novel, Miraben was the daughter of a British admiral. She left Britain to work at Gandhi's side for India's independence in 1925. In the novel, she also accompanies Gandhi during his visit to Bakha's town.

Iqbal Nath Sarshar=

A young poet who defends Gandhi despite his misgivings about the revolutionary's political and economic views. Sarshar offers up a Marxist interpretation of the plight of the untouchables and suggests a Marxist solution.

R. N. Bashir=

An Indian lawyer that studied at Oxford. Bashir is highly critical of Gandhi and the Marxist solution suggested by Sarshar.