Section II

Marginality and Techniques of Coping with it

Marginality is primarily a socio-psychological phenomenon as well as a post-colonial concern that talks about the plight of the individuals and groups that are away from the centre of the power structure, described as people at the periphery or margin. The social categories that are identified as marginalized are the poor, the dispossessed, the weak, the physically and mentally challenged, the women, the differently gendered, the victims of man-made and natural disaster, the displaced, and the victims of racial discrimination etc.

*The Encyclopedia of Sociology* defines marginality as follows:

…the location away from the centre, or being pushed to the margins or edges of the society. The term marginality was first used by the sociologist Robert Park in 1928, to define ‘marginal-man’ as an individual who lives on the periphery of two cultures, but fails to belong to the either group. Edwin Stonequist studied the phenomenon of marginality from the psychological point of view in 1937. It was only after 1966, the term received enough attention in social sciences, when Dickie–Clarke included number of other social categories like the women, the poor, the disabled to the list of the marginalized individuals and groups. The discipline of sociology identifies two types of marginalized categories; people who are excluded from the mainstream of the society and people who choose to be away from the mainstream. (Rutledge, 2007: 2763, 64)

T.K Oommen probes the sociological phenomenon of marginality as follows:

The expression marginality connotes the location of the specified social categories in the society; those located at the core of the society constitute the elite, the dominant and powerful. Towards the other end are those who are placed at the periphery- the dominated or the powerless. Those who find themselves at both the centre and the periphery have not consciously opted to be there; their location is the function of the social structural dynamics. Is the space between the core and the periphery vacuous? Indeed not. That is the marginal-dominant and the centre-peripheries are not dichotomies but continua; there are categories which occupy the intermediate space between them. Occupants of the spaces from the centre to periphery have not opted for these locations voluntarily and yet their individual and social volitions are not completely absent either. This interpenetration of individual and societal factors in combination makes the ‘life world’ vastly complex. If the traditional ‘untouchable’ in India was marginalized by the system, the modern hippie in contemporary Europe opted out of the system and in the process became a marginal. (cited by Saxena, 2013: vii)
Marginality has been in existence since time immemorial. It may not have existed during the hunting stage of human evolution, but ever since man adopted sedentary farming, people who were in possession of the resources acquired the position of centre, and the weak and the dispossessed were pushed to the margins, and the weakest were thrown out of the pale of the society. In *Slavery: A World History*, Milton Meltzer traces the origin of slavery in the creation of “the surplus.” Meltzer comments as follows:

…in the days of early agriculture, the surplus did not amount to much, though farming family could raise little more than what was necessary to feed themselves. When tribes went to war and took prisoners, the captives were usually sacrificed. It was foolish to keep them because they would have been a drain on the food supply. When farming and herding had gone beyond this early stage and people could produce far more than they needed, made the taking of the slaves practical. (1993: 2)

Karl Marx attributes the origin of inequality to the ownership of the private property, which led to the creation of master and servant, freeman and slave, the bourgeois and the proletarian.

It is power which is responsible for the creation of marginality by creating the positions of inequality. The essence of power dynamics which engenders inequality is aptly captured by George Orwell, in his political satire *Animal Farm*, in the commandment read out by an animal character “All Animals Are Equal but Some Animals Are More Equal than Others.” (p 83) It is power that led to stratification in the society, in the ancient world; in ancient Rome one could witness the social division in the form of Plebeians and Patricians; in India, the society was divided into four major castes under *Varna* system, wherein the untouchable was thrown out of the pale of the society. In the medieval period, the feudal system created a divide between the feudal lord and the serf, who served as bonded labour. Woman has been subordinated to man from times immemorial. The Negroes in America were treated as the other.

The phenomenon of marginality exists in the social structures of power. The structure of power is essentially hierarchical in nature that creates the position of centre and margin. Louis Dumont, the social scientist, attributes the creation of marginal position to the hierarchal social structure, where power is wielded by the priests, which is sanctioned by the religion. Louis Dumont says, “hierarchy is essential to the social structure… it is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession…hierarchy as the principle by
which the elements of a whole are ranked in relation to the whole and that in majority of societies, it is religion which provides the view of the whole, and that the ranking will thus be religious in nature. (1998: 65)

The stratification of various institutions in the society has been supported by religion and the institution of priest. Subordination of women is sanctioned by all the religions of the world. The Bible clearly tells the women, “Wives, submit yourselves to your husband as to the Lord.” The institution of slavery was supported by the church. The Harmsworth History of the World contains some interesting official documents concerning slave trade, which is supported by the church of their religion. An official journal of Martinique, June 22, 1840, proclaims:

In the name of the King, of law and of Justice, be it known to all whom it may concern, that on Sunday June Twenty sixth 1840, in the market place of the Holy Spirit, there shall be sold at auction immediately after the Mass the slave woman Susanne, a negress together with her six children, aged respectively thirteen, eleven, eight, seven, six and three. (Innes, Mee, Hamerton, 1914:6372)

With the rise of modernity characterized by the spirit of enlightenment, which gave an impetus to the democratic values, a sense of rationalization, and a spirit of questioning and scientific enquiry, fuelled by the social, philosophical and scientific writings of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, Auguste Comte, Copernicus, Galileo, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, the political movements like the American war of independence and the French Revolution, the oppressed all over the world challenged the traditional notion of superiority and inferiority and fought for justice and equality. It was manifested in the freedom movement spearheaded by Toussaint L’Ouverture in Haiti, the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, the Abolitionist Movement in America, the trade union movement in the Caribbean islands, Indian National Movement etc. Marginality existed in the past and it continues to exist today and therefore calls for a deeper investigation; it can be witnessed in the domination of Canada over Quebec, the conflict between the Hutu and the Tutsi tribes in Africa, the domination of Taiwan and Tibet by China.

The study of the power structure that creates the position of centre and margin is a major concern of post-colonial theory and literature. In Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define marginality as follows:
...The perception of description of experience as marginal is a consequence of the binaristic structure of various kinds of dominant discourses, such as patriarchy, imperialism, and ethnocentrism, which imply that certain forms of experience are peripheral. Although the term carries a misleading geometric implication, marginal group do not necessarily endorse the notion of a fixed centre. Structures of power that are described in terms of ‘centre’ and ‘margin’ operate in reality, in a complex, diffuse and multi-faceted way. The marginal therefore, indicates a positionality that is best defined in terms of the limitations of a subject’s access to power... It is continuous, processual, working through individuals as well as upon them. It reproduces itself with in the very idea of the marginal... (2004: 135)

The position of centre and margin can be discerned in the light of the play *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare, wherein, the protagonist, Prospero’s control over the island and his control of the original inhabitants, like Ariel and Caliban, can be seen as centre and margin in operation. The power dynamics of Prospero and Caliban serves as a metaphor while dealing with the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, which forms the basis of the post -colonial discourse.

The dispossessed individuals and groups that are at the margin suffer social, economic, cultural and political exclusion and are taken advantage of; they are thrown out of the mainstream of life; they are treated as the other. The colonized suffer a loss of identity or a loss of self. The concept of identity has been defined by Erik Erikson as follows:

In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. This process is, luckily, and necessarily, for the most part unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, “identity consciousness” (1968:22,23)

The Post-Colonial critic and psychiatrist from Algeria, Frantz Fanon talks about the impact of colonization on the psyche of the oppressed in *The Wretched of the Earth*. (1967) He says that “the colonized suffer from mental diseases like insomnia, suicidal obsessions, accusatory delirium, nervous depression, loss of appetite and motor disability.” (203)

The frustration and anger, anxiety and disappointment experienced by the colonized are expressed in literature using the literary devices like sarcasm, satire, parody, and irony.
Post-colonial literature refers to the writings that are produced by the writers of erstwhile British Colony, who won their freedom after 1950, namely, India, Africa, the Caribbean islands, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, who talk about the scars of their colonial past, their exilic status, the inferior treatment suffered by their wounded psyche. It also talks about the impact of colonization on the colonized psyche at the global level in terms of class, gender and racial discrimination etc. It also talks about the assertion of their identity in the multicultural, hybrid world of mutuality that it desires to create, which would ensure dignity to the silenced voices of the subalterns. Post-colonial theory and literature talks about the plight of the marginalized; it also tries to suggest a way out of the sufferings in a very dignified and humane manner. Post-colonial discourse on marginality can be unbraided in the light of the dominant discourses of power, identified as race, gender and class etc. It can be perceived as follows:

The black natives of Africa suffered social, economic, political and cultural exclusion, under the imperialist structure of power, with the advent of the European colonialist, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century after the treaty of Berlin in 1885. The Europeans who came primarily, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, in search of raw material and market, established their political domination. By passing several ordinances and by adopting the policy of land grab, the vast fertile land came to be reserved for the European settlers. The black natives of Africa were dispossessed of their ancestral right over the land and were sent to the congested native reserves, where the land was less fertile. The plunder of African continent by the European capitalists is critiqued by Joseph Conrad in the *Heart of Darkness* (1901). He debunks the process of imperialism as robbery with violence. Conrad comments:

They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect they were conquerors, and for that you want brute force—nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the meekness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind, as is very proper for those who tackle darkness. The conquest of the Earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing, when you look into it too much. (p 6)

Ngugi Wa Thiong’o depicts the African land being swallowed up by the British colonizers, in his novel, *The Grain of Wheat*, “who came with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the oth-
er”. Kihika, the hero of the freedom struggle in the novel, recounts the process of Kenya being swallowed up by the British.

We went to their church, Mubia, in white robes, opened the Bible. He said – Let us kneel down to pray. We knelt down. Mubia said – Let us shut our eyes. We did. You know, his remained open so that he could read the word. When we opened our eyes, our land was gone and the sword of flames stood on guard. As for Mubia, he went on reading the word, beseeching us to lay our treasure in heaven where no moth would corrupt them. But he laid on earth, our earth. (p18)

The European settlers, who were in possession of the vast fertile land, imposed several taxes on the dispossessed natives of Africa, which compelled the reluctant natives to work on the settler’s farm for a pittance. The native had to leave his reserve and walk for days or even for months in search of a job. Their wages were abysmally low and they were subject to cruel punishments on the flimsiest of grounds. Work was extracted using coercive methods. The system, thus, stripped the African villages of its most efficient labour force, leaving mainly old men, women and children. Not only was the economic life of the native disrupted but also his emotional, social and cultural stability was destroyed. The natives of Africa suffered a loss of identity, a loss of self.

The Christian missionaries, who came to Africa primarily to proselytize the natives to the Christian faith, interfered with the social and religious practices followed by them. Polygamy, which was a part of the African social custom and economic organization, was eyed as “uncontrolled sexual passion and sin”. The tribal custom of female circumcision was condemned by the Church of Scotland in 1929 as ‘savage and ‘barbarous.’ Ancestor worship, which was an integral part of the African custom, was disapproved by the missionaries. Social historian, E Franklin Frazier, in *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World*, comments, “In an attempt to uproot the practice of ancestor worship they little realized that they were destroying the basis of social cohesion.” (1957: 308)

The African natives further suffered a culture shock, when Bible was introduced to “civilize” the natives and the English Language and western culture was propagated through the education system, disregarding the legacy of the African oral tradition or “Orature,” for African way of life was considered inferior in social, economic, cultural, political and ideological sphere, which dislocated the sense of self-esteem in the African natives. In Chinua Achebe’s novel *Things Fall*
Apart, Okonowko, the protagonist, after he comes in contact with the Christian faith starts finding fault with the native religious and social customs. The custom of inhuman disposal of the babies born as twins and rejecting them as evil is thought to be barbarous.

Thus, Europeans did not merely control the bodies of the Africans; they also controlled their mind, which was thought essential for the exploitation of the natives of Africa by the colonizers. Commenting on the impact of colonization effected through European education and English language Ngugi Wa Thiong’o writes in Decolonizing the Mind:

Berlin of 1884 was effected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom… The new school had the nature of weapon. But better than the cannon it made the conquest permanent. The cannon forces the body and the school fascinates the soul… In my view language was both the cannon and the magnet…the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. (P 9)

The natives of Africa though did not possess any technological knowledge and though they led a simple life, they certainly had a culture of their own. Olaudah Equiano nee Gustavus Vassa, an African slave who was kidnapped at the age of ten and was taken to West-Indies for a few days before being brought to Virginia, where he was sold to a local planter, in his autobiography, The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings, published in 1789, asserts the identity of Africa as a land of bountiful resources and African culture replete with humanity.

Our land is uncommonly rich and fruitful, and produces all kinds of vegetables in great abundance. We have plenty of Indian corn, and vast quantities of cotton and tobacco. Our pine-apples grow without culture… we have also spices of different kinds, particularly pepper; and variety of delicious fruit, which I have never seen in Europe. All our industry is exerted to improve those blessings of nature…We are unacquainted with idleness, we have no beggars. (P 37)

Gustavus Vassa further talks about various aspects of African culture, like food habits, customs of marriage, cleanliness and hygiene; he asserts the presence of culture, which is denied to the black natives of Africa, by the oppressive white colonizers; while commenting on morality and marriage, he throws light on humanity taking precedence over custom

Adultery, however, was sometimes punished with slavery or death; a punishment which I believe is inflicted on it throughout most of the nations of Africa. So sacred among them is the honour of
the marriage bed and so jealous are they of the fidelity of their wives, of this I recollect an incident: a woman was convicted before the judges of adultery, and delivered over, as the custom was to her husband to be punished. Accordingly he determined to put her to death; but it being found just before her execution, that she had an infant at her breast, and no woman being prevailed on to perform the part of the nurse, she was spared on account of the child. (p 33)

Chinua Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* asserts that Africa had a culture of its own before the arrival of the Europeans in Africa; however he does not glorify it in all its aspects. Ngugi asserted the identity of Africa by choosing to write his novel, *Devil on the Cross*, in Gikuyu, his native tongue. Shubhangi Rayker comments, “Ngugi’s decision marked the homecoming” (Rayker, 1993: 308) Ngugi says, “Kenyan writers have no alternative but to return to the roots, return to the sources of their being in the rhythms of speech and language of Kenyan masses, if they are to rise to the great challenge of repeating, in the poems, plays and novels, the epic grandeur of their history.” (Ngugi, 1981:73)

*Devil on the Cross*, portrays the corrupt African society in the post-independence era deeply dented by the colonial impact. The corrupt local representatives are seen as neo-colonialists, who are great thieves and robbers, in the garb of the local watchdogs. Wariinga, the female protagonist, who is sexually, socially and economically oppressed, rebels against the social and economic slavery, and proves to be a successful leader. Ngugi strongly recommends the Marxian principle of the unity of workers, as the only solution to the present condition of marginalization.

In Wole Soyinka’s novel, *The Interpreters*, an affirmative social change is brought out by the new creations of the intellectuals; it is the individual talent and the new creation, which is seen as a coping technique. The novel talks about the corrupt and the fractured condition of Africa depicted through the characters, Chief Winsala, Sir Derin and the managers of the newspapers. The intellectuals, Kola, Sekni, Sagoe, Egbo, try to change the society through new creations. The individual talent brings about an affirmative social change. The monarchy of the church is done away with, the winds of enlightenment sweep across the place. Sekoni displays his skill in the creation of the power plant. Thus, a new dawn of hope and rejuvenation is pronounced by the individual talent.
In Caribbean islands, the position of the colonized was peculiar. The slaves who served on the vast sugar plantations were meted out a brutal treatment by the white colonizers. The discovery of the Caribbean islands by Christopher Columbus in 1492 led to a brutal period of colonial domination that continued till 1960, when most of the Caribbean nations gained independence. The Spaniards established the first settlement in eastern Hispaniola in 1502, and by the middle of the sixteenth century they had fanned out in the other islands. The Dutch, the Portuguese, the English and the French colonizers followed the Spaniards and by the eighteenth century, the entire Caribbean region was under the colonial rule which was dominated by the British. The Amerindians, who were the original dwellers of the land, were brutally decimated under the policy of territorial expansion and economic ambitions of the colonial rule. Bartholomé de las Casas (1484- 1576) offers a chilling account of the decimation of the warm and hospitable, Amerindian nobility in *The Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552) as follows:

…the Spanish captain made his way accompanied by the platoon of his men, under the pretense of wanting to watch the spectacle, but in fact carrying orders to attack the revelers…the nobles were totally absorbed in what they were doing and had no thought of their own safety, when the soldiers drew their swords and shouting: ‘For saint James, and at’em,’ and men proceeded to slice open the lithe and naked bodies of the dancers and to spill their noble blood. Not one dancer was left alive… (las Casa, 1552: 50- 51)

The Amerindians who survived the initial phase of genocide were forced to work on the vast sugar, coffee and tobacco plantations, introduced by the Dutch about 1640 A.D. They failed to survive the brutal treatment, and perished due to hard labour and epidemics. During the same time, several European powers that saw economic potential on the Caribbean islands started importing the African slaves. After the abolition of slavery by the British parliament in 1834, the colonialist brought in the indentured labour from India and China. They, too, suffered the plight of the African slaves on the sugarcane plantations. Esteban Montejo, the African slave who had witnessed the plight of the farm labour who were compelled to live in the baracoons talks about his experience in his narrative, *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave*, He says, “The baracoons were as dirty as hell, and there was no modern ventilation there! Just a hole in the wall or a small barred window. The result was that the place swarmed with fleas and ticks, which made the inmates ill with infections. (1970:18) Montejo, who talked about his experience about the subhuman living conditions in the baracoons, also talks about the Sunday celebrations looked forward
to by the slaves, who entertained themselves with games and dances, which served as a way out of the strict regimen on the sugarcane plantation, where they served as beasts of burden. Montejo writes:

Sunday was the liveliest day in the plantations. I don’t know where the slaves found the energy for it. Their biggest fiestas were held on that day. On some plantations drumming started at midday or one o’clock. At flor de sagua it started very early. The excitement, the games, the children rushing about started at sunrise the baracoon came to life in a flash; it was like the end of the world and in spite of the work, the people woke up cheerful. The overseer and the deputy overseer came into the baracoon and chatted with the black women. I noticed that the Chinese kept part; they had no ears for drums but they thought a lot; to my mind they sent more time thinking than the blacks. No one took any notice of them and people went on with their dances… (Montejo,1970: 24)

Talking about the peculiar demographic profile of the Caribbean islands, their state of uprootedness, hybridity and multicultural identity, J Michael Dash says that the entire island was “re-populated” owing to the economic structure of the plantation slavery and indentureship; it was unlike any other colonies,” and he calls it “a prototype of the modern industrial plant in which European capitalism produced unintended cultural entities out of the need to exploit cheap labour.” (1996: 46)

George Lamming, in The Pleasures of Exile, laments the exilic status of the Caribbeans, and says that “The Exile is a universal figure in the Caribbean Islands,” for he fails to take up a political stand and feels thrown into a moral chaos owing to his fractured thinking which makes him feel irrelevant in a society whose past he can’t alter and whose future is always beyond him. (1960: 24)

Derek Walcot, a well-known poet from the island of St. Lucia tries to assert the identity of the Caribbeans through the new language, which manifests an alternative culture, called Creole culture. Walcot celebrates the position of the artist or the poet from the Caribbean islands as the mythical Adam with a new future and new identity. In Walcot’s poem, Crusoe’s Journal, he compares the artist to the lone survivor of the shipwreck, like the shipwrecked Crusoe, who creates a new world like Adam. Derek Walcot writes as follows:

Once we have driven past Mundo Nuveo trace
Safely to this perch house
Perched between ocean and green, churning forest

The intellect appraises
Objects surely, even the bare necessities
of style are turned to use
Like those plain iron tools he salvages
from shipwreck, hewing a prose
as odorous as raw wood to the adze;
out of such timbers
came our first book, our profane Genesis
whose Adam speaks that prose
which, blessing some sea rock, startles itself
with poetry’s surprise
in a green world, one without metaphors… (Walcot, 22, 23)

The crisis of identity experienced by the Caribbeans is expressed by V.S Naipaul, the novelist from Trinidad, in his novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961). The quest of the protagonist, Mr. Biswas, for a house, can be discerned as a search for identity of the uprooted Caribbean diaspora. Mr. Biswas creates his identity by owning the house on Sikkim Street, in Trinidad. V.S Naipaul comments in the prologue to the novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas* as follows:

When Mr. Biswas came back from the hospital…, he found that the house had been prepared for him…the small garden had been made tidy, the downstairs walls had been distempered. The Prefect motorcar was there… the kitchen safe…, but bigger than them was the house, his house; how terrible it would have been, at this time to have died among the Tulsis, amid the squalor of that large, disintegrating and indifferent family; to have left Shyama and children among them in one room, worse to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to the portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated. (Naipaul, 1961: 8)
The Hindu diaspora, in Trinidad is seen turning to its cultural roots as a gesture of homecoming in Naipaul’s *A House for Mr. Biswas*. The characters recite *Ramcharitmanas* and perform *Satyanarayan puja* to substantiate their cultural roots.

The Negros in America suffered exclusion and terrible humiliation under the racial structure, which established the hegemony of the whites over the blacks. Under the cruel phenomena of American slavery, which began as early as 1654, the black natives of Africa were transported to serve on the large tobacco and cotton plantations, in the Southern colonies of Virginia and Carolina. Carolina was the first colony to have imported the African Negros for they were found better hands than the white labour. Though, slavery in America was officially banned with the Emancipation proclamation, in 1861, the Negroes in America were deprived of their political and civil rights upto the decade of the 1960’s and 70’s. Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights activist, defines what it means to be a Negro in America in the decade of the sixties as follows:

Being a Negro in America is not a comfortable existence. It means to be a part of the company of the bruised, the battered and the scarred and the defeated. Being a Negro in America means trying to hold on to life amidst psychological death. It means the pain of watching your children grow up with clouds of inferiority in their mental skies. It means having your legs cut off, and then being condemned for being a cripple. It means seeing your mother and father spiritually murdered by slings and arrows of daily exploitation, and then being hated for being an orphan… it means being harried by day and haunted by the night by a nagging sense of nobodiness and constantly fighting to be saved from the poison of bitterness. It means the ache and anguish of living in so many situations where hopes unborn have died. (King, 1985: 249)

David A. Hollinger, the sociologist, comments on anti-miscegenation laws that existed in The United states of America as late as 1967. He says that the Supreme court of the United States of America, outlawed the inter-racial marriages between the blacks and the whites, and as a consequence, it denied recognition to the mixed marriages of the past and made them criminals in the eye of the law and jeopardized the future marital relationships between the blacks and the whites. (Hollinger, 2004: 40)

Under slavery, the Negroes in America were subject to the repressive Black Code, which “denied them any political, civil or legal rights. It also denied them access to education, right to inherit property and contract marriage.” (Meltzer, 1993: p 203)
The slaves who served on the plantations were physically exploited and were treated as chattel, and were auctioned off by their white masters. Harriet Beecher Stowe describes the inhuman practice of the auction of the Negros in the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1854)* as follows:

A little before the sale commenced a short, broad, muscular man … elbowed his way through the crowd, like one who is going actively into a business and coming up to the group, began to examine them systematically. He seized Tom by the jaw and pulled open his mouth to inspect his teeth; made him strip up his sleeve, to show is muscle, turned him around, and made him jump and spring to show his paces … he stopped before Susan and Emmeline. He put out his heavy dirty hand, and drew the girl towards him; passed it over her neck and bust, felt her arms, looked at her teeth, and then pushed her back against her mother, whose patient face showed the suffering she had been going through at every motion of the hideous stranger. (p.289, 290)

Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave and the champion of the Abolitionist Movement, in his autobiography, talks about his plight as a child, who was denied the right to be with his mother, for neo-natal rights were denied to the black women, under slavery. He also talks about his aunt, who was ruthlessly beaten up by the white master, who was supposed to be his father, for being attended to by a black man. Douglass talks about “spirituals,” the songs crooned by the blacks to relieve themselves of pain of hard labour on the plantation. Frederic Douglass saw education as a way out of the situation. Douglass writes:

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very soon commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade to instruct me further telling her, it was unlawful and unsafe to teach a slave to read, he said, “If you give a nigger an inch he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master to do what he is told to do…Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world … I now understood what had been to me to wit the Whiteman’s power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. (p78)

Though, slavery was legally abolished in America, in 1861, with the Proclamation of Emancipation and yet, the Negros in America suffered a humiliating discrimination under the demeaning racial structure. They were treated as intellectually and culturally inferior. The Harlem Renaissance, the cultural and aesthetic movement that spanned in 1920s played a vital role in bringing dignity to the Blacks in America. The creative artists explored their roots in the African oral tra-
dition of folk lore. Langston Hughes, a well-known poet, identified with the Harlem Renaissance asserts his universal and ancient identity and his pride in Africa, in the following lines:

I 've known rivers, …
I 've known rivers ancient as the world
and older than the flow of the human blood in human veins
I bathed in the Euphrates when the dawns were young
I built my hut near the Congo
And it lulled one to sleep
I looked upon the Nile and
Raised the pyramids above it…(Hughes, 106)

In Richard Wright’s ironically titled “social protest” novel, The Native Son, the protagonist, Bigger Thomas, is pushed into the unintended crime of murdering the white girl owing to the prejudice that treats the blacks as “criminals.” Ralph Ellison, in his novel The Invisible Man ironical-ly comments on the refusal of the white man to recognize him as a human being. The male protagonist, The Invisible Man makes himself visible, by creating an identity for himself, through his intellectual and communicative abilities and by ideologically identifying himself with the Brotherhood, of the white and the black citizens in America. The protagonist, while speaking to the audience, who belong to the Brotherhood in America, just before the race riots of 1940s, talks about his new found identity marking solidarity with the black and white fraternity as follows:

I feel suddenly that I have become more human. Do you understand? More human… let me confess… I feel the urge to affirm my feelings… I feel that here, after a long and desperate and uncommonly blind journey, I have come home… home, with your eyes upon me I have found my true family my true people my true country I am a new citizen of the country of your vision, a native of your fraternal land. (Ellison, 1952: 279)

Though, the Civil Rights Movement in America, (1954- 1968) which fought against racial sege-gation headed by the social activist, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Rosa Park won the
African Americans an access to the civil institutions and further culminated into the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Immigration and the Nationality Services Act of 1965, that allowed the non-Europeans to settle in America, yet the psyche of the black populace was tormented owing to the pigmentation complex. It can be discerned in Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye*, (1970) Pecola Breedlove, the protagonist of the novel, is tormented by the idea of being ugly; Toni Morrison comments on the inferiority complex suffered due to the black pigmentation, galling not only the adolescent girl, Pecola Breedlove but the entire Breedlove family which is tormented by the castrating notion of ugliness. Yet another character, Claudia, from the same novel rejects the white aesthetic of beauty, Claudia dismembers her white doll with blue eyes and celebrates the notion of “black is beautiful.”

In the novel *The Color Purple*, (1982) the black women characters, Celie and Nettie attain dignity by identifying their cultural roots in Africa.

The sense of exile suffered by the Negroes in America owing to the colour discrimination is suffered by the working class in the capitalist system for being poor. The decline of the feudal system in Europe towards the end of the fifteenth century provided an impetus to the rise of trade and commerce. It is the rise of the middle class which came into existence owing to the rise of industry and commerce boosted the process of industrialization in England in the mid eighteenth century. Talking about the rise of the class system with its notions of superiority and inferiority, the Marxist critic Raymond Williams comments in his critical work, *Culture and Society* as follows:

The class can be dated in its most important modern sense from about 1740 and it is only at the end of the eighteenth century that the modern structure of class, in its social sense, begins to build up … it is obvious, of course, that this spectacular history of the new use of class does not indicate the beginning of social division in England. But it indicates… a change in the character of these divisions and it records… a change in the attitude towards them. (Williams: p 14)

The accelerated pace of development of commerce and industry is to be attributed the philosophy of *Laizze- faire* propounded by Adam Smith in his economic treatise *Wealth of Nations* (1776) which did not approve of interference of state in the private entrepreneurship. The political economists like Arthur Young prescribed economic policies that kept the working class poor
which ensured a sure and a cheap supply of the work force to the industry. The contemporary protestant church which instilled the values of frugality and recommended private ownership boosted the growth of industry. Yet another important factor that supplied cheap labour force was the Enclosure System, which was adopted by the rich landlords in the wake of rise in demand for wool by the woolen industry, in Europe. The common plot of land that supplied the landless labourer with a steady job in agriculture was enclosed for sheep grazing which rendered the labour force unemployed. The poor and the starving landless peasantry which was expelled from the agricultural land were forced to work in the factories. The wealth generated by slave trade and the overseas plantation economy ploughed in capital. The European colonies in Africa and Asia brought in raw material and ensured a large market for the finished goods. The new inventions in science and technology like steam engine and spinning Jenny boosted the textile industry. Consequently, new townships came up where factories mushroomed, surrounded by the filthy slums. Charles Dickens, in his novel, *Hard Times*, *(1852)* talks about the socio-economic and cultural change that was brought about by the capitalist system in England. Dickens satirizes the principle of utilitarianism, and its comprehensive effect on every walk of life, which is illustrated through the education system, and is exemplified through the school established by Mr. Gradgrind, which chastises the fancy free student Sissy Jupes, who fails to define the horse in all its statistical details, and exhorts her to adhere only to the “facts.” Dickens bemoans the disfigurement of the natural landscape. The setting of the novel is provided by the Coke town, which is described as follows:

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of the savage It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got coiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and trembling all day long, and where the piston of the engine worked monotonously up and down like the head of the elephant in a state of melancholy madness. . . it was inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavement, to do the same work, and to whom every day was like yesterday and tomorrow…*(Dickens, 1852 :22)*

Elizabeth’s Gaskell in her industrial novel, *North and South*, *(1854)* describes the town of Milton, as a “dark, lead-coloured town” *(66)* which is located in the north of England and was
known for a booming textile industry. Gaskell talks about the plight of the factory workers by depicting the Higgins’s. Bessy Higgins, one of the woman characters, who is an adolescent, who worked as a child labour in the carding factory and is on the verge of death due to lung congestion narrates her experience follows:

Fluff,… little bits, as fly off from the cotton, when they are carding it and fill the air till it looks all fine dust. They say it winds through the lungs, and tightens them up. There are many a one as works in a carding room, that falls into a waste, coughing and spitting blood, because they are just poisoned by the fluff. (118)

The inhuman and exploitative attitude of the middleclass mill owners can be witnessed in the male protagonist Mr. Thornhill’s perception of dealing with the capital, which in his opinion is his prerogative. The workers right to strike for fair wages is flayed by Thornhill and his mother, who perceives the gesture of “strike” as a ploy to replace the “masters” by “men” Mrs. Thornhill in the novel North and South (1852) expresses her ire against the striking working class. She says, “they always strike for the mastership and ownership of the other people’s property… they are only a pack of ungrateful hounds…they want to be masters and make the masters into slaves on their own ground they are always trying at it, they always have it in their minds. (p135)

A way out of the situation is found in the “marriage” between the ideology of the North and South of England, which is justified through the marriage of Margaret Hale and the mill owner Mr. Thornhill. Margaret Hale, the cultured and humane woman protagonist who hails from the South of England, and who makes the Mill owner Mr. Thornhill more human in his perception of the working class marries Mr. Thornhill. Raymond Williams comments on the solution to the situation. He says, “The relationship of Margaret and Thornton and their eventual marriage serve as a unification of the practical energy of the Northern manufacturer with the developed sensibility of the southern girl. This is stated almost explicitly and is seen as a solution. (p.103)

In Dickens’ Hard Times a solution to the grinding and muzzling utilitarianism is found in the image of the fanciful “circus.” Sissy Jupe’s uncle Mr. Sleary talks about love and humanity as the governing principle of life, which castigates the cut and dried, inhuman principle of utilitarianism upheld by the ilk of the Gradgrinds and Bounderbys, Mr. Sleary says, “that there ith(is) a love in the world, not all the self-interest after all, but thomething very different … it hath a way
of ith own of calculating or not calculating, which thomehow or another ith at lealhtath hard to
give a name to, ath the wayth----- of the dogthith.(p 215)

A solution to the problems faced by the working class was seen in the chartist movement, initiat-
ed in 1838 by the working class men to obtain the voting rights and the socialist ideology em-
braced by Robert Owen through his Lanark Mill. Owen (1771- 1858) who was born of poor
welsh parents, by dint of his ability he became both the manager and the mill owner of the new
Lanark mill which employed 200 people as a mill owner he worked as an ideal industrialist by
constructing well ventilated homes for the workers, he paid them better wages, he built a school
for their children. Owen believed that a cooperative gesture on the part of owners and mill work-
ers is mutually beneficial. He tried to convince the parliament to bring about a legislative reform
to alleviate the marginalized position of the working class. The factory Acts brought a respite to
the workers. The philosophy of Marxism offers a solution to the class system through the aboli-
tion of the private property, and by creating a classless society based on the principle of equality.

What the working class suffers under the unequal economic structure of the Capitalist system,
the people in India suffered under the social structure of the caste characterized by the social
division. The “shudras” who belonged to the lowest rung in the hierarchy were at the margin, and
the “Untouchables” who were treated inferior even to the “Shudras” were thrown out of the pale
of the society and were treated as the “other.” The victims of the caste system acquired a new
identity by rejecting Hinduism and by embracing a religion or rather a cult of Hinduism that is
Buddhism through mass conversion in 1956 under the leadership of B.R Ambedkar, who in-
spired the dalits or the untouchable class through the call of Educate, Agitate and Unite. Mulk
Raj Anand in his novel, Untouchable discusses the postcolonial concern of racial superiority,
understood as caste domination in the Indian context. Anand describes the outcaste colony as
follows:

The outcaste colony was a group of mud – walled houses that clustered together in two rows, un-
der the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate
from them. There lived the scavengers, the leather workers, the washerman, the barbers, the
water carriers, the grass-cutters and the other outcastes from Hindu Society. ( Anand, 1937: 9)

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The novel comes up with three solutions to the problem of untouchability, it is discerned in the form of religious conversion, Gandhian principle of unity, and the use of technology. Col. Hutchinson from Salvation Army tells the protagonist Bakha, the sweeper’s son, “Christianity and Christ stand for equality of all human beings.” (142) Bhakha, listens to Gandhi at, speaking to a sea of humanity, and thought, “Gandhi alone united him with them, in the mind, because Gandhi was in everybody’s mind, including Bakha’s. Gandhi might unite them really.” (151) Another solution to the evil of untouchability is offered by R. N. Bashir, a character from the novel, who is an advocate and his young poet friend Iqbal Nath Sarashar who thinks that introduction of the flush system will automatically put an end to the obnoxious social evil. Sarashar says, “when we accept the machine, which cleans dung without any one to handle it – the flush system, then the sweeper can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity and status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless system. (171) The plight suffered by the “colonized” in the imperialist structure, the capitalist structure and the racial structure was suffered by women, under the patriarchal structure. Since ancient times, women have been subordinated to man. They have been treated as slaves and as objects of pleasure; they have been excluded from religion, politics, education, and property rights in a male dominated society. G Stanley Hall, founder and the first president of the psychological Association summed up the contemporary thinking about women in 1904, wherein woman is shown as man’s “other;” Hall comments as follows:

Our modern knowledge represents her as having characteristic differences from man in every organ and tissue. Her whole soul, conscious and unconscious, is best conceived as a magnificent organ of heredity, and to its laws its all psychic activities… she works by intuition and feeling fear, anger, pity, love and most of the emotions have wider range and greater intensity. If she abandons her natural naiveté and takes up the burden of guiding and accounting for her life by consciousness, she is likely to lose more than she gains… we shall never know the true key to her nature until we understand how the nest and the cradle are larger wombs; the home is a larger nest, the tribe the state and the church and school are larger homes. (Jordan, Weedon: 178)

The major religions of the world have treated women as inferior to men. The Bible establishes male superiority by bestowing the right to name the objects in nature to Adam. Eve is shown as created out of Adam’s rib, and thus is denied an independent status. (Genesis2:20) The Law book of the Hindus, Manusmiriti offers two diametrically opposite views about women, one
makes her into a goddess and the other turns her into a weaker sex who needs to be protected, as a child by her father as a wife by her husband and when old she should be protected by her son. (V, 148)

Up to the late nineteenth century women did not have much access to education. The Grammar schools refused to enroll girls; the only alternative for girls was to be sent to the private boarding schools. Most girls were taught at home by masters or governesses. They were denied access to public institutions like Eton or universities of Cambridge and Oxford. As a consequence, women were barred from any knowledge about the classical languages, history, political thought and philosophy. Instead they were taught “accomplishments” (Wollstonecraft, 1792:15) such as needlework, drawing, singing and playing the piano which was considered attractive abilities and skills, which would enable girls to secure a husband. Marriage was seen as the only way to obtain upward mobility. The very first sentence from Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice* makes a satirical comment on the contemporary society where marriage was the sole destiny of every young woman and therefore “the single man in possession of a large fortune must be in want of a wife and is considered to be the rightful property of one of their daughters.”(P 8)Anne Bronte’ novel *Agnes Grey* talks about the plight of the women who served as governesses. Elaine Showalter, commenting on Thomas Hardy’s novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, critiques Michael Henchard, the male protagonist who auctions his wife Susan and their infant daughter Elizabeth Jane, as a representative of the patriarchal society. Showalter comments, “Henchard sells not only his wife but his child, a child who can only be a female. Patriarchal societies do not readily sell their sons, but their daughters are for sale sooner or later.” (P 130)

Mary Wollstonecraft, the champion of women’s liberation attacked the philosophers and educators like Rousseau and Dr. Gregory in her critical work, *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) who rendered women as objects of desire and pleaded that women should be treated as human beings. Wollstonecraft strongly pleads for women’s education and their protection by law.

John Stuart Mill, in *The Subjection of Women*, (1869) pleads for empowerment of women through education and earning.
All over the globe women were denied the political rights. The Suffragette Movement headed by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst won for women the voting rights. In New Zealand, women got the voting rights in 1893, in Finland, voting rights came in 1906, Norway, it was 1913, Denmark and Iceland (1915), Soviet Union (1917), and in USA and Britain, women got the voting rights in 1920 and 1928 respectively.

In India, the ancient historical record shows that women enjoyed freedom and an equal status with man; women who chose to remain single and devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge were called *Bramhavadinis*, and they contributed to the literary and philosophical writings in the early Vedic period. Gargi, Maitreyi, Ghosha were some of the well-known figures, who devoted themselves to the pursuit of knowledge. The position of women steadily deteriorated after the later Vedic period. They were restricted to the domestic duties, and were subject to the several social evils like child marriage and sati, where the woman was burnt alive on her husband’s pyre; this inhuman custom was abolished in 1828, under the colonial regime. Upto the late nineteenth century, women did not have access to education. In 1878, the first college for women was started in Calcutta. The social reformers, Savitribai Phule, Maharshi Karve, Pandita Ramabai, Rukhmabai, Ramabai Ranade, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar played a vital role in the empowerment of women.

Though, women obtained access to education, right to vote and the right to earn by the turn of the twentieth century, yet women are perceived as the “other.” Simone de Beauvoir, in her critical work, *The Second Sex,*(1949) argues that woman is a cultural construct…”Woman is not born she becomes…she is called “the sex” by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex – absolute sex, no less … she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other. (P 16)

In Leo Tolstoy’s realist novel, *Anna Karenina (1876)* the woman protagonist Anna Karenina rebels against the institution of marriage and family, she rejects her oppressive husband and engages herself in an extra marital relationship. With a man she loves. Anna tells her husband, “I’m listening to you and thinking about him. I love him, I’m his mistress, I can’t bear it. I’m afraid I
can’t help it I hate you.” (p 264) But the patriarchal system tortures and disgraces her, and compels her to commit suicide.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel, *The Scarlet Letter* (1840) the woman protagonist, Hester Prynne is subjected to public disgrace for committing adultery in the patriarchal society; she braves out the torture calmly, brings up her daughter Pearl independently, and she makes her living all by herself, and leads her life without a man in her life. One can see the vision of a free woman in Hester Prynne.

In Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1983) the woman protagonist Celie, the black American woman is raped by her stepfather and two children born to her are forcibly taken away from her. She is compelled to marry a widower who doesn’t love her. Celie, in the course of time, learns to take charge of her life, she leaves her husband and makes her living taking up a tailor’s job. Celie engages herself in a lesbian relationship, which is seen as a form of radical feminism, with a lounge singer Shug Avery and at the end of the novel, she completely rejects her husband and lives a well-to-do life having inherited her father’s property and is reunited with her sister Nettie whose letters from Africa were obstructed by her husband. Thus Celie asserts her identity as a financially, sexually and emotionally independent woman.

It is through the ideology of feminism and the feminist criticism in literature that women are trying to assert their right of being a human being and to live with dignity. The women’s liberation movement of the 1970 has demanded additional rights for women, which include, equal pay, equal access to education, free contraception and abortion, adequate child care facilities and the right of women to define their sexuality for themselves as an end to discrimination against lesbians and an end to domestic and sexual violence.(Jordan, Weedon, 1995:177)

Just as women suffer in the patriarchal system, the homosexuals, acronymed LGBT suffer in the heterosexual world. They are treated as the other. They are persecuted and harassed. They are seen as irritants and a source of embarrassment in the society.

Catholic Church treats homosexuality as an unnatural act. Though homosexuality came to be legitimized in Britain in the late sixties yet the homosexuals are subject to social exclusion and
humiliation, in a research work on the social history of Britain Andrew Rosen comments that though homosexuality among male adults was decriminalized in Britain in 1967, over 74% respondents to the survey conducted by British Social Attitudes believed that “homosexual relationship was always and is mostly wrong.” Raj Rao critiques the closed mind of the Indian legislative system that treats homosexuality as a “criminal act” under section 377 of the Indian penal code. (2015: 5)

While discussing the “Queer Theory” which talks about Lesbian and gay studies, Anupama Mohan writes, “the gays and lesbians were forced to remain “closeted” if they wished to live a “normal” (read persecution and harassment free) life. It was not until late sixties, that gays and lesbians tried to assert their rights- we are queer, we are here accept it.” (2008: 119)

In Shyam Selvadurai’s novel, Funny Boy, (1993) the protagonist, Arjie who unconsciously evinces feminine propensity and who wants to play the role of a bride in the bride –bride game played by the juveniles, is treated as a “funny boy” by the heterosexual society. The Uncle comments, “You have a funny one there.” Arjie is perceived as an irritant and a source of embarrassment by his parents. As an adolescent Arjie realizes his sexual preference when he is offered love by Sheshan in the garage. Though he suffers a “homopanic” state, at the end of the novel Arjie acknowledges his homosexual choice and very symbolically he jumbles up the poem to show his defiance of the heterosexual world represented by the principal who tortures Sheshan. Subsequently he turns away from the heterosexual world of his parents and asserts his homosexual identity as follows:

When we came out of the classroom, the school song had started…I walked to the gallery and looked at the audience, my eyes came to rest on my parents. As gazed at Amma, I felt a sudden sadness. What had happened between Sheshan and me over last few days had changed my relationship with her forever. I was no longer a part of the family in the same way. (p 28)

Mentally and physically challenged or the abnormal are treated as the “other” in the so- called normal society. The victims of the different types of disabilities are thrown out of the mainstream of life. They are subject to discrimination, isolation, exploitation and ridicule. Disability is perceived as social stigma and a curse of fate. Nilika Mehrotra, a researcher in sociology, comments in her paper on disability as follows:
The disabled are recognized as a social category for their special needs...they are not seen as complete or normal persons and their handicaps are often exaggerated and they are made to feel inferior... ridicules are hurled at them and they are addressed by terms like *Surdas*(Visually challenged) *langdi* or *Langda* (limb deformed) *bawala* or *bawali* (mentally challenged)... family is a site of social oppression of the disabled. (p 161)

Bhupinder Zutshi talks about the discrimination meted out the mentally and physically challenged as follows:

Persons with disabilities are often excluded from the mainstream of the society and are denied their human rights. Both de jure and de facto discrimination against the disabled have long history and takes various forms. They range from the invidious discrimination such as the denial of the educational opportunities, to more subtle forms of discrimination such as segregation and isolation because of the imposition of the physical and social barriers... the discrimination has been severe in fields such as education employment housing transport, cultural life and access to public places and services. (2013:139)

Sociologist Ervin Goffman says that madness is seen as social stigma. In his critical work *Asylums*, he describes mental hospitals as built on a “power dynamic in which patients were abased as a way not of curing mental illness but of asserting the power and authority of the psychiatric and mental health professionals.” (cited by Faggen, 1962:2)

Sigmund Freud who identifies mental illness in the form of depression, anxiety, and a state of mental paralysis, traces the cause of mental illness in childhood trauma, in the psychosexual stages of development, and in the repression of desires pushed into the unconscious, and suggests psychoanalysis as a panacea which can be executed through dialogue between the psychiatrist and the patient. Talking about the psycho-analytical method Peter Barry comments as follows:

psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and the unconscious elements in the mind; the classic method is to get the patient to talk freely in such a way that the repressed fears and conflicts are brought to the conscious mind and openly faced rather than remaining buried in the unconscious mind. ((2010:92)

In Ken Kasey’s novel *One Flew Over Cuckoo’s Nest*,(1962) the mentally challenged are oppressed by the nurse Ratchet in the psychiatric institution. She ill-treats, intimidates and tries to control the lives of the mentally challenged inmates. The protagonist McMurphy who tries to
rebel against the oppression is lobotomized and is reduced to a vegetative existence. It is the character, Bromden who is called “Chief” who feigns being deaf and dumb to escape the institutional oppression and at the end of the novel manages to free himself by breaking through the glass pane. Feigning madness is seen as a solution to the institutional oppression.

In Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein* (1819) the character Frankenstein who is physically and mentally different, and who evinces atavistic tendencies is treated as a social misfit and is addressed as fiend, monster, insect etc, by his creator Victor Frankenstein, but Frankenstein asserts his identity by calling himself “Adam” (95 )and by expressing his resolution to live a happy life.

Post–Colonial theory and literature does not merely talk about the problems posed due to colonization; it also talks about the solution to the problem by creating a new identity or an alternative identity for the oppressor and the oppressed by jettisoning colonialism ultimately from their minds, which creates a world based on equality, liberty and fraternity, which ensures a dignity to all. It can be witnessed in the vision of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*, or World: One Family, manifested in the Vedas. A way out of marginality can be found in the philosophy of Gandhism, Marxism and Sufism.

Gandhism refers to the philosophy or principles adopted by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who is hailed as the prophet of truth and non-violence. Gandhi was one of the chief architects of the Indian freedom struggle and the ideologue, who fought against injustice and racial discrimination meted out to the people of Indian origin, in South Africa. Both the struggles against oppression, led by MK Gandhi were characterized by non-violence and peaceful resistance or *Satyagraha*, which means triumph of the truth. Gandhi who came from the Hindu Baniya community from the present state of Gujarat in India was a devout Hindu. Gandhi equated religion with morality. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Hindu scripture, The *Bhagwad Gita*. At different phases of life he was guided by the benign principles of Hinduism but at the same time, he strongly opposed the practice of untouchability, which in his opinion was a stigma on humanity. He was also influenced by Jainism and Buddhism, which stand for non-violence, love and compassion for all beings. Gandhi was positively responsive to those aspects of Christianity that dovetailed into the vision of humanity. Gandhism stands for the dignity of labour, which he justi-
fied in his commune at Johannesburg, in South Africa, calling it the Tolstoy farm. Gandhi was profusely influenced by Leo Tolstoy and John Ruskin’s *Unto This Last* (1860) that talked about the plight of the industrial labour.

Gandhi’s two writings *The Autobiography: My Experiments with Truth, and Hind Swaraj* (1909) offer a vision of the shaping of the superior consciousness and a blue print for the evolution of the entire mankind. Gandhi strongly opposes materialism as an evil that was responsible for the exploitation of the colonized Afro Asian nations, but he could see it as an evil that destroyed the so called civilized European nations that had fallen a victim to exploitation and destruction due to war. In his opinion civilization is the moral progress or evolution of mankind and not the material advancement. He also talks about the peaceful co- existence of the diverse religious faiths through the principle of love. Freedom from anger and fear is seen as the key to the development of the true strength.

Gandhi believed in the equality of all, which came to be manifested in the philosophy of *Sarvodaya*, which implies the rise of all. He opposed the idea of the private property. It also believes in respecting and conserving the environment. Gandhi believed that there is enough for everyone’s need but not for the greed. Thus Gandhi’s vision is autonomous and universal. His vision tries to liberate the enslaved soul of man and frees it as a positive effort in cooperation with his fellow beings. Gandhism has inspired the people all over the world. The philosophy of Marxism and socialism emerged as a reaction to the evils of the modern political economy that came up in the wake of the capitalism and the industrial revolution. The vision of the creation of the international classless community with the abolition of private property is a humanistic vision that fired the imagination of the intellectuals all over the world and especially the erst-while colonies. Though it is recorded as the God that Failed, yet the importance and the relevance of the principle and the zeal for the liberation of the proletariat which represents the oppressed masses enshrined in the Marxist world view does not diminish. The *Communist Manifesto, (1848)* offers the blueprint of his thoughts and plans for the future society. It navigates the working class of all the countries to emancipation from the oppressive capitalism through a triumphant revolution of the proletarian. Marx says:
Communist Revolution would put an end to exploitation once and for all together with every type of social enslavement and the parasitic existence of some men at the expense of the others. National oppression would be eradicated, colonial oppression and bloody wars would disappear forever, there would be plenty of material production and rapid development of the productive forces which would be used for the comprehensive satisfaction of the material and the spiritual requirement of all members of the society. (Collected works, vol-6, 506)

The researcher agrees with Yuri Sdobnikov, who observes in his biography of Karl Marx the relevance of the humanistic philosophy of Marxism as follows:

The ideas of the scientific communism set out in the Manifesto were an expression of genuine humanism and charted the real way of realizing the age old aspiration of laboring mankind its urge to be rid of oppression and live in freedom, equality brotherhood, peace and happiness. (Yuri Sdobnikov, 153)

The element of love and empathy embedded in the philosophy of Sufism, which believes in the unity of all forms of existence, has the potential to liberate mankind from the evils of oppression by achieving superior consciousness or enlightenment through love. Sufism does not believe in the divisive principle of “the East must ever be East and the West must ever be West.” (Lessing, 1994:193) It is an ancient “spiritual freemasonry” (Graves, 1964: 8) whose origins have never been identified. The Sufis don’t take much interest in such researches. They are contented with the idea that their own realm of thought can be traced in diverse religions and historical periods. Sufism is not restricted by any religious dogma and the Sufi feels at home in every religion. Sufism basically believes in the evolutionary potential of every soul. A true Sufi questions the authority, he is anti-establishment, and it is a belief which talks about spirituality and applies its humane principles to solve the problems faced by mankind in the practical world. It is scientific in its approach and sees life in every living and non-living thing. Pointing out the salient features of Sufism, Robert Graves comments as follows:

Sufism has gained an oriental flavor from having been long protected by Islam but the natural Sufi may be as common in the west as in the East, and may come dressed as general a peasant a merchant a lawyer, a school master a house wife, anything. ‘To be in the world but not of it’ free from ambition, greed, intellectual pride, blind obedience to custom or awe of persons higher in rank– that is the Sufi ideal. It aims at establishing social harmony and achieving enlightenment through love. (P 8)