Chapter II
Nature and Texture of Dalit and African American Autobiography
Dalit and African American autobiographies represent the world of traditional Indian and American society. The Indian society was divided due to the *Varna* system. Dalits had to do menial jobs like skinning the dead animals and cleaning the village. They earned their livelihood by doing odd jobs such as cattle tending, working as watchmen and when they were unable to get jobs they resorted to robbery. On the other hand, African Americans were brought to America as untrained workers. Cruel treatment was meted out to them and they were denied all the necessities of life. The revolutionary movements of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in India and Black Panther Movement in America, Dalit and African Americans were inspired to take education. Their education enabled them to describe their agonies, sorrows and sufferings in their autobiographies.

Dalit and African American Autobiographies possess the potential to be served as social and political documents of caste and race ridden India and America. One cannot think that the suffering, oppression, exploitation and maltreatment they experienced in ancient India and America had actually happened. Let us make a quick comment on the content and
community of the autobiographies one by one, starting with Dalit Autobiographies. 

*Upara - An Outsider*, the autobiography of Laxman Mane is a landmark in Dalit Literature. It gives a vivid account of the writer’s struggle within the caste structure of the Hindu society. The author had no pretensions to become a writer, nor was he engaged with any literary activity. He writes because he wants to tell the experiences of struggle, oppression, exploitation and agonies to the society. Laxman Mane belongs to the Kaikadi community. His unending struggle started from his childhood and it reached its peak after his inter-caste marriage.

The Kaikadi tribe is a nomadic tribe. The people from these tribes have been moving from one place to other for generations together, loading their hearth and home on the backs of donkeys, selling baskets made up of cane, doing seasonal jobs like cattle tending and working in farms during harvesting. When they are unable to get anything they beg in the villages. They have no records of their birth-death. They remember their birth dates as per seasons or important incidents. Laxman explained that his birth date was remembered by his father because he was born on the day when Mahatma Gandhi died.

Since hundreds of years Kaikadis have been wandering in the darkness of illiteracy. They have their own rules, laws, customs and traditions. Their disputes are solved within the community Panchayat. If anyone disobeys the judgment of the Panchayat his complete family is excommunicated from the society. Excommunication meant that nobody would dare to touch him. They are served food and water from a distance; and nobody
from the family is neither invited nor permitted to attend marriages. No marital relations would be allowed with such person. This is an example of social exploitation and the tragedy of Kaikadi Community that they are exploited by their own community and by the Hindu society at large.

Kaikadis have to inform the village chief of their arrival in the town and provide all the information of their belongings. They are allowed to live out of towns in huts under the trees. Kaikadis were treated as untouchables. Anybody who accidentally touched a Kaikadi would bathe again. Women from the villages served them water and food by keeping distance. They were not allowed to attend auspicious ceremonies like marriages, engagements, birthdays, etc. They were denied to sit and speak with the high class people in the villages. Laxman was humiliated when he went to attend marriage ceremony along with his friends. He was forced to leave half eaten meal because of his birth in a Kaikadi family. Laxman recalls:

The row was full of Maratha children. Then there came a bearer who happened to be from our village and an invitee to the wedding. As he approached me, he opened his eyes wide, bent down and thundered- Son of a Kaikadi low caste! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out! 1.

When Laxman’s father came to know that his son had attended a marriage of a high caste friend and polluted the whole ceremony, he beat Laxman very cruelly. Kaikadis believed that they were untouchables and they had no right to participate in the marriages of high class people and eat along with them. This is an example of self – exploitation.

Hunger plays a very vital role in the autobiography. There is physical and psychological hunger in the life of Laxman Mane. The
Kaikadi’s have to work hard for earning meals. They sell baskets of cane in villages which are distributed to them otherwise they have to beg in the villages and Laxman was no exception. He too, had to beg in the village. His mother and father went in the villages for selling the baskets and other articles. Laxman and his sister starved in the hut as there was nothing to eat. Laxman’s mother usually received stale food from the villagers which was their routine meal. Laxman recalls:

Mother had brought lots of bhakari. Three of these were given by the village chief’s wife. She had also given the leftovers of the night before. In addition, the women whose baskets mother had mended had given her something or the other which she had packed in the loose end of her sari. Mother had borrowed some buttermilk from somewhere. She had also brought some flat loaves, drum stick curry, sauce, pickle all stale and of course collected as alms. Mother would sell some baskets in the village, mend the old ones and in exchange acquire all this food. We ate all it. This was our everyday meal.

The above passage illustrates the economic, social and cultural conditions of the Kaikadis. They don’t have proper food, no clothes, and no houses; they often eat stale food which is given to them in exchange of cane baskets. Laxman never received good food like sweets and chapattis. He was always haunted with questions like, why he was not able to take good food like high caste people? Why he was not allowed to attend school like other children? These questions inspired him to take education and to achieve all the amenities like high class people.

Laxman’s father admitted him to school but he was always teased by his classmates because of his low caste, clothing and his Kaikadi dialect. But,
Laxman went to school regularly and he never paid attention towards the teasing and mocking. Laxman was unable to understand anything at school. He was ignorant about book; notebook, pen and pencil, as no one from his family and also from his community had ever attended school. Laxman’s oppression was same in all the villages. He was always teased by his schoolmates. They never tried to speak to him and Laxman also didn't feel like speaking to them. Laxman states:

I was going to school regularly, when we made a halt in a village, I had to go to school of that village. Now I was used to it. I do not mix with the other students. They too were not prepared to approach me.

Laxman realized that education was the only way to overcome all the sufferings and so, he went to school regularly and studied hard.

Kaikadis have their own rules and norms. They have their own customs and traditions. They celebrate festivals by taking loan from the village Sahukar. They offer goats to the god for fulfilling their wishes, keeping them and their families in a good condition. Kaikadis, in a helpless condition, turned towards begging and robbing. They were hungry for food, education, equality, liberty and identity. Laxman Mane, very courageously has narrated all the sorrows and sufferings of a community that was wandering in the darkness of suppression and exploitation. All the incidents from the autobiography are a picture of the contemporary social, economical, political and anthropological conditions of the Kaikadi community and the Indian society at large. This autobiography is a reliable document of the past.

Laxman Gaikwad through his autobiography *Uchalya- The Branded* provides a canvass for the agonies of tribal community and he laments the fact that they were branded as notorious thieves. Laxman Gaikwad like
Laxman Mane was not related with any literary movement. Laxman Gaikwad was the only person who brought out the problems of Uchalya community for the first time. Laxman, the protagonist of the autobiography himself had suffered immensely because he was also branded as a thief. Exploitation, maltreatment and oppression are inseparable elements of Laxman’s life. Laxman could educate himself formally after a lot of struggle against the caste system and economic constraints. Since he knows the importance of education he was always willingly ready to help the needy ones to learn and receive education.

What is Uchalya?

Uchalya is the name of a tribe which was notified as ‘criminals’ under the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act first passed in 1871 and subsequently amended from time to time. For thousands of years many tribes have been living in India almost unknown to the so-called sophisticated society. They have been mostly wanderers shifting from place to place in search of odd jobs such as harvesting, cattle tending, stone cutting and mostly seasonally available jobs or hunting wild animals. They have been in a way outcasts lower than the lowest scheduled -castes. They were on the bottom most rung of the social hierarchical ladder the politics, education, religion, economics of the main stream – the society never touched them and they had been living in their own world of superstition of primitive norms of justice and of ignorance. Denied of all decent and lawful means of livelihood the only alternative left to these people was to exist by thieving or pick pocketing. The higher castes and classes have exploited the miserable, helpless situation of these people for their own selfish purposes for years together. This may be the only community in the
world branded as inherent criminals by birth. Everyone in this community feels smothered and suffocated in the social environment in which he or she is forced to live.

*Uchalya* were treated as untouchables and branded as thieves. They were not allowed to live in the village, and had to live out of the village generally, near the cremation ground. They were not allowed to touch anything without permission. They had to keep distance while talking with the people of higher classes. They were not allowed to raise their voice against the upper class person. They had to do whatever work was given to them otherwise they would be severely beaten up by the villagers till he died.

People from the Uchalya, Kaikadi and Mahar castes were denied the right to take water from public wells. Laxman narrates one such incident when a person from a Wadar community – a low caste, was killed by the upper caste people for drawing water from a public well. Laxman says:

> Maratha hooligans from the village Sindhwadi had attacked the Wadar community of the place because they had taken water from a public well. Hanmanta wadar was killed in the attack. The Marathas then brought pressure on the wadars forcing them to bury him in the village. 4.

Ancient India was completely under the influence of caste system. High caste people gave more importance to caste rather than human life, therefore they mercilessly killed Hanmanta Wadar.

Uchalya’s were treated like animals. Just as animals were taken to the fair with passes on their neck, Uchalaya’s had to seek permission from the Police Patil to leave village and had to inform the Police Patil their reasons for going out of village and also the number of days. Laxman’s family
members were engaged in thieving, and his brother stole grains from the farms. Sometimes they got handsome money and other times they were caught by the villagers and beaten to death. Laxman recalls:

If a domesticated animal tied to a peg is not given its usual feed its ration of grass, it growls, grumbles and cries out. Then at night when it stand the gnawing hunger no more it, pulls and tugs at rope tied to the peg till the rope snaps. It then runs falls on the devours whatever crop it can eat in who so ever’s farm it may be standing in. when satiated fully it returns to its place. The farmer, whose crop has been so eaten and destroyed, tracks down the animal by its foot marks and locks only when due fine is paid. In the same way whenever my brother is caught and imprisoned his release is obtained by paying lawyer and the court necessary fees, fines and the bail amount. Hence I feel there is no difference between my brothers and cattle. 5.

Uchalya’s were often harassed by the police. For any theft that occurred in the village, the police directly went to their huts and explored the things beating all the family members. The Police are for protecting people, but, here in the case of Uchalyas Police proved to be robbers. They extorted bribe from the poor people or beat them to death. Police build houses and feather their nests on the earnings of these thieves. They confiscated the alleged stolen goods, another articles of the Pardhis but never mentioned it in their registers. The goods in good condition were shared by the police among themselves. On many occasions the Pardhis showed receipts for the goods confiscated. But the police tore these receipts and misappropriated the goods. The poor pardhis are helpless. Their plight is like that of a miserable dumb woman in a well known as the saying goes – a dumb woman complains but there’s neither a whimper nor a howl. Laxman narrates:
The society refuses to accept them and the police instead of protecting them harass them. A pardhi house has hardly more than 3 or 4 aluminum utensils. Even then a pardhi is regarded as a notorious thief, but an officer who amasses cores of rupees in underhand and corrupt dealings is treated with dignity and respect.

Hunger was the major problem for these people. As they were branded ‘thieves’ no one was ready to give them permanent jobs. They indulged in odd jobs such as harvesting, cattle tending and other seasonable jobs – so they had to migrate from one town to another in search of livelihood. They eat wild animals like rats, rabbits, mongoos, deer, iguanas, fox, patridges ducks, cranes, doves, tortoise, fish, wild cats, pigeons, pigs, crabs, sheep, goats, water hens, peacocks.

Laxman described his condition in the following paragraph that when hunger became unbearable for Laxman he went to the cremation ground and ate the offerings made to the evil spirit. Laxman narrates:

Sometimes hunger gnawed at my intestines so much that I went in search of offerings made to evil spirits. In the month of Shravan on full moon days and new moon days parents made offerings of the food and coconuts to propitiate evil spirits if their children were seriously ill. Such offering were found in cremation yards, supposedly the hunt of evil spirits. On one occasion we lived only on water for 8 or 9 days. On these days I used to put my arms round father’s neck and weep bitterly for food. I used to make rounds of rubbish heaps and search for dried mango stones and tamarind seeds, collect them and roast them and eat them.

To quench the fire of hunger Laxman went to marriages and collected leftovers. Laxman was caught by the food server and was whipped and cursed bitterly. The lower caste people in India were denied even the basic necessities of life.
Laxman had a great desire to learn, become a successful man and to bring out his family out of the wretchedness of casteism. Laxman’s father worked as a watchman in a farm. He noticed the importance of education and instead of giving blade in his child’s hand he gave him pencil, slate and admitted him to the primary school. Many times, Laxman went to school without food. Laxman had to walk 4 to 5 k.m. daily to attend school but he regularly and sincerely attended school. The village school was only upto 4th class but Laxman had to go to Babhulgaon in Solapur district for secondary education.

Laxman Gaikwad belongs to the Uchalya community so he was treated like an untouchable. Upper caste people spoke to them from a distance. But this distance vanished when Laxman Gaikwad learnt to sing Abhangas and the Kirtans. He also learnt to read the Shivlilamrut and the Ramayana. He was treated honourably and permitted to sit in baithaks where only Marathas and Brahmins were present. These facts reinforce the impact of education and its power to bring a revolutionary change in the thinking of the society. Laxman Gaikwad was the only person from the Uchalaya community who sought education and inspired many to take education. He penned all the sorrows, sufferings and maltreatment of the Uchalya community very humbly in *The Branded*. Hence *Uchalya – The Branded* is a trustworthy document of the traditional Indian society.

*Against All Odds*, the autobiography of Kishore Kale brings out the suffering of the Kolhati community- a nomadic tribe and also the sufferings of an illegitimate child. At the beginning of the autobiography Kishore has described the sufferings of his mother and in later part he describes his struggle for education.

**Who are Kolhati’s ?**
The Kolhati community is originally a nomadic Rajasthani tribe that migrated to Western Maharashtra. They first earned their livelihood by performing acrobatic acts, but soon turned to the more lucrative business of dance. Women of the community were trained in dance and music, and forced to entertain men and earn money while the males of the community lived on the earnings of their women folk. However, though, the men made their sisters and daughters dance to their selfish tunes, their wives were never allowed to do so. Kolhati men rarely married within the tribe. They roamed from village to village and abducted any young woman they fancied. Through a simple ceremony called melhi, she was made a Kolhati. Acceptance into the community came through the jaat panchyat, a group of powerful men who controlled the community. Daughters of the Kolhati community lead a far harsher life. They are sold for their virginity at puberty and are usually abandoned when they get pregnant. That is why Kolhati children bear their mother’s name, a fact that proclaims their illegitimacy and causes most of them to drop out of school rather than face the social derision.

The Kolhati’s developed a distinct style of dance and song called ‘lavani’. The music has more rhythm than melody and the songs are loud and full of double entrance. The dance itself is designed to attract male attention and it is called tamasha.

The Kolhati’s have their own traditions, customs and lifestyle. The men from this community look after the children and women went to earn their livelihood. Kishore Kale narrates:

The Kolhati community forces its women to dance to attract male attention. Young and teenaged virgins are given to men in a ceremony called ‘chira utarna’ with all the trapping of a wedding but none of its sanctity. The man pays a prefixed
price for her virginity. As long as he visits her, she does not
dance on stage and does not see any other man. But if she is
abandoned by the man she has to go back to the stage and
earn money which is appropriated by her father and brothers.
A Kolhati community survives on the money earned by the
women of the family. The men consider any labour below
their dignity. Their wives do not dance, but all other female
relatives are made to step on the floorboards of the dancing
stage. They are given no part of their earnings; in fact they are
given nothing at all return.

The above passage narrates the truth about women from the Kolhati
community. The tragedy of their lives is that they are forced into the
darkness of Tamasha by their fathers and brothers who are supposed to be
a woman’s protectors and providers. Fathers and brothers literally sold
their daughters and sisters under the ceremony of Chira Utarna to the
highest bidder for her virginity. The same happened with Kishore’s
mother. She was given to Namdeorao Jagtap by her father. Kale’s mother-
Shantabai Kale was harassed by her father. Shantabai wanted to get
educated and become a teacher but her father admitted her in dance and
music classes and forced her to work in Tamasha. When Shanta was a
tenager her Chira Utarna ceremony was performed by her family with
Namdeorao Jagtap. After conception, She was abandoned by Jagtap.
Shanta gave birth to Kishore- who was called as an illegitimate child and
always harassed in the school and society. Shanta again joined tamasha for
her family. There she came in contact with Krushnarao Wadkar and went
with him to Parbhani as his wife. Marriage also could not put an end to her
sufferings. Wadkar was a moneylender in Parbhani but he bad habits of
going to tamasha and gambling and thus lost all wealth in gambling and in
tamasha. In frustration, Wadkar always beat Shantabai. The same situation
has to be faced by Kishore’s aunts Jiji, Baby, Susheela. Jiji was very badly treated by her father Kondiba. Jiji had 25 acres land in her name but her father always took away all the earnings from the farm without giving a single rupee to Jiji. Jiji was paralyzed and all the family members left her alone in the farm house to die. When Kishore came to take her to the hospital Kondiba refused and asked money to send Jiji with him to the hospital. All the family members were living on her earnings and in her difficult days they were not ready to take care of her. This is the tragedy of Kolhati women. For Kolhati’s, a woman is only for earning money and once she has stopped earning they throw her into storehouse. Kishore felt very sad and by observing such a heart rendering situation he was haunted with questions like:

Has a woman no right to her own life? Is the only aim of our lives to provide a livelihood to our fathers and brothers? It is sin to be born a beautiful woman in a Kolhati family?.

Kishore was Shanta’s illegitimate child. He did not know about his father’s identity and Shanta also did not tell him about his father. Shanta went with Krushnarao Wadkar to Sonpeth leaving Kishore behind. Kishore was brought up by his aunt Jiji. Shanta was refused by Wadkar to take Kishore with her as he was an illegitimate child. Shanta had no time for Kishore. After Kishore’s birth Shanta again joined Tamasha. She had no time even to breast feed Kishore. Kishore describes:

Bai had no time to spare for me. All night she was on the stage singing and dancing, all day she rested and dealt with the men who visited the group’s rooms. A tamasha dancer has no time for her own children. Bai often had no time even to breast fed me.
Kishore was hungry for his mother’s love. He was dying to live with her but she abandoned him when he was an infant. Kishore from his childhood wondered why his mother had abandoned him. In frustration he abused her. Kishore faced humiliation in school because of his caste and unknown identity of his father. He did not know who his father was. Kishore’s mother also abandoned him and he had to be registered by his mother’s name in school. Kishore describes his being teased by his schoolmates thus:

Attendance was taken every morning at school and Guruji called out my name- “Kishore Shantabai kale”. All the children laughed and teased me “where is your father? ” they asked.

Kishore took education up to seventh class in his village Neral. For higher studies he went to Sonpeth towards his mother, Shantabai. The difference in both villages was that at Neral only one teacher taught all subjects but in Sonpeth different teachers taught different subjects and in English language. Before that Kishore was in Marathi Medium and it became very difficult for him to understand English. Literally he did not know what ‘leaf’ meant. This language problem did not prove to be a barrier in the way of education and with hard efforts Kishore successfully overcame it. After matriculation he chose to study Science. College classes were not sufficient for Kishore to understand science so he decided to join private classes but because of poverty he couldn’t join the classes. He studied with his own method and became successful. Kishore stood second among the backward class students in twelfth class examination. He received a call from Grant Medical College, Mumbai and got admission to MBBS. Poverty was a major problem for Kishore. He
could not arrange his day to day meal also. Kishore accepted the job of an assistant doctor in a hospital during night. Continuous night shift proved uncomfortable for him. He dozed in the classes. Kishore left that job and started business of selling readymade shirts in Parbhani which he purchased from Mumbai at low cost. Kishore was always in economic trouble. He asked Krushnarao Wadkar to arrange money for him but he failed to arrange. Kishore went to his aunt Nagin and asked for money. She helped him and with her help and with his small work he completed his MBBS. In the final examination Kishore was asked to pay bribe by the examiner. Kishore refused to pay the bribe and as a result he failed in the examination. Next year, Kishore completed his MBBS. A small boy from a Kolhati community became a doctor which was a very rare achievement by Kishore and he proved thus an inspiration for the whole society. All the three Dalit autobiographies have similar background and circumstances. All the three autobiographers Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikwad and Kishore Kale are from the same background i.e. low caste, Mahar. They experienced poverty, hunger and superstition. All the autobiographers are first from their communities to document the past, agonies with the help of words. Dalit autobiographies are documents of contemporary social conditions.

Now we will assess African American Autobiographies.

Frederick Douglass’s autobiography *My Bondage My Freedom* attempts, with painstaking verisimilitude to reproduce a system of signs that we call Plantation culture from the initial paragraph of the first chapter:

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough and about 12 miles from Easton in Talbot country, Maryland. I have no
accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday, they seldom come nearer to it that planting-time harvest time, cherry time, spring time, or fall time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of up happiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages, I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed such inquiries on the past of a slave improper and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between 27 and 28 years of age. I come to this from hearing my master say, sometimes during 1835, I was about 17 years old.12.

We see an ordering of the world based on a profoundly relational type of thinking in which a strict barrier of difference or opposition forms the basis of claps rather than and in other classification schemes an ordering based on resemblances or the identity of two or more elements. In the text these binary oppositions produced through separation the most inflexible of barriers, that of meaning. Slaves were restricted for each and every act. Their day starts early in the morning does not end late in the night. They were kept in such an ignorant condition that they did not know their birth dates. Though slaves have families they were not allowed to share the happiness because of the cruel rules of slavery. The slave holders thought that if slaves united together they would rebel. Though Douglass had brothers and sisters they were not able to share their happiness and sorrows to each other. Douglass narrates:

Brothers and sisters we were by blood, but slavery had made us strangers. I heard the words brother and sisters and knew they must mean something but slavery had robbed these terms
of their true meaning. The conditions of brotherly and sisterly feeling were wanting – we had never nestled and played together. 13.

Slaves were not allowed to have families. Though they had families, they were separated from each other. Children were separated from parents, therefore the children did not know about their mother and father and even they did not know their exact birthdates. Usually Slave masters seduced their slaves. Slave master was their father. Douglass was also born by such relations. The masters were fathers to slaves who could sell their children to anybody, who would pay more money to him. That’s why Douglass was shifted from one master to the other continuously.

Slaves were treated like animals by their masters. They were forced to work continuously through day and night. They were not allowed to rest while working, very little time was given to them for having meal in the afternoon. Plantation was their home and family. In exchange of tiring hard work, very low quality of food, clothes and shelter were arranged for the salves. Douglass narrates:

The men and women slaves received as their monthly allowance of food, eight pounds of pickled pork, or their equivalent in fish. The pork was often tainted and the fish was of the poorest quality – herrings which would bring very little if offered for sale in any northern market. This was the entire monthly allowance of a full grown slave working constantly in the open field from morning until night, everyday in the month except Sunday and living on a fraction more than a quarter of a pound of meat per day, and less than a pack of cornmeal per week. The yearly allowance of clothing for the slaves on this plantation consisted of two linen shirts- such linen as the coarsest crash towels are made of one pair of trousers and a jacket of woolen, most slazily put together for winter one pair of yarn stockings, and one pair of shoes of the coarsest description. The slave entire apparel could not have cost more than 8 dollars per year.14.
Slavery was legalized in America. Separate laws were created. But the laws were in favour of the Americans as they were made to defend them against their cruelties and injustices to slaves. Because of these laws of slavery Americans became more powerful and cruel. They also shot dead their slaves for their single mistake. Douglass narrates:

Laws for the protection of the lives of the slaves are as they must needs be utterly incapable of being enforced, where the very parties who are nominally protected are not permitted to give evidence in courts of law against the only class of persons from whom abuse outrage and might be reasonably apprehended. While I heard of numerous murders committed by slaveholders on the eastern shore of Maryland, I never knew a solitary instance in which a slaveholder was either hung or imprisoned for having murdered a slave. The usual pretext for killing a slave is that the slave has offered resistance should a slave when assaulted but raise his hand in self-defense the white assaulting party is fully justified by southern or Maryland, public opinion in shooting a slave down.15.

Slave masters took lot of services from them and in exchange gave them very low quality food and clothes. The slaves went to their work early in the morning and came late in the night, and all the while their children were left alone in their houses. They starved until their mother came back from work. Douglass has described about himself that due to hunger he always fought with the dog.

Douglass’s life was full of exploitation, maltreatment and suffering. Many a time Douglass wanted to leave the way and on the basis of his strong desire he overcome all the barriers and proved a great success. This autobiography documents the contemporary social conditions in America.
In 1901 Booker T. Washington’s *Up From Slavery* appeared. It offers a perfect illustration of the African American Autobiographer’s assumption of the public mantle. Instead of apology or the justification of rebellion one finds in *Up from Slavery* gratitude - even joy – that the self has been swept along by the current and acknowledged for aiding its progressive flow. Moral upliftment and financial success quickly run together as Washington accepts economic man as the norm in his own ascent from ignorance, poverty and vice to property ownership and a sound bank account. Washington was simply an imitator of the commercial industrial utterances that guided his age. Compared to others, we can notice that this autobiography is different and a source of inspiration. No doubt there is description of contemporary social conditions but on the other side it is blended with principles of success in business and the conduct of the moral life in an industrialist society.

Booker was born in a log cabin of about 14 by 16 square feet. Booker did not know who his father was nor did he know about his mother. Because the masters never bothered to keep the birth-death record of the slaves. He was denied education as the schools were only for the Whites and Blacks had no right to attend the school. Booker went to school along with his mistress where he saw all the students with books in their hand. For Washington, going to school was like going to paradise. Booker as a slave experienced exploitation and maltreatment of the hands of plantation owner. He had to work very hard. Booker grabbed a job which was beyond his capacity in the coal mine and also continued his primary education.

Booker felt nervous that he did not experience togetherness with his family. When the boys were became hungry, they took their meal separately and not like other children together. Booker describes:
I cannot remember a single instance during my childhood or earlyhood when our entire family sat down to the table together and God’s blessing was asked and family ate a meal in a civilized manner.16.

Very low quality of food was given to slaves on the Plantation. Washington described that the slave owners did not feel any difference between animals and slaves. Sometimes slaves were treated beyond animals. On the plantation, at Virginia, the meals were served to children and other slaves in a big vessel and as per one’s strength he achieved the place around the vessel and took more quantity of meal than the other.

The slaves did not have proper clothes to wear- they had to use very rough clothes called flax which injured the skin and it is very difficult to wear that clothes for many days- Booker had no leather shoes to wear so he used to wear shoes made up of wood and leather covering. It became difficult for Booker to walk. Booker describes:

The first pair of shoes that I recall wearing were wooden ones. They had rough leather on the tops, but the bottoms, which were about an inch thick, were of wood. When I walked they made a fearful noise and besides this they were very inconvenient since there was no yielding to the natural pressure of the foot. In the portion of Virginia where I lived it was common to use flax as part of clothing for the slaves. The part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuge which of course was the cheapest and roughest part.17.

Booker was admitted to Hampton Institute. His way to Hampton Institute was not easy it was full of problems. Money was the major problem for him and that was overcome by his brother, who was working in a coal mine. Booker was encouraged by his neighbors who gave a nickel and handkerchief to him, at the same time his mother was very ill though he
departed to Hampton for education. The Hampton Institute played a crucial role in the life of Booker T. Washington. It is because of the Hampton Institute that Booker got name and fame and started Tuskegee Institute for the upliftment of the African Americans. Booker T. Washington started Tuskegee Institute for African Americans to give them academic, commercial, industrial and trade education for development. Booker believed that African Americans would be successful if they came out of darkness with industrial training and academics.

Booker suffered because of his race. He had to live in miserable conditions in the childhood. Usually, in childhood all the children are engaged in playing and enjoying but Booker rendered his childhood by working in Salt furnace and in a coal mine. Booker suffered because of his colour and race. On the way to Hampton Institute the vehicle in which Booker was traveling failed. All the White passengers accommodated themselves in the hotel. When Booker went to the hotel, the Manager straightly refused him entry into the hotel because of his race and colour. Washington spent whole night without clothes and in hunger out of the hotel. Washington recalls:

After all the other passengers had been shown rooms and were getting ready for supper, I shyly presented myself before the man at the desk. It is true I had practically no money in my pocket with which to pay for bed or food but I had hoped in some way to beg my way into the good graces to the landlord, for at that season in the mountains of the Virginia the whether was cold and I wanted to get indoors for the night. Without asking as to whether I had any money, the man at the desk firmly refused to even consider the matter of providing me with food or lodging.18.
Washington has described each and every incident about how he started the Tuskegee Institute and the problems, sorrows, his efforts and his wife’s efforts, his maltreatment and exploitation by community members and society at large. This autobiography is a document of the contemporary social condition.

*Black Boy*, autobiography of Richard Wright. This autobiography broached the problem of racially mixed children. It is a saga of exploitation, maltreatment, oppression, suppression of the African Americans in contemporary America.

In *Black Boy* Wright describes the hateful relationship between African Americans and Whites. After the civil war African Americans were declared free from slavery. Though they were independent, quarrels in between Blacks and Whites did not stop. Blacks were limited to certain colonies and Whites as well. If anyone of them crossed their boundaries they pelted stones at each other. Wright recalls:

> The round house was the racial boundary of the neighborhood and it had been tacitly agreed between Black boys and white boys that the Whites were to keep to the far side of the roundhouse and we blacks were to keep to outside. Whenever we caught a white boy on our side we stoned him, if we strayed to their side they stoned us. Our battles were real and boldly we threw rocks, cinders, coal sticks, pieces of iron and broker bottles and while we threw them we longed for ever deadlier weapons.19.

Another instance of the hate relation between Blacks and Whites –

Richard was working as a water boy in a brickyard. The brick yard owner had a dog. One day that dog bit Richard. Richard complained about the incident to the owner but then the owner said:
A dog bite can’t hurt nigger. It’s swelling and it hurt’s’ I said, ‘if it bothers you let me know.’ He said, ‘but I never saw a dog yet that could really hurt a nigger.20.

From this incident we understand the dominating nature of White American towards African Americans. African Americans were treated beyond animals. Americans never lost a single chance to dominate African Americans. Americans did not want that African Americans came up and stood equal to them. Richard seen and experienced the heart rendering condition of African Americans and became silent and reserved.

Richard’s way was full of hurdles, a white mistress discouraged him and hunger, and various menial jobs that dissuaded him but Richard overcame them all. Richard wrote a story entitled, ‘The voodoo of Hell’s Half-Acre’- which was crudely atmospheric, emotional, intuitively psychological, and stemmed from pure feeling. It was published in a newspaper in three parts, but no one was ready to accept that Richard himself had written that story. His family members as well as his schoolmates said that he had copied it from somewhere, only the Negro newspaper editor encouraged Richard. The principal wanted to know why Richard had used the word ‘hell’ in the story. Because of such queries and unfaithfulness of family members and schoolmates about the story Richard felt as though he had committed a crime by writing the story. Very cruel and degraded treatment was given to Blacks by their White Masters. They always offered them stale and sticky food. Whites never lost any incident to humiliate the slaves.

Richard was working as a worker in a white family. One morning his mistress called Richard for breakfast. There was a plate of thick clack molasses and a hunk of white bread which was stale and hard to break,
Richard wanted to drink molasses so he lifted the plate only to see black liquid and white bits of mold so he refused to drink it. On the other hand the white family took coffee, egg and bacon.

African Americans were banished and ostracised by the White American world. They were not allowed and accepted in white world though they achieved education, dignity and pride. There was always a wall of hate against the African Americans in the mind of Americans. The following incident will prove this in a wider way.

Whites believed that Blacks used to steal from their masters houses. The slave masters were not providing quality food and clothing to the slaves. Slaves were not able to fulfill their hunger. They slept starving and when hunger became unbearable they stole food from their master's share. Douglass and Washington also accepted that slaves used to steal. On the same side they defended their stealing by saying that they were forced to steal because of their masters. They were the victims of slavery. But it is not proper to see all the Blacks with the same prejudice that they are thieves. Richard was cross examined by his Mistress and she asked him directly if he had habit of stealing. Richard was surprised by her question and quickly answered no. From this question one can understand the feeling towards the Blacks among the whites. Whites were always prejudiced that Blacks are thieves.

Richard Wright through *Black Boy* described the American social condition. Blacks were declared free after the Civil War. But Whites did not accept them. They were not ready to give them equality. They hated and humiliated Blacks often. All the three African American
autobiographies are nothing but a saga of contemporary social condition; plight against inequality, hatred, dignity and for pride.

Above all, the six autobiographies of Dalits and African Americans, describe the contemporary social condition in India and America. Dalits in India were oppressed and humiliated by Hindus on the contrary, African Americans by the Americans in America. Both the communities were denied to avail their social status. They were degraded beyond animals. Because of depiction of contemporary social conditions of India and America both the autobiographies became authentic documents of contemporary social conditions in India and America.

Dalits and African American Autobiographies are not basically and essentially literary exercises. The main aim behind writing these autobiographies is not to achieve an aesthetic performance in literature as an art, but to serve as a social intervention and accordingly carry strong militant connotations. All the Dalit and African American Autobiographies explicitly insist on the decisive impact on their lives of Dr. Ambedkar’s message to unite, to educate and to struggle! They narrate the extraordinary efforts to attend the school against all odds as the most significant step of social protest and personal assertion. Actually Dalits and African Americans have been denied their basic right of taking education, but these autobiographers, faced unbearable difficulties, sought education and came up. Here we discuss the extraordinary efforts of the protagonist to achieve education, hunger for education starting from Dalit Autobiographers.

Laxman Mane a boy from the Kaikadi community became a successful writer, social worker and a columnist. Laxman, because of his father’s initial encouragement was attracted towards school. Laxman’s father did not want his son also to live a life of wanderers begging from
one village to the other. So he decided to admit Laxman to the school. Because of Laxman’s father’s initiative for his schooling Laxman came out of the darkness of illiteracy and exploitation which they had been experiencing from hundreds of years. Kaikadis earned livelihood by selling baskets of canes or by begging in the villages and this tradition was carried forward from one generation to other generation very smoothly. No one thought of getting out of these menial jobs. But Laxman’s father took initiative and admitted his child, Laxman to school. This initial encouragement proved a spark for Laxman to face any problem in life. Laxman’s way towards education was not smooth but his way was full of hurdles of hate, anger and suppression.

Laxman only knew the Kaikadi dialect and so he did not understand what the teacher was teaching at school. The students from the school always teased him because of his lower caste. Before him no one from his caste was admitted to the school. Laxman did not know what a book or a pencil was. Laxman went to school regularly. Kaikadis travel from one village to other by carrying their hearth on the backs of donkeys in search of livelihood. Laxman attended the school in the village they halted. Laxman was humiliated because of his caste. The schoolteacher was not ready to admit him to the school because of he belonged to the Kaikadi caste. The children from the school always teased him because of his looks:

All the pupils started teasing me in the way the hens do when a strange chick intrudes upon their privacy. Moreover, I had the look of a mongrel straight from dunghill – no student would allow me near him. The poor schoolmaster! He was a good man. He asked me to sit near the door. The pupils were afraid of any physical contact with me. 21.
Due to poor economical condition, Laxman’s father advised him to stop education as it was not possible for him to bear the expenses. He had to look after seven – eight children and it was better for Laxman to join him in his business to share the income and to manage family expenses. Laxman worked with his father in marriage band to manage expenses but he never left school and assured his father:

Don’t worry father! I won’t do anything wrong. I will try my best and I shall study… I won’t do anything which you would be ashamed of.

Laxman attended the school regularly. After school he worked with his mother and father to share the expenses. Laxman was the only boy from the Kaikadi community who was attending school regularly. The people from Kaikadi community told false things about Laxman to his father and also told him that it was not their business to learn in the school. Laxman completed matriculation by doing small jobs and playing in marriage band with his father. After matriculation his parents forced him to get married. Laxman wanted to continue education so he ran away to Kolhapur to his friend Narayan. From all these incidents we come to know about Laxman's passion for education and higher education.

Laxman, for the first time went to a big city like Kolhapur and also to the college. It was all new for him. Laxman got attracted towards each and everything he saw. At the college there were about 150 students in each class. The teachers delivered lectures. Boys and girls sat together. The city boys and girls talked to each other. All this was like a dream to him at Kolhapur. Due to poor economical conditions Laxman had to play in marriage band in Kolhapur also. He was afraid that had someone seen him and his position would put to risk.
In Kolhapur, I was afraid that I might be seen by someone or the other playing in the band – I did not want to risk my position in Kolhapur. The day I played I was paid 20 rupees.

Laxman completed his graduation on the basis of scholarship and started working as assistant librarian in the same college where he was learning. For some days Laxman worked as a teacher in a school. Laxman, with endless efforts completed his education. This is nothing but a protest against the society in which the lower caste people were denied to take education. Laxman set an example for the Kaikadi community and whole society.

Laxman Gaikwad through his autobiography The Branded presents the saga of his endless efforts to acquire education in highly unfavourable conditions. The barriers in the way of his education were his caste, poverty and social conditions. Before him no one from Uchalya community had ever gone to school. Illiteracy was the main reason of their miserable condition. Because of the illiteracy they followed the way which was shown to them by the high class Hindus.

The autobiographer’s father was working as a watchman in a farm. He realised the importance of education and instead of giving blade in his son’s hand, gave him pencil and slate and admitted him to the primary school. Laxman Gaikwad like Laxman Mane sat away from all the students. The students always teased him because of his low caste, dirty clothes and language. Laxman had only one set of clothes to wear and he never washed his clothes and as a result there were lice on his clothes and smelled foul so students always kept distance from him. Laxman was suffering each and every moment because of his own community and the
high class community. According to the Varna system Laxman had no right to education, yet he was attending school regularly and so the people from high classes hated him. Other students from his class also hated him and sometimes threw stones towards him. Laxman narrates:

I had just started going to school. It was all novel and strange to me. All the urchins started harassing me, as if a poor lamb had entered a pack of wolves. They throw stones at me because an Uchalya’s child had dared come to school. They would taunt mockingly” Laciman tata khekdyacha curry khata .24.

Laxman never answered them back. He thought that because of his caste he had to accept such abuses and the boys had the right to abuse and beat him. Laxman answered back by studying hard. On the occasion of Independence Day, Laxman made a speech in front of the students and this news spread in the village that a pathrut boy made a speech. Laxman’s father also came to know about Laxman’s speech and he encouraged Laxman saying:

Now go ahead with your schooling, I shall buy you a cycle, if I can pay off the advance I have taken and if I can save some money after the payment. I felt that if I passed that year, I would at least get employed as a policeman or a peon. 25.

Making a speech in front of the students in presence of all the honourable people from the village was a very great thing for Laxman. Laxman represented the community that was denied education since hundreds of years and now he had delivered speech in front of them. That was nothing but change, a revolutionary change and also a form of protest. Laxman’s father always encouraged him for his schooling. He wanted Laxman to come out of the darkness of undeveloped and underprivileged society and this could be possible only with the help of education. Once, Uchalaya
community members came to him asking him to stop Laxman’s education.

Laxman recalls:

Once people from Bhadgaon approached father to lend me to them for thieving. They had said “Martanda, give us Laxman to work in our gang. We shall teach him to pick pockets in a year. Your will be full of pleasure. There’ll be plentiful of earnings. Father had firmly resolved that he would send his Laxman to school to get educated. That was how I came to educated; otherwise I too would have been a thief. 26.

This is an example of self-exploitation. People from the Uchalya community believed that their work was thieving. They have no right to take education that’s why they all went to Laxman's father and told him to stop Laxman's schooling. But Laxman’s father did not pay attention towards them and Laxman so could continue his schooling.

Facing unbearable situations throughout his life, Laxman Gaikwad completed his graduation successfully. He is the first from Uchalya community to have successfully completed education.

Kishore Kale’s life was full of odds. He was the illegitimate child of a tamasha dancer. He faced humiliation from birth and before his birth his family members had tried to abort the child but they were not successful. Kishore’s mother was a tamasha dancer. There were many men in her life. According to the traditions of the Kolhati community a woman had to spend her life with the person who paid a substantial amount for her virginity. It is that person’s responsibility to take care of that women and her family. After fulfilling the sexual hunger that person abandoned the women. Meanwhile the women got pregnant and sometimes she gave birth to the child or even aborted the child. The same happened with the protagonist’s mother and it was not possible for her to abort the child so
she gave birth to Kishore. Kishore’s grandfather Kodiba, wanted Kishore to learn tabla but Kishore wanted to attend the school and became a teacher. Kishore was registered to school with his mother’s name as his father was unknown, which caused students to teased him but he did not pay attention. Kishore answered them by studying hard and attaining expertise in mathematics Kishore forced the students to revolve around him. Kishore sat in front row and other students sat behind him and copied his answers. Kishore recalls:

I passed my second standard exams. All my classmates passed as well. They sat behind me in class and copied my answers.

Kishore completed his primary education with his grandfather and after that he went to his mother at Sonpeth. There he completed his education upto 12th standard and studied M.B.B.S. from Mumbai. Everywhere Kishore had to suffer tremendously. At her mother’s house his sufferings were less or, we can say that Kishore had not realized that because he was living with his mother for which he was waiting since long. At his grandfather’s house Kishore had to do all the odd jobs and had to endure his grandfather’s beatings. Kishore’s grandfather was not interested in his studies and so he did not give Kishore any money for books and notebooks. Kishore asked him for money to buy books he refused and said:

ha, I know how smart you are and how great you are going to be. Your mother hasn’t sent a packet for you. Go and asked your cursed mother.

Actually it is grandfather’s duty to take care of his grandson, but to the contrary he always cursed and beat Kishore. Kishore asked his uncle, Ramesh kaka for money to buy the books and he gave him. But Kishore
had not taken that money free of cost; in exchange he pressed his hands and feet. Kishore went to his mother for higher education. But there also after his school he had a lot of work to do like looking after the floor mill and keeping accounts. Kishore, by doing such kind of job completed his matriculation. Kishore was admitted to Yogeshwari College, Ambejogai for junior college education. English was major problem for Kishore at Yogeshwari College, but with hard efforts he overcame it. Kishore narrates:

Science was taught in English at Ambajogai, and I had intense trouble understanding what was going on. I did not even know what leaf meant. After class, I would sit in my room staring at my books and crying. I was convinced that I would never be able to handle science and get through college. I bought dictionary and went through it page by page, a very painstaking and slow task.

The above passage narrates the desire and efforts of Kishore to get education and to rise up from miserable life. College education was not sufficient for Kishore to understand science so he decided to join private classes, but his poverty was a hinderance in his education. He had to become his own teacher. Due to his caste he was already banished by his classmates. He had studied following his own methods and proved a success. He stood second among the backward students in HSC examination.

Despite unfavourable conditions, Kishore secured merit and was invited to his college to Parbhani to attend the felicitation ceremony arranged for him. This was a very great occasion in Kishore’s life. He was often teased by the students because of his lower caste. It was difficult for the lower caste students to take education and now Kishore was going to be
felicitated by the college. This is an example of protest against the contemporary social conditions. Though Kishore was harassed and exploited by the society he completed his education.

Kishore was always engulfed by economic troubles at Mumbai. His father Krushnarao Wadkar stopped sending him money. Kishore worked as an assistant doctor in the night shifts. Because of continuous night shifts he dozed in the classes and was not able to concentrate on his studies. So he left that job. Kishore started selling shirts at Ambajogai which he had brought from Mumbai. With that business Kishore made handsome money. But when his brother came to know about Kishore’s business he cursed him and told him to stop this business. When Kishore could not overcome his financial problems he attempted suicide. Before this, due to lack of family support and money the protagonist was diverted towards a whorehouse. He joined Jalsa party along with his aunt and indulged in odd jobs like buying pann, bottles of liquor, and cigarettes for the customers and massaging their bodies. During the day, Kishore worked for women. He brought pins and flowers for their hair, snow or kumkum from the market, sometimes pressed their legs and even buttoned their blouses. After endless efforts, Kishore, the child of a mistress became a doctor, which indeed is a very revolutionary change for the whole society. Kishore set an example for many children who wanted to free themselves from the clutches of casticism, exploitation, suppression and maltreatment. All the three autobiographers, with great efforts and hard work achieved education and with the help of education came on the right track of development, liberation and equality. These autobiographers were the first among their communities to achieve education.
Like Dalit Autobiographers, African American Autobiographer’s way to education was not smooth. According to the laws of slavery, Slaves were not allowed to take education. Slaves tried their best to acquire education. Their way was full of hurdles like poverty, hunger, cruel laws of slavery. Their strong desire and passion for knowledge helped them to get over all the hurdles successfully. Frederick Douglass learnt to read because of Mrs. Auld never discriminated between her child and Douglass though Douglass was a slave at her place. She taught Douglass to read the Bible. It was not permissible for a slaveholder to teach their slaves. Americans believed that after receiving education the slaves would unite and rebel against the slavery. When Mr. Auld came to know that Mrs. Auld was teaching Douglass to read the Bible, he immediately ordered her to stop teaching him. After that incident her behaviour completely changed and she started keeping eye on Douglass to find out whether he was trying to read Bible.

Education proved an inspiration for him because he realized that ignorance was the reason behind slavery. Douglass was influenced by the thoughts of Sheridan and very soon he started thinking about the rights of man as a human being. Douglass became a good reader and because of his wide reading he became aware about slavery. He says:

The increase of knowledge was attended with bitter, as well as sweet results. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest slavery and my enslavers. Slaveholders thought I are only a band of successful robbers who left their homes and went into Africa for the purpose of stealing and reducing my people to slavery. As I read I was no longer the light hearted gleesome boy, full of mirth and play as when I landed first at Baltimore knowledge had come light had penetrated the moral dungeon where I dwelt. 30.
Because of education Frederick came to know the reason of bondage. Before seeking education like other people he thought that because of colour, race and caste he had to live like a slave. God had created them as slaves and it was his desire that they should spend their life like slaves. But education showed Frederick that they could achieve the same life like whites.

Douglass became helpless because of slavery. He had to work with different masters. He describes his frustration in the following words:

I am ruthlessly snatched from the hearth of a fond grandmother and hurried away to the home of a mysterious old master again I am remover from there to a master in Baltimore. Hence am I snatched away to the Eastern shore to be valued with the beasts of the field and with them divided and set apart for a possessor. Then I am sent back to Baltimore and I am again broke up and sent to st. Mechaels and I am footing my way to the home of a new master where I am given to understand that like a wild young working animal. I am to be broken to the yoke of a bitter and life-long bondage.31.

Douglass was sent to Covey who was well known as a slave breaker. He whipped Douglass many times. Experiencing continuous whipping Douglass revolted against Covey and achieved victory. After his victory Douglass felt changed and described himself that “Now I am a Man”. After this incident Covey never tried to whip Douglass and after completing the period with Covey, Douglass went to his new Master Hugh. Douglass protested against injustices and inequality. It was not easy to raise voice against the injustices during slavery. For a single mistake the master shot dead the slaves. Douglass himself did not understand from where he received inspiration to fight him. Education inspired Douglass to protest against slavery. The thoughts of Sheridan and Liberator poured power in
him and he protested against the injustices. Douglass bought his freedom from Master Hugh. After that Douglass’ life changed, from a slave, he became an orator, Abolitionist Speaker and Lecturer. It was because of the initiatives of Mrs. Auld, that Douglass got attracted towards education. He was influenced by the thoughts of Sheridan and a Columbian Orator. Douglass came to know the difference between the African American and American community i.e. colour and education. African Americans are Black and uneducated and on the other hand Americans are Whites and educated. The educational difference between the two communities has banished but the colour difference persists. African Americans achieved education though they were not accepted by the American Society.

Booker Taliaferro Washington was an African American educator, author and leader of the African American community. Booker’s way, like Douglass, towards education was full of hurdles like poverty, hunger and the cruel laws of Slavery. Booker’s childhood was snatched by slavery. Since childhood, he was forced to work and to manage family expenses. He worked with his mother as a salt-packer and also worked in a coal mine. He even signed up briefly as a hired hand on a steamboat. However, he soon became employed as a houseboy for Viola Ruffner, the wife of General Lewis Ruffner, who owned the salt-furnace and the coal mine. Many other houseboys had failed to satisfy the demanding and methodical Mrs. Ruffner, but Booker's diligence and attention to detail met her standards. Encouraged to do so by Mrs. Ruffner, young Booker attended school and learned to read and write. And soon, he sought even more education than was available in his community. Leaving Malden at sixteen, Washington enrolled at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, in
Hampton, Virginia. Students with little income such as Washington could get a place there by working to pay their way. The normal school (teachers college) at Hampton was founded for the purpose of training black teachers and had been largely funded by church groups and individuals such as William Jackson Palmer, a Quaker, among others. In many ways he was back where he had started, earning a living through menial tasks, but his time at Hampton led him away from a life of labour. From 1878 to 1879 he attended Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C., and returned to teach at Hampton. Soon, Hampton officials recommended him to become the first principal of a similar school being founded in Alabama. Washington raised Tuskegee Institute by collecting charity because of which he was criticised as beggar by his community members. Washington answered them:

I often tell people that I have never begged. My experience and observation have convinced me that persistent asking outright for money from the rich does not, as a rule, serve help. I have usually proceeded on the principle that persons who possess sense enough to earn money have sense enough to know to give it away, and that the mere making known of the facts regarding the work of graduates, has been more effective than outright. 32.

Washington never stopped asking for charity. He, along with his wives collected charity and raised the Tuskegee Institute. Washington started Tuskegee Institute with a three to four dilapidated buildings after twenty years of hard work and endless efforts. Tuskegee Institute has twenty three hundred acres of campus and forty buildings. By raising Tuskegee Institute Washington set an example of hard work and honesty. He proved that sincere efforts have no bindings of colour, race, and caste. Strong will power and sincere efforts are sufficient to achieve success in life. Washington represents the community that was denied education, but
through endless efforts and hard work he educated himself and his community members, too. This is protest against the social injustice. Washington also protested against his own community members who were trying to be barriers in his way. Washington gave them a jerk by raising Tuskegee Institute. Washington protested against the inequality and injustices of the White Americans – who always tried to suppress African Americans. White Americans never wanted the African Americans to come up and live a life of honesty, liberty and equality. But Washington rose up and helped many people to live a life of honesty and liberty. Washington forced his community members to take industrial education along with academic education and so he set up the Tuskegee Institute. In Tuskegee Institute he gave industrial training like brick work, farming, black smithing, carpentry etc. which enabled students to earn while learning. Washington had seen heart rending poverty in his childhood. He worked in salt furnace and coal mine to manage his day to day expenses. He had to walk long distances to acquire education from Hampton Institute as he had no money to buy expenses of commutation. His admission at Hampton Institute changed his whole course of life. Washington received the great mantra of life, that is work is worship and no work is below dignity.

Washington was a dominant figure in the African American community in the United States from 1890 to 1915, especially after he achieved prominence for his Atlanta Address of 1895. Many politicians and the public in general looked upon Washington as a popular spokesperson for African American citizens. Representing the last generation of black leaders born into slavery, he was credible when spoke
publicly and sought educational improvements for those freed men who had remained in the New South in an uneasy life. He maintained this standing through a nationwide network of core supporters in many communities, including black educators, ministers, editors and businessmen and especially those who were working on social and educational issues. He gained access to top national leaders in politics, philanthropy and education, and was awarded honorary degrees. Critics called his network of supporters the "Tuskegee Machine".

Richard Wright was not far behind from Douglass and Washington. Richard had seen heartrending poverty and hunger since his childhood. Richard lived with his mother and father in Memphis. After his father deserted his mother, it became very difficult to run the household. Richard's mother worked as a cook in a white’s house. Sometimes, she took Richard and his brother along with her, where they could get bread and meat from the leftovers of Whites. When Richard saw whites eating, he thought that they were eating up to their bellies and he was deprived of everything. Since childhood Richard was possessed by hunger for food and education. As explained above Richard was not able to get full meal for many days and had to starve. His want of food was increasing day by day. Richard wanted to learn like other children. When children came to play on the ground Richard practised words by asking children, and very soon he learnt to write the words. Coal man came to his house and taught him to count the numbers. In a short period, Richard was able to count numbers. Richard often asked a number of questions to his mother but she used to get fed up with his questions and slaps him.
Richard’s mother did not earn enough to feed her children. At the same time she was paralyzed and her family members took her to her mother’s house at Jackson. Richard was sent to his Uncle Austen’s house but he returned to his Granny’s house. At Granny’s house, Richard met Ella who was a school teacher. In leisure time, Ella used to read novels. Richard was very curious about her reading so he often asked her to tell him what she was reading. When Ella tried to tell him the story of the Bluebeard and his Seven Wives Granny stopped her. Richard’s desire for reading stories and novels was increasing day by day. When there was no one in the house he secretly went to Ella’s room, stole book and read it. Richard could not able to understand the story because of difficult words. So he asked the difficult words to his mother. Richard’s mother was surprised with his increasing queries and came to know that Richard secretly read the books from Ella’s room. So his Granny drove Ella from their house. But Richard’s reading did not stopped there. Richard was very good at Mathematics. He usually solved the problems very early as compared to other students. He read adventure stories whenever he found time. Richard struggled to quench his thirst for knowledge.

Richard fought with his schoolmates. On the first day Richard was surrounded by a group of students who started teasing him because of his appearance and clothing. All the students gathered around him and one of the students rushed towards him and started fighting. Richard also fought and whipped him and achieved victory. Because of that incident all the students realised that Richard was a strong boy and no one from the school dared to tease him again. If Richard had kept quiet at that moment he would have had to face whipping from all the students regularly. But he
fought with them and got a safe place. It is a general philosophy that the strongest always keep hold on the weaker unless and until the weaker does not protest. Richard completed his graduation with hard work. Because of his poverty he was not able to buy books and clothes. For many days he could not get enough meal to fulfill his hunger. In the interval, when all the students were buying sandwiches from the canteen Richard watched them from the corner, and when they asked him where his meal was, he told them that he did not feel hungry in the afternoon. Actually he was suffering from the hunger but he had no money to buy sandwiches. Richard faced very difficult conditions throughout his life. Richard wanted to overcome all the difficulties and he realised that only education would help him to overcome the problems, so he went to school regularly and sincerely. Richard, through his hard work and endless efforts became a writer.

All the six autobiographers protested against the social injustices. Both the communities, Dalit and African American were denied to take education but somehow they educated themselves. They not only sought education in unfavourable conditions and in heart rending poverty, hunger and oppression but also achieved success. Laxman Mane became a school teacher, Laxman Gaikwad runs a grocery shop and is working for the branded people, nomadic tribes and Adivasis’s and Kishore Kale became a doctor. He worked for the Advavasis’s and nomadic tribes. He started a hospital at Kuderan in Thane at Mumbai. African American autobiographers also worked for the community development Frederick Douglass became a speaker for Abolitionists Antislavery Movement. He worked as a Lecturer and orator, writer and autobiographer. Booker T. Washington started Tuskegee Institute and provided academic as well as
industrial education to African Americans. He also worked as a speaker for
the Antislavery Movement. Richard Wright became a successful author,
writer, and novelist. Through his novels and autobiographies, Richard
brought out the problems of the African Americans after the freedom. All
the six autobiographers not only protested against the social injustices but
also against their family members and community members. Their own
family members proved barriers in the way of education because they all
believed that they had no right to take education. Autobiographers acquired
education and encouraged and inspired others to learn.

A very important fact about all the six autobiographies is that these
autobiographers were born in poverty. Dalit autobiographers were born out
side the villages and there were no medical facilities for them and their
families. They spent their childhood playing on the dunghills where other
villagers went to relieve themselves. On the other hand, African American
Autobiographers were born slaves except Richard Wright. They are born in
log cabins, in huts. They spent their childhood on the plantation by doing
small jobs like serving water to the workers, working in coal mines and
salt furnaces. Like other children they all have not enjoyed the luxurious
life in childhood. Their childhood was snatched from them by slavery.
Their sufferings have started from their childhood.

A detailed evaluation of the autobiographies starting from the Dalit
writers is cited here for the understanding their problems of these Laxman
Mane the writer of the autobiography ‘Upara- An outsider’ has explained
the condition of his childhood in following words:
Leaving the donkeys on the outskirts of the hamlet, we would play loitering behind these poor animals grazing on fresh human excrement and brandishing our sticks in the air. We played mostly with marbles or flat pebbles piling them one on top of the other and smashing them with a ball from a certain distance. A shirt, someone’s charity, covered my body. Mended in several places, it was full of wrinkles. Shorts were a luxury. The shirt itself hung loose serving the purpose of shorts as well. Its sleeves too were very long. They came handy in blowing my nose now and again. My head was covered with father’s cap. This too was a handout. A brisk breeze lifting it off my head. Khatrya, Indya, Martya and I usually played on the dunghills or in the places where the villagers came to relieve themselves.

This paragraph very vividly articulates the family conditions of Laxman Mane. Laxman Mane was born in a very poor family. They were living out of the town in small huts. They had no clothes to wear. They wear clothes which they received in charity. Laxman’s sufferings and oppression started from his school days. Laxman’s father had admitted him to school. Laxman went to school regularly. But, because of his low caste he had to sit out of the classroom, in the ‘verandah’. He had no pencil, no books, no slate and no proper clothes. He spoke in the Kaikadi dielect, because of which school children always teased him and made fun of him. Laxman describes:

I would sit there like a stone. My class mates would not talk to me. I know only our Kaikadi dialect whereas all others knew Marathi which I could hardly understand. So the pupils laughed and made fun of me. Some teased me by raising my shirt. I almost died of shame as I had no shorts on the shirt was supposed to serve the purpose. But when I sat down, everything under my shirt was exposed and then the pupils would roar with laughter causing the teacher to lose his temper.
Once, Laxman went for a marriage along with his friends and sat with them to eat. His friends belonged to the Maratha caste and it was not permitted to a low caste like Laxman to be seated in their company and eat. One of the invitees who was serving food recognized Laxman and asked him to get up from the meal. Laxman recalls:

The guests took their seats in a row in the pandal for the wedding feast. Being pressed by my friends I took my seat in the row of the guests' right side the pandal. Everybody thought that I was one of the invitees and so nobody said anything to me. My friends vouched that nobody would recognise me in such a crowd and insisted that I join them without fear. Half the meal was over. The bearers were serving us as we ate happily. The ro was full of Maratha children. Then there came a bearer who happened to be from our village and an invitee to the wedding. As he approached me, he opened his eyes wide, bent down and thundered, “son of a Kaikadi – low cast! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out!35.

When Laxman got up from his seat and went out of the pandal nobody intervened or stopped him. All were against him and they all accepted that Kaikadis had no right to sit and to eat with them. Laxman felt very sad and wept for hours lonely. Laxman went to Kolhapur to complete his graduation and he sought admission to Kirti College. Laxman started working as an assistant librarian in the same college for managing his expenses. There too, because of his caste he was forced to leave the job. The librarian belonged to high caste and he always cursed Laxman without any reason. He fired Laxman under the charge of corruption in the library fees. Laxman experienced oppression of both the communities i.e. his own community and the high caste Hindu Society. Because of his low caste he was oppressed by the Hindu Society and his own community oppressed
him because of the intercaste marriage. Laxman Mane faced oppression on each and every occasion. But oppression never proved a barrier in Laxman’s way it converted into inspiration to him.

Laxman Gaikwad was born in very poor and pitiable surroundings. His very birth in the Uchalya community was the beginning of his social predicament. His autobiography opens with the following words:

No native place. No birth date. No house or farm. No caste, either. This is how I was born in an Uchalya community at Dhanegaon in Taluka Latur.”36.

From the above description we come to know about the family conditions and the community in which Laxman was born. The Uchalya community did not maintain the records of birthdates. They had no houses to live or land so, they lived in hut out of the town or village where all the villagers came to relieve themselves. They have no farms. They have no concrete and permanent ways of earning livelihood. They were not allowed entry in the villages without prior permission from the village chief. They have to take pass from the police patil to leave the village and inform him for how many days they would be out of town. Actually they were not allowed to remain out of town for more than three to four days. Laxman describes:

If anyone from our household or tribe wished to leave the place he had to obtain a permit from the police patil a bribe for the purpose. We were reduced to the level of animals; for just as permits are needed for cattle to be moved to other places or to be sold in the market, we had to have passes to move about. We had to show them to the police patil and tell him where we were going to and even then we could not stay there for more than three days.37.
If they travelled without a pass they were invariably arrested on trumped up charges, beaten up and set free only after extracting large amounts from them. These people were oppressed and even exploited by the caste system and by the police. Taking permission for going out of the village in the form of passes suggests the bondage as a form of oppression. It also suggests that they had no freedom of movement.

Laxman’s father worked as a guard in the farm of the Chamel, a rich farmer. There he came to know the importance of education. So he sent his son- Laxman to the school, but in school Laxman experienced oppression and suppression because of his caste as his classmate did not sit near him. They always poked fun at him and they beat him and pelted stones at him. But, Laxman took it all calmly and quietly never protested against their actions. He narrates:

When I went to the school the boys in my class sniggered at me. They mocked derisively; ‘Lakshya, Pathrut boy, has come to school’ I used to sit in a corner meekly as if I had been forcibly dragged there. Balachari guruji used to write numbers, one two …… on my slate and I would run my pencil over them repeatedly for practice. Some of the boys in the school used to call me Lachhmanta and taunt me – Lachhmanta crab curry Khataa.

Laxman did not say a word to anyone. He accepted all their mocking, believing that they had the right to mock at him because he was an Uchalya. Laxman was following the foot steps of his ancestors by accepting exploitation, oppression and suppression without protest. This attitude of accepting discrimination of the lower castes provoked the high caste people to exploit them. Dalits, themselves were responsible for their
suffering upto a certain extent. As Douglass pointed that Slavery was not a sin, but being a slave is a very big sin.39.

Dalits in India were oppressed and exploited by the Hindus from one generation to the other. They never tried to come out of it but to the contrary they accepted it because of their caste they had to live in miserable conditions. However the crusaders against inequality and casteism, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule enlightened the Dalits to acquire education and liberate themselves from the ageold bonds of slavery and untouchability.

Laxman believed that education was the only solution to hunger and poverty. Laxman received education but his sufferings and sorrows didnot end. Laxman at the end of his autobiography very desperately says that his exploitation and exploitation within the caste continues till date with a different face. Laxman works as a social worker for the nomadic and criminal tribes. Political leaders always oppress them and they make big promises which they never fulfill. Laxman narrates:

There is definitely a world of difference between my nomadism and the traditional nomadism of my forefather. But I feel that not a single problem of the Nomadic and denotified tribes has yet been solved. Even today the attitude of political and social leaders is vitiated by double standards and prejudiced criteria only because I and my community have been branded criminals socially and legally. These high cast leaders see to it that I attain no position of vantage find no firm foot hold in their field. They create rich pastures for their own kith and kins. With a sweet tongue they use and exploit me for their social and political ends proclaiming that a worker from a nomadic and denotified tribe is working shoulder to shoulder and on an equal footing with them. This I nothing but a kind of deceptive exploitation.40.
High class leaders used their position to feather their nests at the cost of these people. They never tried to solve the problems of nomadic tribes. Laxman and his community members were oppressed at various levels. They were oppressed socially, economically and culturally too. Their oppression begins at their birth and is forwarded to their future generations.

Laxman Mane and Laxman Gaikwad were oppressed because of their caste by the high caste society. But the situations were different for Kishore Kale. Kishore Kale, the writer and protagonist of autobiography *Against All Odds*, is unfortunately oppressed by his mother. His mother, Shantabai married Krushnarao Wadkar who refused Shantabai to accept Kishore to take him along with them. So Kishore was left back with his grandfather, Kondiba. There he was brought up by his aunt, Jiji maushi. Throughout his life Kishore pined to live with his mother and for her love. Abandoned by mother, Kishore’s childhood was filled by the oppression and exploitation at the hands of his own relatives and by the high class society as well. Kishore had to do odd jobs like sweeping the yard, chopping onions and cattle tending. Kishore, like his mother, wanted to attend the school but his grandfather refused him and told to learn tabla so that he could earn something by playing tabla in the tamasha. Every society takes pride in educating its youngsters and parents strive hard to provide the best to their children. But, exactly the contrary happens in the Kolhati community. Parents deprive their children of education and enforce them to earn livelihood. They refuse to send their children to school although the children want to go to school. Kishore was suppressed by his grandfather and was admitted to the school against his grandfathers
will. Whenever Kishore asked for money to buy books to his grandfather always cursed him by saying:

Ha, I know how smart you are and how great you are going to be. Your mother hasn’t sent a packet for you. Go and ask your cursed mother.41.

Kishore suffered because of his grandfather, Kondiba. After Kishore had passed 4th class examination his mother Shantabai called him to live with her but Kondiba, his grandfather refused to send him to his mother in fearing that after the departure of Kishore, Shanta would not send money and his liquor and meat would be stopped. Kishore narrates:

I want to go to Sonepeth’, I told jiji. Ajoba overheard and exploded with rage. He thought I wanted to go there for good ‘if you go off your mother will never visit us’, he yelled, ‘she will forget we exist. You will not go to sonepeth now and I will ensure that you never go ther’ he said.42.

Though Kishore’s mother Shantabai sent money for Kishore’s upbringing, his grandfather deprived him of education.

Kishore was admitted to school by his mother’s name because of his father’s unknown identity and it is usual in the Kolhati community that the students obtain their mother’s name. But all the schoolmates always teased him by asking where his father was, Kishore mentions:

Attendance was taken every morning at school and Guruji called out my name – ‘Kishore Shantabai Kale.’ All the children laughed and teased me ‘where is your father? They asked.43.
Kishore was always teased and mocked by his schoolmates because of his fathers' unknown identity but he did not pay attention to the mocking and completed his school education. After that he went to Yogeshwari College, Ambejogai in science branch. There also his caste became problem for him. Because of his caste he had to leave the room often. No one was ready to give accommodation to an illegitimate child. Kishore received accommodation by hiding his caste. He narrates:

I was looking for a room to live in when I was in class twelve and I went to a Komti’s house. He asked me my name and I said, Kishore Kale ‘Are you a Maratha or a Brahmin?’ ‘Maratha’ he gave me the room.44.

Kishore felt helpless and lied that he belonged to the Maratha community because no one was ready to give accommodation. Through hardwork, Kishore stood second among the backward classes in HSC examination and got admission in the Grant Medical College, Mumbai. There also he was oppressed by college mates because of his caste. He narrates:

Life in the hostel was made difficult by the other students who teased me constantly and played practical jokes on me. I could not stand up to anybody. I had no guts. I was afraid that my hostelmates would find out that my mother was mistress and look down on me.45.

Kishore was afraid that his college mates would come to know that he was a son of mistress and it would have humiliated him. Kishore tolerated all the suppression, exploitation and oppression of his family and society and became a doctor. He realised that success did not depend on name or a caste or the womb from which one is born. It is only sincere
efforts that count. Dalit autobiographers were oppressed on each and every level by their own community and society at large.

African Americans were oppressed by Americans and ignored on each and every level. They have no records of their births, deaths, and marriages. They kept all the records like birth and death of pet animals but in case of their slaves they were not ready to maintain records of birth, death and marriages. According to the laws of slavery it was the masters' duty to take care of the slaves but they provided them with poor quality of food and clothes. The masters were not ready to follow the laws of slavery. They were ignorant of the birthdates of their slaves. Slaves remembered their birth dates with remarkable incidents and with the seasons. Douglass recalls:

I never met with a slave who could tell me how old he was. Few slave mothers know anything of the months of the year, not of the days of the month. They keep in family records with marriages, births and deaths. They measure the ages of their children by spring time, winter time, and harvest time planting time.46.

Douglass, by describing his birth place and family condition with the opening of his autobiography described the oppression blacks had been forcing.

After delivering services to Auld family Douglass was sent to master Thomas at the Eastern shore. There he was neither allowed to teach nor learn, though, Douglass started teaching in a little Sabbath school. Their first Sabbath passed delightfully and in their second meeting they learned that there was objection to their Sabbath school and finally their Sabbath school ended because of his master Master Thomas. Douglass’s master by
ending his Sabbath school proved his mightiness and also suggested that he was able to oppress and suppress each and every movement against his will.

Douglass was sent to Covey where he experienced the height of oppression. Covey was a very cruel slaveholder who always whipped his slaves. By giving them very hard and continuous work, Covey forced them to work up to their death. Douglass expresses his agony thus:

I suffered bodily as well as mentally. I had neither sufficient time in which to eat or to sleep, except on Sundays. The overwork and the brutal chastisements of which I was the victim, combined with that ever gnawing and soul-devouring though – I am a slave – a slave for life – a slave with no rational ground to hope for freedom – rendered me a living embodiment of mental and physical wretchedness.

The slave holders harassed their slaves' to an extent that they never thought of freedom. The same happened with Douglass and he became helpless and thought that he could never be able to achieve freedom. Douglass was harassed by every slave master but he admired some of the slave holders like Mrs. Auld where he lived for 8 years and Mr. Freeman, for their hospitality and humane treatment. Elsewhere he was treated like an animal. Slavery was a form of oppression, suppression and exploitation of the African Americans. Slavery was a systematic arrangement of keeping Africans into bondage. The slave masters gave holidays to the slaves. Holidays were a tool of oppression in the hands of Whites. The slave holders used holidays as a sweet poison for keeping them ignorant. They were presented with these holidays not for the welfare of slaves but tried to create good will in the minds of slaves.
Once, when Douglass had gone to see an exhibition at Boston he was refused entry by the door keepers because of his colour. Douglass recalls:

I went and as I approached the entrance to gain admission, I was met and told by the doorkeeper, in a harsh and contemptuous tone ‘We don’t allow nigger in here’. 48.

Once Douglass attended the revival meeting at Jackson’s house but he was denied entry into the meeting because of his colour. Douglass narrates:

Attending a revival meeting in the Rev. Henry Jackson’s meeting house at New Bedford, and going up the broad aisle to find a seat, I was met by a good deacon, who told me, in a pious tone ‘We don’t allow niggers in here!’. 49.

When Douglass was traveling in a steamer from New York to Boston he had to face humiliation on account of his being a black:

While passing from New York to Boston, on the steamer Massachusetts, on the night of the 9th December 1843, when chilled almost through with the cold, I went into the cabin to get a little warm. I was soon touched upon the shoulder and told”, We don’t allow nigger in here!50.

Everywhere in America Douglass was insulted because of his colour and race with the words ‘We don’t allow nigger here’. White Americans never lost any opportunity to oppress and suppress the Blacks. This oppression and suppression proved an inspiration to Douglass, Washington and Wright for achieving freedom from slavery and to fight against the injustices meted out to them.
Booker T. Washington like Douglass was a born slave. He was born on a slave plantation in Franklin country Virginia. He was born in a log cabin of about 14 by 16 square feet. But like Douglass he did not make efforts to get freedom. After the civil war they were declared free.

Booker T. Washington as a slave and as a free man faced oppression and exploitation by the Americans. Booker refused to take education. He went up to the door of the school house along with his mistress by carrying her books. Booker became very sad because of his helpless condition as he was not able to attend the school like white children, like his mistress as he describes:

The picture of several dozen boys and girls in a school room engaged in study made a deep impression upon me and I had the feeling that to get into school house and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise.51.

Booker felt that going to school was nothing less than going to paradise. Booker wanted to attend the school. It was slavery which became a hurdle in his way to school. This is societal oppression.

Booker’s parents lived on a plantation where they were forced to live in desperate conditions because log cabins which were used for cooking purposes. Log cabins neither has a window nor a proper door. Booker even did not know his exact birthdate as slaves were kept ignorant. They did not maintain records of birth and deaths. Slaves were forced to live separately though they had families. Fathers were not allowed to live with their families because of which Booker did not know about fathers'
identity. He was completely ignorant about his brother and sisters. This form of oppression was experienced by all the slaves all over America.

Slaves were named after pet animals of their masters or on the names of their masters. A master would simply address his slave as John or Susan. There was seldom occasion for more than the use of the one name. If ‘John or Susan’ belonged to a Whiteman by the name of ‘Hetcher’ he would be addressed as called ‘John Hetcher’ or ‘Hetcher’s John’ as is with Booker T. Washington ‘T’ stands for ‘Taliaferro’ his owner’s name. This narrates the fact that blacks had no identity of their own beside ‘John’ or ‘Susan’ or ‘Nigger’.

Booker was not allowed to take dinner in the dinner saloon because of his colour. He recalls:

During my journey to Washington, on a steamboat when the bell rang for dinner, I was careful to wait and not enter the dining room until after the greater part of the passengers had finished their meal. Then with my charge I went to the dinning saloon. The man in charge politely informed me that the Indian could be served, but I could not.52.

Booker T. Washington was economically oppressed. He did not have enough money to buy the Plantation for Tuskegee Institute. He started his school in a stable and hen house. Booker describes:

We occupied the place there were standing upon it a cabin, formerly used as the dinning room and old kitchen a stable and an old hen house. Within a few weeks we had all of these structures in use. The stable was repaired and used as a recitation-room and very presently the hen now was utilized for the same purpose.53.
Booker was oppressed by the society because of his colour and race. But that oppression no longer proved to be a barrier in his way instead it turned into an inspiration for him to struggle against all odds. By establishing Tuskegee Institute for the coloured people Booker set an example of hard work and strong desire to the coloured, Americans, of all races and of all castes.

Growing up as a Negro in the South in early 1900's was not that easy, because people suffered different forms of oppression. In this case, it has been illustrated in the autobiography called Black Boy written by Richard Wright. Like Douglass and Washington, Wright was oppressed by his own community members and the society too.

Black Boy is set in the early part of the 1900's, somewhere deep in Jim Crow South. Richard Wright, who is obviously the main character, is the protagonist. The Protagonist is not one person in particular, for it takes many different forms called "oppression" in general. The main character over comes this "oppression" by rebelling against the common roles of the black, Jim Crow society. Richard Wright's character was affected in early childhood by the effects of societal oppression, but he became a great American author despite these negative factors in his life.

Today everyone encounters some form of oppression. One of the forms Richard is encountered is called societal oppression. As an example, after Richard sees a "black" boy whipped by a "white" man, he asks his mother why the incident happened. His mother says, "the "white" man did not whip the "black" boy...He beat the "black" boy," "54.
This quote shows racism, which is one way of society keeping Richard Wright, and all other blacks in the South down. Another example is when he was at the railroad station with his mother, and as they were waiting for the train, he saw something he had never seen, "...for the first time I noticed that there were two lines of people at the ticket window, a "white" line and a "black" line,"55. This excerpt demonstrates how this scene of Jim Crow laws is keeping a certain group of people apart, which is also another form of societal oppression.

Societal oppression occurred again when Richard was "hanging" out with his friends, and their conversation with each other lead to the subject of war. One of his friends really got into the subject and said, "'Yeah, they send you to war, make you lick them Germans, teach you how to fight and when you come back they scared of you,' "56. This quote means that the "white" people put the "black" people on the front line to defend our country, and when they come back, they can not accept them, therefore they oppress them in different ways, which is societal oppression.

Another example can be cited here. When Richard wanted to borrow a library card he thought about asking his boss. After thinking about it for a while, he knew he could not ask him, for he knews that the boss was a Caucasian Baptist, and Richard thought that he would not be able to accept the fact of a "black" boy, such as Richard, would want to read and cultivate his intelligence. This would be considered societal oppression; for he knew that his boss did not want Richard to be enlightened with books, in turn keeping Richard away from the light of knowledge. These are examples of societal oppression that Richard Wright overcame and rose to the top on his own.
Internalized oppression is a very difficult thing to overcome. Richard Wright had to confront with internalized oppression when he saw a "black" boy being beaten by a "white" man, so he thought that the "white" man was the boy's father. "...Did not all fathers, like my father, have the right to beat their children? A paternal right was the only right, to my understanding..."57. This excerpt shows internalized oppression because he thinks it was okay for a parent to abuse their child, in turn having the child think that beating a child is okay, and only a parent beat a child. Another case of internalized oppression can be cited when Richard uttered bad word, and then his Aunt Jody lectured him by saying, "'Richard, you are a very bad, bad boy,' "58. Later in the passage, he also says that he did not care that he was a "bad boy." This states that Richard believed that he is a bad person, Later in the autobiography, after Richard read some books, he wanted to use the words he had learned as weapons, but he could not, because using the words frightened him. This is internalized oppression, for Richard thinks of the words as something sacred only whites could use. He feels that the words could have put them into trouble. Later, Richard tried to identify himself with a book, but he felt guilty about it. All the above incidents are examples of internalized oppression. The way Richard Wright overcame this abstract oppression is reflected upon his personality, which helped him become a great American author. Richard states: "During that noon hour I learned all the four-letter words describing physiological sex functions, and discovered that I had known them before...A tall black boy recited a long, funny piece of doggerel, replete with filth, describing the physiological relations between men and women, and I memorized it word for word after having heard it but once, "59. This
quote shows how smart and quick Richard was in learning, which is a part of his personality and his ability to understand.

Once Uncle Tom was about to whip Richard, so he showed the razors to his uncle. In a low voice Richard said, "If you touch me, I'll cut you! Maybe I'll get cut too, but I'll cut you, so help me God," 60. This passage reveals that Richard was rebellious and he stood up for himself and confronted his uncle for something he had not done. Further, when Richard was confronted with the fact that white people like Negroes who were stole from them, than to know their own true self-worth. Richard thought, "But I, who stole nothing, who wanted to look them straight in the face, who wanted to talk and act like a man, inspired fear in them," 61. This passage demonstrates how bold and brave Richard was, for he wanted to stand up for himself against a white man who looked down upon him.

These are all examples of Richard Wright's character that helped him become the great author that he is. Societal oppression and internalized oppression affected Richard Wright in his childhood. He overcame the negative factors throughout his life, which contributed to his rise as a great American author. Blacks have undergone the same experiences before, but only Richard Wright had the courage to face the situation and come out of it. He also made attempts to protect his dignity. In *Black Boy*, Richard Wright did just the opposite. Instead of submitting, like everyone else, to the low life, Jim Crow laws were intended for; he has risen above those who already have submitted.

Oppression and suppression became a part and parcel of Dalit and African American Autobiographers life. All the six autobiographers discussed in
the study were oppressed by their own community and society as well. Dalit and African American autobiographers were hungry for love, family, education, dignity, equality and pride.

Dalit and African American autobiographers lost their identity because of the oppression, suppression by their caste respectively the Hindus and the White Americans. Dalits and African Americans came to know about the injustices to them and they fought against it and achieved lost identity by using the weapon called education. Laxman Mane became a teacher and social worker. Laxman Gaikwad works for the tribal communities, especially, the criminal tribes. Kishore Kale became a doctor and ran a hospital for tribal communities at Kuderan, near Mumbai. On the other hand African American autobiographers, Frederick Douglass worked for the Anti Slavery Movement, as a lecturer and an orator. Booker T. Washington raised Tuskegee Institute for the coloured students. Washington received publicity as a lecturer, author, and an autobiographer. Richard Wright obtained name and fame as an author, writer, and novelist.

All the autobiographers i.e. three Dalit and three African American pictured the heartrending saga of injustices and maltreatment of traditional Indian and American society. They must be accepted as the authentic documents of past. The autobiographers very humbly brought out their oppression, suppression, will to take education in an unfavourable conditions and also their extra ordinary efforts and their plight for obtaining lost identity, dignity and pride. It is the nature of Dalit and African Autobiography to demonstrate this saga to the whole literary world and to receive and achieve place in the literary world. No doubt, Dalit and
African American literature have achieved a new place in the literary world as the literature of protest.

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