Introduction

Chapter One
CHAPTER ONE

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

"Those who fear the Lord will have a happy end." Sirach 1:13

1.1 Introduction

Man was created in the image of God with wisdom, holiness and truth, to glorify God and to enjoy His favour for ever, but as a consequence of the temptation and the fall of man in the garden of Eden, tragedy set in the lives of human beings. Man's first disobedience was described by Milton in his Paradise Lost Book One.

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe" 1

Suffering and death have become part of human existence due to Adam's sin of disobedience, which banished lasting happiness of humanity forever.

Why do people suffer? Why do the innocent suffer? This painful cry of mankind both in personal or cosmic suffering is echoed down the ages. Suffering is part of life. Every individual has to face the reality of pain at one stage or another. An earnest attempt is made to portray a small portion of the suffering humanity in the world.

In Shakespeare's As You Like It, Jacques Comments:

"All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players They have their exits and their entrances". 2
The reader may pleasantly agree or disagree with Shakespeare's view that all men are players; but certainly acknowledge the fact that every human being has to play various roles in the short span of his life.

In the birth of a child, there is pain and suffering both for the mother and the baby. The school going child finds it difficult to grasp all the knowledge and skills forced on him. Suffering can also be termed as a struggle for life. The struggle for existence begins in his temple of learning - the university; the individual faces privations and agony if he has to settle for a job, which is far beneath his high qualification. The theme of love has always been ridden with pain, sorrow, and contradiction and has caused the lover to reflect on the sentiment of Lysander, a character in A Mid Summer Night's Dream:

"The course of true love never runs smooth"\(^3\)

In the next stage of marriage, responsibilities crowd in, and if man is fortunate in a spouse endowed with understanding and love, his happiness is assured; if not misery is his life long companion. For a while, worldly fame, position and possession lend him fleeting happiness in his middle age, and with the approach of old age he faces all the problems annexed with it (ill health, insecurity, loneliness and poverty). Man's sorrow does not end with his own. There is flux of sorrow in crime and devastation rushing on to him.

1.1.1 The Present World Situation and its Gloom

Worldwide famine, crime and violence are the noted features of our times. Sexual permissiveness has become commonplace in this contemporary society. Due to ethnic hatred and religious intolerance riots and strikes are multiplying day by day. Global society is well stocked with unhappy, restless
and frustrated people. No age has witnessed such suffering, unhappiness and insecurity. Nervous breakdown, broken homes, drug addiction and suicide attempts are the trademarks of the day. A sense of insecurity, loneliness and anxiety fill the minds of people. Some are burdened by myriad complexes and phobias. People are succumbing to an existential gloom. In order to understand the problem of suffering it has to be classified.

1.1.2 The Suffering of the Oppressed

The word Dalit stands for oppression, hurt and pain; it portrays the dehumanized condition of a group of people, on the basis of the origin of their birth. It is an inherited doom fallen on a class of people for no fault of theirs. The social structure based on the caste system perpetuates suffering and oppression for millions of people in India. The Dalit men, women and children are the victims of atrocities and abuses, particularly in the rural areas.

As S. Manickam observes in Slavery in the Tamil Country – a Historical Over-view, “the majority among the poor who fall a prey to the systematic injustice chiefly belong to the scheduled caste, tribal and other weaker sections who number one-fourth of the total population of India (about 200 million out of 800 millions). These people suffer under caste, class, and sex discrimination.... Like mute animals, these victims carry out the orders of their masters. Even slightest indication of their dissent or disobedience is met with painful reprisals, involving physical torture, rape, implication in criminal charge and murder”.4

The suffering of the Dalit society is depicted in the poem Caste.

"...........................

My eyes could not hold back the tears,
Our lips must smile when they cursed
I don’t understand every thing
I heard this, I learned that,
I became a man, like a man.
Even now I don’t know
How is caste? Where is it?
It’s not seen so does it live inside the body?
All the questions float like smoke,
And the wick of thought is sputtering
But when I know nothing, then I knew
My caste was low.”

Sadly enough this type of misery and inherited pain is peculiar to the Indian sub continent.

1.1.3 Pain of Poverty

Poor people suffer due to lack of livelihood strategies. They do not have access to resources like money or land. They are bothered by feelings of insecurity and live in frustration and despair. Thousands of people are ill fed and ill clothed. Large numbers are not housed properly. Poverty is a source of suffering both for individuals and societies.

1.1.4 The Suffering of Women

The suffering individuals in the global society grow more and more in number like the stars in heaven. Sadism is more common to both sexes, but historically speaking the male has played a dominant role in this type of suffering. In a chauvinistic society, families abound with jealous Othellos and
suspicious Leonteses inflicting more pain to their wives, who waver in their decision, like Hamlet:

"To be or not to be – that is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer.
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
or to take arms against a sea of troubles.
And by opposing end them". 

1.1.5 Suffering Due to Religion

Through out the world, most of the people follow a religion mainly because, it is part of their tradition or culture. Religion has been one of the most powerful and influential forces in history, shaping the lives of people by its teachings. It can be a strong binding force among the nations of the world; but unfortunately millions of people are persecuted and slaughtered in the name of religion.

If man lives in harmony with his neighbour, he will appreciate the great truth of the poem One Thought Ever at the Fore by Walt Whitman.

"One thought ever at the fore -
That in the divine ship, the world, breasting time and space.
All peoples of the globe together sail, sail the same voyage, are,
bound to the same destination." 

The analysis of various sufferings in society and individuals sheds more light on the nature of suffering.
1.2 The Three Types of Suffering

The concept of suffering will take three broad divisions namely – physical, emotional and mental suffering. Nevertheless, this demarcation merges when each type of suffering becomes intense. The oxford dictionary defines suffering as, “what one has to endure, pain”. Pain is described as suffering of the body or the mind. W.S. Ganong observes, “The sense organs for pain are the naked nerve endings found in almost every tissue of the body. Pain impulses are transmitted to the central nervous system by a two fiber system...”.

According to the physiological observation, man is furnished with both sharp and dull sensations of pain. In physic, and in mind, every individual suffers as long as he lives.

1.2.1 Physical Pain

Millions of people exposed to hunger, disease and poverty undergo physical pain. Refuge camps overflowing with starving multitudes mirror both the physical and emotional pain of the sufferers. People affected by diseases become gloomy and depressed reflecting both physical and mental pain. An AIDS patient suffers both physical and mental torture.

Physical pain is also inflicted by callous individuals. News reports horrify us with the narration of the violence done to helpless victims of rape, incest and ethnic hatred. Victims of war suffer physical pain and with the loss of their limbs turn mental wrecks.
Natural disasters like earthquakes and floods claim thousands of lives, rendering the survivors — homeless and hopeless with mental agony.

1.2.2 Emotional Pain

People who hurt physically can also undergo emotional stress. There are many factors which cause emotional agony — for example the death of a loved one, the loss of health, the loss of property or a job or a broken relationship inflict emotional pain. Suffering creates a positive or negative attitude in an individual.

1.2.3 Mental Anguish

Our society abounds with suffering individuals. Some of them are over charged with emotions and fears. Men of moral courage and faith, develop an enduring spirit and strength of character. Negatively speaking, some suffering can induce suicide and self-destruction. The third category of sufferers face loss of health and peace of mind. Sufferers with fatalistic attitude accept pain passively. Mental anguish is caused by physical and emotional agony. Fear of death, insecurity, loss of reputation are some of the factors contributing to mental agony.

1.3 Suffering - Cause and Effect

1.3.1 Individual Acts of Sin

People who break the laws of morality suffer from diseases and guilt .... A person who disobeys the health laws by over eating, has to pay for it. Likewise people who violate the laws of society (e.g. a murderer) ruin the lives
of innocent victims and cause misery to everyone. An alcoholic driver’s fatal mistake results in the death of lawful citizens.

1.3.2 More Sinned Against than Sinning

Victims of ethnic hatred, war, violence, rape and incest are examples of undeserved suffering. They are abused by individuals and communities. The poor in certain societies are oppressed by their masters. The refugees in many countries suffer similar fate.

1.3.3 The Innocent Sufferers

People who champion the cause of the downtrodden and oppressed are murdered for their noble endeavour. Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. fell a prey to the assassin’s bullet. Lord Jesus Christ was an innocent sufferer and his suffering had a redemptive purpose in it. The study of the Book of Job throws light on the suffering of the righteous.

1.4 Suffering of Job in Relation to the Data (Book of Job)

1.4.1 The Reasons for Job’s Suffering

1. Job was the object of Satan’s envy.
2. Job’s friends unjust censure.
3. The loss of children, health and wealth.
4. The loss of divine favour.
5. A social outcast.
1.4.1.1 Job - An Object of Satan’s Envy

Job was a perfect and an upright man who feared God and denounced evil. He was a worthy and an eminent magistrate. His godliness was reflected in his upright dealings with God and man. He enjoyed God’s favour and worldly prosperity. He was the greatest of all the men of the earth (Ch. 1:3).

Satan, who was instrumental in bringing sin into the world, doubted Job’s sincerity in his devotion to God. Job’s piety provoked Satan’s envy. As Milton had aptly described Satan’s position in heaven,

“All good to me is lost
Evil be thou my good.”

Satan planned to bring evil upon Job; in heaven he appeared at an assembly of the sons of God and sought God’s permission to prove that Job served God only for his favour. Job had won God’s confidence, who spoke very honourably of Job’s character. "And the Lord said unto Satan, 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and is escheweth evil?" (Ch. 1:8)

Satan argued with God regarding Job’s religion, which was mercenary in his opinion. Job’s piety would vanish, if he was deprived of all his possession which would tempt him to renounce his faith in God.

God responded to Satan’s challenge by authorizing Satan to remove his possessions; Satan was permitted to assail Job in two cycles of oppression. Job’s miseries were caused by Satan and Job was ignorant of Satan’s challenge and the cause of his suffering.
1.4.2 The Significance of Suffering in Various Religions

People all over the world practise religion for many reasons. Religion provides them, a sense of security because they believe that a divine power watches over them. Many follow religion, as it promises salvation and earthly happiness. It also gives meaning to life and answers questions like what is the purpose of life? What is the final destiny of man. It also teaches man the difference between right and wrong. Most of the religions in the world share some characteristics which include belief in a deity, doctrine of salvation, a code of conduct and religious ceremonies. The essential practice and beliefs of a religion are passed from generation to generation.

1.4.3 Some of the Major Religions and Their Teaching

According to Buddhism, life is suffering. The Hindus believe in karma; the Muslims confess that Allah is responsible for all actions, whether good or bad. Christians believe that God allows suffering in the lives of the believers; but they also uphold the view that Satan is also one of the sources of misery.

1.4.4 Buddhism and the Concept of Suffering

Buddha wanted to enlighten people on important questions about sorrow, the origin of sorrow and the cessation of sorrow and the path leading to cessation of sorrow. The answer to the question constitutes the essence of his enlightenment. Life in the world is full of suffering. All that is born of attachment is misery.
The second noble truth is about the cause of suffering. Suffering is due to birth. The third noble truth about the cessation of suffering follows that misery depends on some conditions; so if those causes are removed, suffering would cease. The fourth noble truth deals with the path (marga) followed by Buddha to reach a state free from misery. To state the matter in another way, according to Buddha, "...all is suffering; suffering originates in people's desires; greed or attachment to things. Greed hatred and ignorance are like three fires which must be blown out ... there is a path to the happiness of Nirvana. This path involves morality, meditation and wisdom". 11

Buddha taught his believers to attain the state of Nirvana which secures cessation from sorrow.

1.4.5 Hinduism on Suffering

Most Hindus believe in the authority of the Vedas. They accept the teaching of the Dharma Shastras or ancient law books, Upanishads and the Bhagawad-Gita. They also believe in a supreme spirit called Brahman and in the reincarnation of a person's atman. They believe that atman (self) is ever pure and free. Man in reality is Atman; he identifies with the gross body, on death, the gross body falls off. It is the body which stores desires which transmigrates from one birth to another. They believe that the body enjoys the fruits of action in the physical world.

The Hindus believe in the reincarnation. They believe that the soul is reborn when the body dies. This process of rebirth is known as reincarnation which depends on karma (a person's action and its effects). "Every action
influences as how a person’s soul will be born in the next incarnation. The soul
goes through many existences in a cycle of births and rebirth called the
Samsara.”

According to the principle of karma, people reap what they sow. Every
little action has its effect on character which proclaims that a man becomes
saved by his good deeds and suffers for his bad deeds.

1.4.6 Islam and its Views on Suffering

The Quran is the sacred book of Muslims. A number of passages are
similar to Old Testament passages.

The five pillars of Islam: A Muslim is expected to confess his faith and
offer prayers at particular times during each day. He must fast during
Ramadhan. Every Muslim must give alms according to his property. He must
go on a pilgrimage to Mecca – a duty for any Muslim who is able to make this
journey.

The Muslims believe in Allah. They believe in angels who are the
messengers of Allah, and express their belief in the prophets of God. They also
believe in the books of God, and in the resurrection and the day of judgement.
Finally they express their belief in the predestination of good or bad. As
mentioned earlier, they confess that from Allah proceeds every thing – both
good and evil. Some argue that man is responsible for the evil.
1.4.7 Christianity and its View Point on Suffering

Christianity is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that God sent Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. “Christianity teaches that humanity can achieve salvation through Jesus.” 13

The Bible teaches that suffering was introduced into the world by sin (Gen. 3:15 – 19). Christ died to deliver man from suffering, corruption and death (Rom. 8:21, 1 Cor. 15:26). Satan has power to afflict men (Job 1:12; 2:6, 2 Cor. 12:7). God sends suffering (Is. 45:7). God’s people face the problem of suffering (Gen. 47:9). In the midst of suffering, believers are exhorted to live by faith.

Suffering is the punishment of sin (Hos. 8:7). Sometimes it is meant for chastisement (Ps. 94:12). Men are tested by suffering (Ps. 66:10). Suffering brings men closer to God (Rom. 8:35 – 37). It has both good and opposite effects.

Jesus Christ is the suffering servant of Yahweh (Is. 53) and “a new meaning and purpose is now seen in such unique suffering in which one can suffer in the place of and as the inclusive representative of all ... sufferings of Christ are sufficient in themselves to set all men free ...”. 14 (Is. 53:4 – 6).

The Christians believe that Christ died to release humanity from the bondage of sin and suffering.
1.5 Placement of the Book of Job

Bible is known to be “The well spring of pure English”. Simplicity of expression and clarity of thought are characteristics of the Bible prose. It is a rich mine of literary excellence and human experience. In the words of Newman Watts, “The authorized version of the Bible stabilized the English language, so that we today can appreciate any good literature written in the seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, reading our own language in its simplicity and purity”.

Bible literature is timeless and universal with its description of people and events. The Bible deals with things that hold a permanent place in human nature. The book of Job deals with the suffering of Job, the righteous man. It is not simply an interpretation of Job’s problem. It also becomes universal with its depiction of the suffering of the just.

The Book of Job belongs to the third division of the Hebrew Bible. The first three books of the writings are Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes. The Book of Job occupies a unique place in the Old Testament. Though it is Israelite in spirit and in theology, it is universal in its humanism and is often classed as part of the wisdom literature. It is concerned with expounding a kind of practical and prudential approach to life, which is often considered as wisdom.

According to the Interpreter’s Bible, “... in the Hebrew manuscripts, the book is found among the Hagiography or Holy writings, usually after the Psalms and Proverbs. In the Septuagint manuscripts, as well as in the Greek and Latin lists of Biblical books, its place varies greatly: but western tradition, under the influence of the vulgate, lists Job at the head of the poetical books”.

14
John E. Hartley in *The New International Commentary* on the Old Testament remarks, "The canonicity of the book of Job has never been seriously questioned, though its location in the various canons has fluctuated. In the Hebrew Bible, Job appears in the third division, known as the writings. The order in sephardic manuscripts is Psalms, Job, Proverbs; in Ashkenazic manuscripts, it is Psalms, Proverbs, Job. The Syriac Peshitta places Job after Deuteronomy in honour of the tradition that Moses was its author.\(^{18}\)

1.5.1 Date and Authorship of the Book

For the composition of the Book of Job, different dates have been suggested by scholars. Some would trace it to as early as the seventh century, but other scholars suggest it as third century.

According to Donald Southeard, "The complete book was known in the Greek version by about 200 B.C., so its composition must have been sometime before this, as it bears obvious marks of having passed through, a succession of editions ... some scholars believe that the present book is the result of a series of revisions and expansions by the original author...".\(^{19}\)

In *Archaeology and Bible* Joseph P. Free observes, "...the internal evidence of the book, with its background characteristic of patriarchal times, would point to a time before 1500 B.C.".\(^{20}\)

John E. Hartley is of the opinion that, "...the dates proposed by contemporary scholars fall into three periods: early 7th century B.C., during Hezekiah’s time (e.g Anderson); mid-6th Century B.C, after the fall of Jerusalem (e.g. Terrain, Guillaume); and the 4th - 3rd Century B.C., the era of the second temple (e.g. Dhorme, Fohrer Gordis). The evidence cited for the last date includes the following, the order in the list of kings, counselors, and
princes in (Job) 3:14 – 15 corresponds to the hierarchy of the Persian empire (Ezra 7:28, 8:25, Esth. 1:3); Job's request that his words be inscribed in stone outlined with lead (19:23 – 24) may allude to Darius' world famous Behistun inscription (Ca 520 B.C.) the references to swift runners in 9:25 may refer to the messenger service instituted by Darius and caravan trade from Tema and Sheba (16:19) was fostered by the Persians. Three other points that are used in favour of the late date are the large number of Aramaism through out the book, the emphasis on the individual over the community and the figure of satan in the prologue.21 The events take place outside Israel which makes it difficult to fix the date.

Gleason L. Archer Jr., observes that “...the Talmud ventures only to suggest that the writer must have been some one who lived prior to the time of Moses. There seems to be nothing in the internal evidence of the text itself to furnish a clue as to the author’s identity”.22 He also mentions that the commentators Jacques Bolder (1637) suggested that it may have been secondarily the work of Moses himself, who found it in an original Aramaic form and felt it worthwhile to translate into Hebrew, while it can scarcely be said that there is any thing Mosaic about the style of Job, this theory would atleast account for (1) its being possessed by the Hebrew, (2) its attaining a status, (3) its patriarchal flavour and setting and (4) the Aramaic flavour in some of the terminology and modes of expression exhibited by the text”.23

Some scholars consider that the Book of Job was penned by Moses, while others are of opinion that the writer of the Book of Job was an Edomite. J.H Eaton remarks that, “some scholars (e.g. Pfeiffer) see the author himself as an Edomite, especially as the wisdom of Edom is mentioned in Obadiah”.24

There are many passages in the Book of Job which reveal that the author was familiar with the number of Old Testament references. A few examples
are cited – Job 31:4, Prov. 5:21, Job 31:8, Levi. 26:16, Job 18:11 and Jer. 6:25. The author did not refer to any Israelite or Jewish institution; but in his work, he had often alluded to civil and moral laws.

Robert Pfeiffer is of the opinion that, “all such reference have an international character and represent practices in force among all ancient civilized nations”.  

The writer of the Book of Job seems to be a man of great erudition. He was learned in all the knowledge and wisdom of the Egyptians which is disclosed in his work. Many Bible scholars had even compared him with Shakespeare. Samuel J. Schultz aptly remarks, “Among the Hebrew writers, the author of the book displays the most extensive vocabulary – he is at times referred to as the Shakespeare of the Old Testament times. Exhibited in this book, are vast resources of knowledge, a superb style of forceful expression, profundity of thought, excellent command of language, noble ideals, a high standard of ethics, and a genuine love for nature. The religious and philosophical ideas have claimed the consideration of the greatest theologians and philosophers down to the present day”. The Book of Job is considered to be one of the greatest works of all times.

1.5.2 The Scope of the Study

The present study deals with the suffering of Job and his attaining salvation through humility and repentance. It throws light on the nature of suffering – physical, emotional and mental. The sufferer’s attitudes and responses to affliction are described. Suffering is not always penal; but a test of character in the life of Job. Suffering brings forth valuable traits like patience steadfastness and loyalty to God.
1.5.3 The Objectives of the Study

To describe and to state:

I. The causes of suffering
   a. Personal suffering
   b. Suffering inflicted by others
   c. Suffering of the innocent or the righteous.

II. The causes of Job's suffering – his various agonies of the body, of the mind and dereliction.

III. The three stages of suffering

IV. Release from self

V. a. Afflictions – part of life
    b. Significance of pain and sorrow in Job’s life
    c. The patience of Job in his trials
    d. Priceless truths about suffering
    e. Lessons from Job’s life

VI. a. Job’s calamities in life
    b. The accusation of the three friends
    c. A wrong theory about suffering
    d. Job’s self justification
    e. Elihu, an oracle of God.

VII. a. Job’s encounter with God.
b. His humility and submission
c. Self-knowledge and discovery
d. Restoration of his former glory with divine intervention.

1.5.4 Data for the Study

Data has been collected from the Book of Job from the Bible. The study is taken up with the dual perspective viz. of presenting the afflictions of Job, as well as the salvation of Job through his humility and surrender. The collection of data has been made in the following manner:

1. data for Job’s sufferings
2. data for analysis of revelation of Job’s character in the trials of his life
3. data for Job’s reaction and responses to the harsh censure of his friends.
4. data for Job’s obtaining salvation.

1.5.5 Methodology Adopted

Methodology is a set of rules or modes to analyze the topic of study. Some of the research methods comprise of descriptive method, comparative method, contrastive method, interpretative and analytical methods.

Descriptive method is employed to exhibit Job’s piety, prosperity, patience, popularity, generosity and his relationship with God and man. With the interpretative method Job’s fears are explained. The three cycles of speeches, the three friends’ unjust condemnation of Job, Job’s angry protest and denial are analyzed with descriptive details.
The similarities in tragic situations, sufferings, responses and attitudes of various suffering individuals in the literary texts are analyzed with Job's attitudes to sufferings from the comparative perspective.

In affliction, people differ in their behavioural patterns. Some passively accept pain, while others rebel and groan under it. Job's bitterness, his resentment and his defensive arguments are compared and contrasted with similar characters from literature and parallel literature.

Job's liberation from pain to salvation is analyzed with characters from literary texts, and discussed with descriptive details to bring out the difference in gaining the release.

1.5.6 Significance of the Study

The theme of suffering presented in the Book of Job is not related to Job the hero alone. Job's suffering is an universal problem – the suffering of the righteous. The study attempts to highlight Job's afflictions; his patience in tribulation, perseverance, unflinching faith in God, his humility, repentance submission and God's favour in bestowing salvation (his former position) thereby shows man's relation to God from the perspective of suffering. The Book of Job enriches the reader with significant truths.

1.5.7 The Truths about Suffering

I. Suffering is real; no one is exempted from it. Both the righteous and the wicked suffer.
2. Suffering has to be faced; one should not evade it or make an attempt to escape from it. (e.g. Attitude of Job's wife Ch. 2:9)

3. The suffering is not always penal.

4. The suffering individuals should not be condemned or criticized. (e.g. Job's three friends)

5. Sufferers deserve sympathy and compassion; not lectures about their code of behaviour.

6. Like Elihu, gentle and kind people comfort people in need. The mild reminders about God's purposes in a sufferer's life will help people to reconcile to their lot.

7. Suffering helps a person to grow in patience. Their faith is deepened in their pain but mostly people grow impatient and deny their faith in God.

8. Suffering individual should not indulge in irreverent talk.

9. God hears the cry of the oppressed. (In Job's case he was personally vindicated).

10. The sufferer's faith in God will be rewarded (Ch. 42).

11. The evil one is the root cause of suffering for the righteous (Ch. 1:10). But God limits its power (2:6) and brings the afflicted out of it (Ch. 42:10).

II. The Book of Job teaches about the ethical standards in the depiction of Job's exemplary character (Ch. 31). He is portrayed as a model man of piety, and purity in thought and deed.
III. Book of Job conveys a social message (Ch. 28 and 31) The orphan, the widow and the stranger should be treated with kindness, sympathy and concern.

IV. Book of Job offers hope and healing to those who are hurt on the inside. Suffering individuals bear witness to the healing message of the book (e.g. Joni Erekson) and recognize Job's patience in his ordeals. Job's faith is truly inspiring and contagious.

"Though he slay me
Yet will I trust in Him". (Ch. 13:15)

V. Therapy for the counsellors: the three friends of Job, were miserable comforters. In the portrayal of these men, the Joban writer conveys psychological truth – silence is preferred to lectures for people in distress; infact they need pity and not criticism.

IV. God's discourses and his hard questions regarding His rule in the universe exposed the ignorance of Job. Method of inquiry was God's way of inspiring confidence in Job. His questions contained the answers in them.

V. The Book of Job teaches about the source of wisdom. “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. Human wisdom is futile but divine wisdom is necessary in the management of human activities.
1.5.8 Further Research Studies

Book of Job is a rich mine of wisdom with its sublime theme of suffering and triumph of faith. The future research scholars can investigate on the following:

1. The theme of innocent sufferers in English Literature like Cordelia, St. Joan.

2. Suffering individuals like King Lear, Samson Agonistes

3. The influence of Book of Job on English Literature. The Book of Job opens up new vistas for research work on comparative study of suffering and salvation.

4. The Book of Job and Asian wisdom literature.


1.5.9 Plan of the Study

Suffering in its entirety is infinite in scope in the life of man from birth to death. It is the breath of human life. As such, an analysis and deduction is attempted in the study undertaken. For this purpose a broad distribution of the theme over seven chapters is presented.

1. General introduction.

2. The theme of suffering in the Book of Job.

3. Job's attainment of salvation through humility and surrender to God's Sovereignty.
4. The theme of suffering in the works of some of the poets, dramatists and novelists in English Literature

5. The theme of suffering in some of the Bible personalities and communities

6. The Book of Job and its contribution

7. Conclusion

Chapter one deals with the causes of suffering in general. It throws light on the three types of suffering — physical, emotional and mental. It deals with the significance of suffering in various religions thereby bringing out the universality of the theme. The third phase of the chapter presents The Book of Job, with its date, authorship and placement in the Bible.

The second chapter focuses on the sufferings of Job which is intensified and pointed because it comes undeserved. God Himself testifies to Job's innocence and permits the oppressor (satan) to victimise the innocent Job. This affliction beginning at the physical level moves on to the mental and becomes spiritual. Social ostracism is the final cutting edge of suffering. In relation to this, Job's afflictions are discussed along with other comparable literature. Priceless truths are learnt from the suffering of Job.

In as much as suffering is universal, the cry for salvation is also universal. Chapter Three shows how Job attains this. The ultimate desired effect is surrender and humility. Job's divine encounter and release form latent sin is discussed. Self-knowledge is also a part of salvation. The various approaches to salvation are briefly compared with Job's attainment of salvation.
The fourth chapter examines suffering in the works of some of the poets, dramatists and novelists. Both the vicarious, direct and personal experiences are discussed here. The fifth chapter presents the plan of salvation presented in the Bible. Suffering commencing from Adam and Eve as a result of disobedience still stalks human kind. Suffering is not selective but strikes both the righteous and the unrighteous; and as such, Job is a precursor of Lord Jesus in His unmerited affliction. This painful mystery is unravelled on the cross by our Lord Jesus in the form of surrender, submission and sacrifice. This divine and human sacrifice is the salvation for all humanity.

The sixth chapter deals with the impact of the Book of Job on society and its contribution to the problem of suffering. The psychological truths, ethical values and social message are discussed here.

The concluding chapter sums up the impressions and evaluation of the Book of Job. The study opens up new vistas for further research on the suffering of the just.
Chapter One


2) Raghul Tilak (ed.), Shakespeare As you Like it (Meerut: Rajhans Prakasham Mandir, 1983) 2.7.139-142.


5) John Malickal, Castle in India Today (Bangalore: Centre for Social action, 1991) 100.


16) Newman Watts, 1.


21) Hartley, 18.


23) Archer Jr. 458.

