Marginalization has been, by and large, described as the blatant action or tendency of human societies whereby certain sections in our community are removed or excluded from the prevalent systems of protection and integration, thus limiting their opportunities and means for survival. Marginalization lies at the core of all social, political and economic conflicts wherein vulnerable groups undergo victimization.

The historical discrimination and exclusion encountered by certain groups and communities have been sought to be ameliorated by the Indian constitutional provisions of inclusion and positive discrimination. Steps of great magnitude, for the empowerment of these excluded and marginalized groups, have been institutionalized under the Constitution of India leading to the social restructuring of the entire socio-politico-economic system. In spite of the express rights that have been embodied in the Indian Constitution, questions still loom about the sidelined fate of the unorganized sector. The condition of the unorganized sector brings to the forefront, the important question as to whether there is an inadequacy in the giving of rights or inadequacy in terms of protection of already existent rights. A matter of serious consequence is the empowerment and integration of differently abled persons. The issues faced by this group also questions the veracity of the rights guaranteed to them. Another pertinent question relates to rights that are given to, what would become the backbone of the nation someday, i.e., the children. Issues relating to education, health and general well-being of the children in India are still highly debatable. The questions relating to the legal safeguards granted to the women and the achievement of gender justice in the Indian climate is one that has not been fully settled upon to this date. The constitutional provisions, legislative protections and the
issues faced by migrants, displaced persons and refugees are an area of utmost importance especially considering the diverse populous of the country.

Marginalization is a complex as well as shifting Phenomenon linked to social status. It is also called Social Exclusion. It is the social process by which a person or a group of people are made marginal or become relegated to the edge of the society. There are different social structures that impact exclusion i.e. race, geographic location, class structure, globalization, social issues, education, religion, politics, economic status, etc.\(^1\) Marginalized group is viewed with hostility and fear. Marginality is an experience affecting millions of people throughout the world. The forms of marginalization are very, and it changes from country to country. It is true that more marginalized group exist in Third World especially in developing nations. Women, people with disabilities, Dalits, Aged people, children, minorities, poor, sexual minorities, etc. are most vulnerable marginalized groups in almost every society.\(^2\) Being excluded from economic, social and political means of promoting one’s self-determination can have adverse effects on individual and community. Poverty, dependency and feeling of shame are everyday aspects of economic dislocation and social marginalization. The effects of marginalization are extremely large. Those who are marginalized suffer from a crisis of identity, and this perhaps leads to rising in social inequality. Deprivation in various aspects of life is the most common result of marginalization.\(^3\) Material resources such as food, shelter, etc. are unfairly dispersed in society, and the marginalized individuals or groups are excluded from employment. It is true that marginalization is the unfair or unjust treatment of individual or minority groups by the majority or stronger group. Making marginalized refers to making separated from the mainstream society and being marginalized
refers to being separated from the rest of the society or forced to remain on the fringes or outskirt and not to be at the centre of social or national life. Sometimes marginalized people are not considered as an ingredient or part of the society rather they are thought to be unwanted or negligible in the building of society or nation.

In every nation or society, there are some sections of the people deprived of socio-economic opportunities for their development and they are victims of social, cultural and political exclusion. They are the marginalized, and the marginalized communities are Women, people with disabilities, Dalits, Aged people, poor, the downtrodden, etc.

In India, the caste system is a strictly hierarchical social system based on underlying notions of purity and pollution. The Indian society is broadly classified into Upper cast and Lower cast. Brahmins are on the top of the hierarchy, and Dalits or the depressed class constitutes the bottom of the hierarchy. Among them, there are also some sub-casts. Caste based discrimination entails social and economic exclusion, segregation in housing, denial and restrictions of access to public and private services and employment, and enforcement of certain types of jobs on Dalits. Dalits in India have existence as if they have their island in the same society. The geographical, cultural, social, educational existence of Dalits is different from the upper caste Indians.

The marginalization of Dalits influences all spheres of their life, violating basic human rights such as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. A major proportion of the Dalits and lower castes are still dependent on others for their livelihood. Dalits does not refer to a caste but suggest a group who are in a state of oppression, social disability and who are helpless and poor. Many Creative writers depicted this reality in their writing.
The fundamental human rights guarantees of equality and non-discrimination are legally binding obligations and do not need instrumental justifications. That said there is a growing body of evidence that human rights-based approaches, and these key guarantees, in particular, can lead to more sustainable and inclusive development results.\textsuperscript{5}

This is to show that all the indigenous peoples have been living in what may be termed as frontier regions right from the pre-historical period. They are just survivors, they have been living what seems precarious or bare existence until today. What have actually emerged today are two unequal societies or two different worlds. People in the valley are politically and economically more powerful, often linked to the national or international market. But people living in the periphery or frontier lands are still languishing for their survival. Despite the widespread impact of globalization on modern life, the indigenous people in Manipur hills still practice primitive modes of production and nomadic land use, for example, shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering with a village-based administration that does not extend beyond the community. As a result, the people have continued to retain many social handicaps and economic hardships that set them apart from the mainstream or more affluent society in the valley. This paper argues that the marginalization of the hill peoples of Manipur was deeply rooted in history and geography that was further distorted by the isolationist and ‘divide and rule’ policy of British imperial rulers.

The Colonial Experience: Origin and Historical background of Marginalized Groups:

The major strategy that had been popularly used by imperial rulers to maintain their power was “divide and rule” policy that had played a crucial part in ensuring the stability indeed, the viability of nearly every
colonial system. Richard Morrock in his ‘Heritage of Strife: The effects of colonialist “Divide and Rule” strategy upon the colonized peoples’ defines “divide and rule” as the “conscious effort of an imperialist power to create and/or turn to its own advantage the ethnic, linguistic, cultural, tribal, or religious differences within the population of a subjugated colony”6. The basic tactics of “divide and rule” as practiced by Western colonialists were to create differences within the conquered population; to exploit those differences for the benefit of the colonial power and then to politicize those differences so that they were carried over into the post-colonial period. The creation of differences can come about in several ways: first by playing one ethnic group against another; secondly, by throwing hostile ethnic groups together; thirdly, by magnifying linguistic or cultural differences; and fourthly by religious conversion. Let us now see how the British colonialist ‘divide and rule’ policy and its basic tactics were applied to various ethnic groups and communities of India Andhra Pradesh thereby resulting in their isolation and marginalization.7

Marginality is an experience that affects millions of people throughout the world. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in delving contribution to society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation. This has a tremendous impact on the development of human beings, as well as on society at large. As the objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy a productive, healthy, and creative life, it is important to address the issue of marginalization. Development is always broadly conceived in terms of mass participation.
Marginalization deprives a large majority of people across the globe from participating in the development. It is a complex problem, and there are many factors that cause marginalization. This complex and serious problem need to be addressed at the policy level. This project deals with the problems associated with the groups suffering from marginalization and the ways to reduce them.

**Meaning of Marginalized Groups:**

In general, the term ‘marginalization’ describes the overt actions or tendencies of human societies, where people who they perceive to undesirable or without useful function, are excluded, i.e., marginalized. These people, who are marginalized, from a Group or Community for their protection and integration and are known as ‘marginalized groups. This limits their opportunities and means for survival. Peter Leonard defines marginality as, “being outside the mainstream of productive activity and social reproductive activity”.

The Encyclopaedia of Public Health defines marginalized groups as, “To be marginalized is to be placed in the margins, and thus excluded from the privilege and power found at the center”. Latin observes that ‘Marginality’ is so thoroughly demeaning, for economic well-being, for human dignity, as well as for physical security. Marginal groups can always be identified by members of dominant society, and will face irrevocable discrimination.” These definitions are mentioned in different contexts and show that marginalization is a slippery and multilayered concept. Marginalization has aspects in sociological, economic, and political debates. Marginalization may manifest itself in forms varying from genocide/ethnic cleansing and other xenophobic acts/activities at one end of the spectrum, to more basic economic and social hardships at the unitary (individual/family) level.
Of course, the forms of marginalization may vary linked to the level of development of society; culturally, and as importantly, with relation to economics. For example, it would be true, that there would exist more “marginalized” groups in the Third World”, and developing nations, that in the Developed/First-World nations. Indeed, there can be a distinction made, on the basis of the “choice” that one has within this context those in the Third World who live under impoverished conditions, through no choice of their own (being far removed from the protectionism that exists for people in the First World,) are often left to die due to hunger, disease, and war. One can also add to these various minorities, as well as women. Within the First World, low-income drug addicts stand out as being the most marginalized. This deliberate or chosen marginalization of people carries with it aspects of a so-called “Social Darwinism”.

To further clarify the meaning and concept let us discuss certain characteristics of marginalized groups: Usually a minority group has the following characteristics

1) It suffers from discrimination and subordination.
2) They have physical and cultural traits that set them apart, and Which are disapproved of, by a dominant group.
3) They share a sense of collective identity and common burdens.
4) They have shared social rules about who belongs, and who does not.
5) They have a tendency to marry within the group.

Thus, marginalization is a complex as well as shifting phenomenon linked to social status.

**Problems of Marginalized Groups:**

Most vulnerable marginalized groups in almost every society can be summarized as below: Women: Under different economic conditions,
and under the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal and religious factors, marginalization is one of the manifestations of gender inequality. In other words, women may be excluded from certain jobs and occupations, incorporated into certain others, and marginalized in others. In general, they are always marginalized about men, in every country and culture. Women (or, men) don’t present a homogeneous category where members have common interests, abilities, or practices. Women belonging to lower classes, lower castes, illiterate, and the poorest region have different levels of marginalization than their better-off counterparts.

**People with disabilities:** People with disabilities have had to battle against centuries of biased assumptions, harmful stereotypes, and irrational fears. The stigmatization of disability resulted in the social and economic marginalization of generations with disabilities, and, like many other oppressed minorities, this has left people with disabilities in a severe state of impoverishment for centuries. The proportion of the disabled population in India is about 21.9 million. The percentage of the disabled population to the total population is about 2.13 percent. There are interstate and interregional differences in the disabled population. The disabled face various types of barriers while seeking access to health and health services. Among those who are physically challenged women, children and aged are more vulnerable and need attention.

**Schedule Castes (Dalits):** The caste system is a strictly hierarchical social system based on underlying notions of purity and pollution. Brahmins are on the top of the hierarchy, and Shudras or Dalits constitute the bottom of the hierarchy. The marginalization of Dalits influences all spheres of their life, violating basic human rights such as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. A major proportion of the lower castes and Dalits are still dependent on others for
their livelihood. Dalits does not refer to a caste but suggests a group who are in a state of oppression, social disability and who are helpless and poor. Literacy rates among Dalits are very low. They have meagre purchasing power and have poor housing conditions as well as have low access to resources and entitlements. Structural discrimination against these groups takes place in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse that receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system. Physical segregation of their settlements is common in the villages forcing them to live in the most unhygienic and inhabitable conditions. All these factors affect their health status, access to healthcare and quality of life. There are high rates of malnutrition reported among the marginalized groups resulting in mortality, morbidity, and anemia. Access to and utilization of healthcare among the marginalized groups is influenced by their socio-economic status within the society.

Caste based marginalization is one of the most serious human rights issues in the world today, adversely affecting more than 260 million people mostly reside in India. Caste-based discrimination entails social and economic exclusion, segregation in housing, denial and restrictions of access to public and private services and employment, and enforcement of certain types of jobs on Dalits, resulting in a system of modern day slavery or bonded labor. However, in recent years due to affirmative action and legal protection, the intensity of caste based marginalization is reducing.

Scheduled Tribes: The Scheduled Tribes like the Scheduled Castes face structural discrimination within the Indian society. Unlike the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are a product of marginalization based on ethnicity. In India, the Scheduled Tribes population is around 84.3 million and is considered to be socially and
economically disadvantaged. Their percentages in the population and numbers, however, vary from State to State. They are mainly landless with little control over resources such as land, forest, and water. They constitute a large proportion of agricultural laborers, casual laborers, plantation laborers, industrial laborers, etc. This has resulted in poverty among them, low levels of education, poor health and reduced access to healthcare services. They belong to the poorest strata of the society and have severe health problems.

Elderly or Aged People: Ageing is an inevitable and inexorable process in life. In India, the population of the elderly is growing rapidly and is emerging as a serious area of concern for the government and the policy planners. According to data on the age of India’s population, in Census 2001, there are a little over 76.6 million people above 60 years, constituting 7.2 percent of the population. The number of people over 60 years in 1991 was 6.8 percent of the country’s population. The vulnerability of the elderly is not only due to an increased incidence of illness and disability but also due to their economic dependency on their spouses, children, and other younger family members. According to the 2001 census, 33.1 percent of the elderly in India live without their spouses. The widowers among older men from 14.9 per cent as against 50.1 per cent widows, among elderly women. Among the elderly (80 years and above), 71.1 per cent of women were widows while widowers formed only 28.9 per cent of men. Lack of economic dependence has an impact on their access to food, clothing and healthcare. Among the basic needs of the elderly, medicine features as the highest unmet need. Health care of the elderly is a major concern for the society as aging is often accompanied by multiple illnesses and physical ailments.

Children: Children Mortality and morbidity among children are caused and compounded by poverty, their sex and caste position in
society. All these have consequences on their nutrition intake, access to healthcare, environment and education. Poverty has a direct impact on the mortality and morbidity among children. In India, a girl child faces discrimination and differential access to nutritious food and gender-based violence are evident from the falling sex ratio and the use of technologies to eliminate the girl child. The manifestations of these violations are various, ranging from child labor, child trafficking, to commercial sexual exploitation and many other forms of violence and abuse. With an estimated 12.6 million children engaged in hazardous occupations, for instance, India has the largest number of child laborers under the age of 14 in the world. Among children, there are some groups of street children and children of sex workers who face additional forms of discrimination. A large number of children are reportedly trafficked to the neighboring countries. Trafficking of children also continues to be a serious problem in India. While systematic data and information on child protection issues are still not always available, evidence suggests that children in need of special protection belong to communities suffering disadvantage and social exclusion such as scheduled castes and tribes, and the poor (UNICEF, India).

**Sexual Minorities:** Another group that faces stigma and discrimination are the sexual minorities. Those identified as gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, Kothi and Hijra; experience various forms of discrimination within the society and the health system. Due to the dominance of heteronymous sexual relations as the only form of normally acceptable relations within the society, individuals who are identified as having same-sex sexual preferences are ridiculed and ostracized by their family and are left with very limited support structures and networks of community that provide them conditions of
care and support. Their needs and concerns are excluded from the various health policies and programs.

The caste system has shown resilience in adapting itself to changing situations. However, the castes that handled the creation of wealth in the country were never given the status that they deserved. As a result, the OBCs and Dalits who are involved in production activity are given very low positions; while those who do not contribute anything but are involved in the exchange and implicated in contributing intangible services obtain a higher status in India. In European society, particularly in France during the French Revolution, they were considered a sterile class. Stephen Fuchs (1981) surveyed around 630 artisan castes, mostly belonging to the untouchable category and came out with new conclusion that, ‘the ancestors of the present low castes and outcastes were, on the whole, the artisans and manual workers in this culture. They performed the tasks of blacksmiths, potters, weavers and leather workers. They were well skilled in the arts, in singing, playing musical instruments and dancing, in the composition of songs, poetry, legends, and ballads. They were also the painters and sculptors of culture. Most probably the wonderful architecture temples, palaces and monuments, the very artistic paintings and sculptures in caves and temples were conceived and produced by the descendants of these early artisans and village servants. However, he found that there is a difference in the status of these artisan castes of the North and South and in different parts of the country depending upon how the skills are perceived and utilized by the upper castes. Fuchs opined that ‘excellence in a certain trade may also help in gaining a respected social status; weavers who produced high quality cloth or worked in silk, smiths who became the moulders or carvers of the figures of gods and goddesses or masons and carpenters who specialized in temple architecture, stone-
cutters who became sculptors and even distillers who became money-lenders or land owners, have risen to the status of clean Shudras and sometimes higher’. But the above optimistic note with which he concluded his study has not fully conveyed the situation in the 21st century.

Most of the artisan occupations that the Shudras and Dalits performed were appropriated once the occupation or skill gained significance and economic return. Simply several traditional occupations were slowly transformed into secular professions after interaction with the western world. Some of the occupations have been modernized with the use of modern technology and are considered advanced. The OBCs and Dalits who were denied access to education have failed to modernize their occupations, and they have failed to enter modern sectors of the economy. Therefore, once upper castes appropriated these occupations with the use of modern technology (for example, fishermen were displaced by upper castes using trawlers and mechanized boats), lower caste artisans lapsed into much lower positions than they previously held; such as the agriculture sector or menial occupations in the urban area. Thus, they fail to participate in the process of modernization with dignity owing to the legacy of their past. Access to education and the reservation of positions of power in civil society appear to be the solutions to this malady in the immediate future.8

**Marginalization and Productive Communities:**

Marginalization has been defined as a complex process of relegating specific groups of people to the lower or outer edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally and socially following the policy of exclusion. It denies a section of the society equal access to productive resources and avenues for the realization of their productive
human potential and opportunities for their full capacity utilization. This pushes the community to poverty, misery, low wage and discrimination and livelihood insecurity. Their upward social mobility is being limited. Politically this process of relegation denies people equal access to the formal power structure and participation in the decision-making processes leading to their subordination to and dependence on the economically and politically dominant groups of society. As a consequence of the economic, political and cultural deprivation a vast chunk of the population has emerged to be socially ignorant, illiterate, uneducated and dependent. Devoid of the necessities of life they are relegated to live on the margins of society.

In developing countries like India, civil societies have assumed a much significant role in the social development of the marginalized people. The marginalized community looks upon the civil society with expectation as state’s development initiatives have failed to percolate to the bottom strata of the society. In the contemporary development scenario, the concept of empowerment of the marginalized has got a special focus and civil society initiatives have been given special emphasis. As the role of civil society has acquired a role in the social development, it has developed the relationship with the marginalized community.

It is envisaged that Government will not only refrain from discriminating but will actively undertake to remove existing discriminatory practices in 'the private sphere, but this attack' 'on discrimination is only one facet 'of the constitutional scheme to secure equality. The Constitution also directs and empowers the Government to undertake special measures for the advancement of backward groups.

The wording" any provision" in Article 16(4) and" any. The special provision" in Article 15(4) gives the State great leeway
prescribing the method of operation for such schemes. Article 16 (4) dealing with, "Government employment confines the State to the method of “reservation”10. ‘Presumably’ this rules out other possible ways of encouraging these groups in ‘Government employment. But it is ‘broad’ enough to include preferential rules of recruitment, such as waiver of age requirements, application fees, and minimum educational qualifications. State power to establish preferences for employment is not confined to posts directly under the State: where the State acts as employing the agency for State-aided schools, it may make such preference a condition of the aid. Outside the Government employment area, the State is not limited to the reservation as a method. Thus, the State may provide such benefits as educational facilities, fee concessions or housing exclusively for backward groups.

This is an attempt to analyze the rise of Marginalized groups and backward castes movements in modern India. These movements came into existence in response to the hierarchically structured, unequal, exploitative, suppressive and oppressive social system, which has denied the basic human rights of education, property and power. Even though there were movements against the caste system in Indian history, it is during the colonial and the post-colonial period only one can find the sophisticated social movements in various parts of the country. Due to lack of co-ordination, networking at the national level, homogeneity and existence of the class differences within the backward castes, therefore, these movements are unable to consolidate. The dynamics of these movements can be understood by analyzing them in an integrated framework to understand the nature of backward castes mobilization in Andhra Pradesh.

The lines of exploitation in Pre-British India, in terms of the production, extraction and accumulation of surplus, were structured
through the caste system. This identified a particular caste division of labour involving specific forms of hierarchy among the exploited, with at least three major groups identified in most villages: toiling peasant castes, most of whom were simply cultivators but with some village management powers held by a dominant lineage, artisans and service castes performing particular caste-duties within a Jajmani system: a large caste of general labourers working for the village and its dominant sections and classes as 'untouchable'. Tribals and pastoralists outside the village were also among the exploited sections. The exploited as a whole included a very wide range of castes, the broad 'toiling caste majority'  

The toiling caste majorities also known as the backward classes, which is a general term applied to three different categories of people who have been identified, they are the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes, which together constitute about one-third of the total population of India. Among these the other backward castes constitute, in terms of numerical strength and castes, more. The term other backward classes were widely used by the British administration come to mean 'other Backward Castes' in administrative usage. It is used in the Constitution of India to designate backward classes other than the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes. Article 15 (4) refers to them as 'socially and educationally backward classes of citizens' and article 340 as 'socially and educationally backward classes'. Article 16 (4) mentions 'backward class of citizens' and article 46 refers to 'the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people.' No doubt, the constitutional recognition of the other backward classes as a category of public policy made it one of an all-India scope but by contrast it is a more nebulous category. The other backward classes were mentioned in the Constitution in general terms. There were no all India lists drawn for the other backward classes. They were not
separately enumerated in the Constitution, and in fact, one has to work with only a rough estimate of their population. Their position was sought to be defined in more specific terms by the Backward Classes Commission. 12

The Other Backward Castes also termed as backward classes in the policy matter and bureaucratic circles is having theoretical limitation. In fact, in the Indian context all the forward castes and Dalits have got the class character due to their privileged and underprivileged social and economic position. Therefore, they may be characterized as the upper class and lower class or exploiting class and exploited class. The backward castes also come under the exploited category by the upper caste but in a different form. The backward castes are collectively exploited and deprived all the privileges along with Dalits. But untouchability is not practiced in the case of backward castes. For practicing the traditional caste-based occupations to provide goods and services to the rulers in particular and mass, in general, got the higher position than the Dalits and lower position than the upper castes and they are highly heterogeneous and stratified with similar socio-economic backwardness and interdependence nature of all these occupational castes. The traditional occupation prevented them to come out of the social stranglehold resulting in continued backwardness. Therefore, instead of calling them as backward classes, it would be more appropriate to term them as the 'Backward Castes.' Therefore, Other Backward Castes are defined as the producing classes in India either in agriculture or secondary manufacture through handcraft household production or in guilds of the goods that were of common use for society or specifically for the ruling classes. All these sections of society were made up of dependent 'jatis' whether as peasants or agricultural labour or as artisans upon superior castes: dependence, in other words, were of the
collectivities and not merely of the individuals. In other words, the direct producers in India were of a 'collective' kind unlike the 'individual un-freeoms of the European serf or earlier of the slaves.\textsuperscript{13}

Socially deprived backward castes lived in a social limbo somewhere between the upper caste Shudras and the Untouchables. The Other Backward Castes existed all over the country in general and in every village in the State in particular. The caste stratification, the occupation division, and its hierarchical nature always posed problems in backward castes social mobilization. It is a vicious circle in the sense that stratification cannot be altered without social mobilization, and mobilization is a problem due to stratification. It is this enigma that needs to be probed into getting at the law of change of these communities. To overcome the feudal caste exploitation and for the protection of the rights, some lower caste movements came into existence during the colonial and post-colonial period.

These movements have questioned the very foundations of the caste-feudalism to overcome the exploitation, social suppression and for the human dignity. Before, going into the analysis of these social movements, it would be appropriate here to discuss the conceptual framework of the social movements.

A social movement may also be seen as symptomatic of some malfunctioning of society like deprivation, discrimination, inequalities, social imbalance, but not sufficient to spurn a social movement. An awareness of the discrimination or deprived condition is necessary. This awakening created in a sufficiently large number of people leads to a widespread collective mobilization. Often this consciousness exists in the middle class and the intelligentsia, who tend to be the leaders of the movement. Movements begin in the minds of men with ideas. Hungry men do not revolt as such, as they are deeply involved in the primary
struggle for survival. The genesis of different kinds of social and cultural movements has been analyzed regarding the concepts of strain, revitalization, and relative deprivation: A position of relative deprivation alone will not generate a movement. But it is the perception of a situation and the estimation of capabilities by activity. MSA. Rao further stresses that relative deprivation refers not only to material condition but also to the other spheres of life such as religion, education, politics and civic life.

It is found that the notion of relative deprivation adequate in analyzing the structural conditions, which provide the necessary conditions for explaining the genesis of backward classes movement. The concept of relative deprivation incorporates the virtue of Marxian analysis without accepting the caste struggle as the only ideology. It is important to realize that caste, ethnicity and class are not mutually exclusive categories. They interact and intersect and articulate either in caste, ethnic or class idioms. For example on the surface the conflict between the backward classes and the upper castes (Brahmins, Reddies, Kammas, Velamas and Kapus), looks like caste conflict, but it has class underpinnings. The upper castes own land and exercised control over productive resources, whereas backward castes are occupancy tenants, small peasants, and laborers.

A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavor to promote a change in any direction and by any means not excluding violence, illegal means, revolution or withdrawal into 'utopian' community. The social mobility and changes that are brought about by protest movement are based on challenges, protest dissent, confrontation, aggression and revolt as opposed to acquiescence.

All movements have political implications even if their members do not strive for political power. Heberle holds that all social movements
fulfil two key functions in society. They help both in the process of socialization and train the elites. Movements that are directed only at the change in ideology or culture movements that are primarily non-political can have a fairly widespread impact but this impact tends to be diffused and impermanent.

The study of social movements logically belongs to the realm of the social process; it is related to both social structure and the consequence of change. Although there are variations in how social scientists define social movements. These are collective mobilization, the presence of an ideology and an orientation towards change.

Social movements may be classified on the basis of one or the other criterion on the basis of the locus, social movements may be classified into linguistic, religious, sectarian, caste, peasant, worker, tribal, racial, ethnic, women and students. Taking the nature of social change as the criterion movements may be classified into reformative, transformative and revolutionary. Similarly, the nature of their ideology provides another criterion by which social movements may be classified into either protest, millenarian or revitalizing. The present study falls broadly under the general category of caste and class movements based on the locus. The movements are transformative concerning the nature of the social changes being brought about.

The backward classes’ movements have varied in their support basis, an extent of relative deprivation, goals they were seeking and the means they adopted. The variations were strongly determined by the different cleavages provided by the inherited social structure, and the impact of the British rule and different public policies adopted by the post-independence governments, both at the Center and in the States.

The rise of the backward castes in North India, unlike in the peninsular India is, basically a post-independent phenomena. In the
south, the backward classes’ movement had its origin in the non-Brahmin polarization whereas in the north the conflict emerged between the forward and "twice-born" castes of Brahmins. Kayasthas, Bhumihars, Rajputs on the one hand and the intermediate castes of Yadavs, Ahirs, Kurmis, etc., on the other.

The Varna divide between the twice-born castes and Shudras in the Hindi heart-land areas as historically demarcated a rigid social hierarchy, one in which the lower castes were deprived of education, denied social dignity, and confined to manual work of cultivation or other low-status artisan and service occupations. It is possible to divide the Shudra category in North India into two clearly identifiable sub-categories what are called the upper Shudras and lower Shudras. The former comprise such economically powerful and politically aggressive groups as the Jats, Yadavs, Kurmis, and Koiris, while the latter include the humble Hajjam, Kumbhar, Lohar, Teli, Taiwan, Dhanuk, and Mallah. The Jats included in the backward classes list and regarded themselves as the leaders of the backward castes. It is the inclusion of all these heterogeneous groups within the Shudra category that made for its large size and had enabled leaders of the backward castes to press hard their claim for special status in the post-independent period.

**Development and Marginalization:**

The development process has failed to end the deprivation faced by the marginalized communities in most of the developing nations. In fact, it has contributed to the social reproduction of marginalization. According to Human Development Report, the marginalized people are emerged as victims of these processes of development. In every society, there are some sections of people who are deprived of socio-economic opportunities for their sustenance and are victims of social, cultural and political exclusion. In India, the marginalized communities are rural
poor, scheduled tribes and castes, manual workers in unorganized sectors, etc. The marginalized people have very little or no participation in the development process. The initiatives are channelled through pre-existing power structure.

Their conditions have remained unchanged over the centuries even after government initiatives implemented for their upward mobility. There has been serious thinking about the participation of marginalized communities in the process of development. Due to government failure of integrating them into the development process, an alternative has emerged in the form of civil society to evolve the strategy for empowerment of the marginalized people.\(^{14}\)

**Marginalization in Schedule Tribes:**

In this study special reference is made the marginalization of schedule tribes, therefore we are discussing the marginalization of STs in a more elaborative way. The Scheduled Tribes like the Scheduled Castes face structural discrimination within the Indian society. Unlike the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are a product of marginalization based on ethnicity. There are approximately two hundred million tribal people in the entire globe, which means about four percent of the global population. In India, the Scheduled Tribes population is around 84.3 million and is considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Their percentages in the population and numbers, however, vary from State to State, 50% of the India’s tribal population is concentrated in the North-eastern region of the country, who are, geographically and culturally, are at widely different stages of social as well as their economic development is concerned and their problems too differ from area to area within their groups.

From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of societal exploitation. They are mainly landless with little
control over resources such as land, forest and water. They constitute a large proportion of agricultural laborers, casual laborers, plantation laborers, industrial laborers, etc. This has resulted in poverty among them, low levels of education, poor health and reduced access to healthcare services. They belong to the poorest strata of the society and have severe health problems. They are less likely to afford and get access to healthcare services when required. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from a modern civilized way of living for so many centuries. The health outcomes among the Scheduled Tribes are very poor even as compared to the Scheduled Castes. The Infant Mortality Rate among Scheduled Castes is 83 per 1000 live births while it is 84.2 per 1000 per live births among the Scheduled Tribes.

Among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, the most vulnerable are women, children and aged, those living with HIV/AIDS, mental illness and disability. These groups face severe forms of discrimination that denies them access to treatment and prevents them from achieving a better health status. Gender-based violence and domestic violence is high among women in general in India. Girl child and women from the marginalized groups are more vulnerable to violence. The dropout and illiteracy rates among them are high.

Early marriage, trafficking, forced prostitution and other forms of exploitation are also reportedly high among them. In situations of caste conflict, women from marginalized groups face sexual violence from men of the upper caste, i.e., rape and other forms of mental torture and humiliation.

Nevertheless, the Constitution of India has made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the tribal people throughout the country. And the greatest challenge that the Government of India has
been facing since Independence, till today is the proper provision of social justice to the scheduled tribe population, besides its rigorous efforts in implementing the new policy of tribal development and integration, was initiated throughout the country. It is clear that they are given low position in the hierarchically divided social system, and they are producing class either of commodities or services, which are for the general use in the society. In this process, they are denied basic rights, which are essential for the development of the community or individual and the Constitution of India is also not clear on these aspects.

**Empowerment of Marginalised People in India:**

In developing countries like India, civil societies like NGOs play a crucial role in the social development of the marginalised people. Again these groups of people have also developed a sense of expectations from the NGOs as the state-sponsored development initiatives have miserably failed to elevate their status in society, in the contemporary development discourse, the concept of empowerment of the marginalised has got a special focus and civil society initiatives have been given an emphasis.

As the role of civil society has acquired a special significance for the social development and the empowerment of the marginalised people, and it has developed a substantive relationship with them who are the marginalised people and how the developmental processes have contributed to their marginalisation in society.15

Marginalisation in conventional parlance is a complex process of relegating specific group(s) of people to the lower or outer edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally, and socially following the parameters of exclusion and inclusion.
**Dimensions of Denials and Deprivations:**

The process of marginalisation economically denies a large section of society equal access to productive resources, avenues for the realisation of their human productive potential, and opportunities for their full capacity utilisation. These denials ultimately push these populations to the state of rampant poverty, human misery, devaluation of their work, low wage and wage discrimination, casualisation in the workforce, and livelihood insecurity.

Thus, they are provided with very limited space for upward occupational and social mobility and are excluded from the range of economic opportunities and choices. Politically, this process of relegation denies these people equal access to the formal power structure and participation in the decision-making processes leading to their subordination to and dependence on the economically and politically dominant groups of society. Politically they emerge to be the underdogs, underrepresented and disempowered.  

In the continuous process of this relegation, they emerge to be culturally excluded from the mainstream of society becoming “part society with part culture”, “outsider for within”, “alienated and disintegrated”. They eventually get a stigmatised cultural existence, an ascribed low social status and become the victims of cultural segregation. As a consequence of the economic, political and cultural deprivation, a vast chunk of the population of the country has emerged to be socially ignorant, illiterate, uneducated and dependent. Devoid of the necessities of life they are relegated to live on the margins of society with a subhuman existence.

**Artificial Structure of Hierarchy:**

Indeed marginalisation is a man-made and socially constructed process that is permuted and continuously reproduced on the basis of on
unequal relationship of dependency and domination. In this context, even the natural differentiation between men and women, linguistic or ethnic groups and so on are put in an order of hierarchy with the guiding principle of domination and subordination.

This process of creating hierarchy has arranged social groups in a steep ordering of people, with a powerful few at the social and economic command deciding the mainstream of the society, polity and the economy. On the other hand, within the same arrangement the vast majority has remained powerless, occupying the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and surviving at the periphery of the social order.

**Bases of Legitimacy and Reproduction:**

The process of marginalisation has also been historically embedded in a socio-cultural context. Significantly there are strong institutional, normative and ideological bases, steaming out of the primordial interpretation of the institutional and normative arrangements of caste, ethnicity, race, gender, patriarchy, religion and so on, to provide legitimacy to the processes of marginalisation.

Again, the ongoing processes of socialisation, education, politicisation, enculturation, etc.; contribute to their reproduction in society. Thus, over a period, the socially constructed marginalised categories tend to appear to be the empirical categories, viz., the low castes, tribes, women, blacks and so on.

**Development Strategy and Marginalisation:**

The development strategies, which were implemented within the pre-existing structural arrangements of society, have not been able to bring an end to the deprivation of the marginalised groups, rather than have largely contributed to the social reproduction of marginalisation.

The Human Development Report 1990 highlighted ruthless, voiceless, jobless, futureless facts of development. Indeed, the
marginalised people have emerged to be the major victim of these processes of development. In every human society, there are vulnerable sections of marginalised population who are deprived of socio-economic opportunities and choices for their minimum sustenance and are victims of the artificial structure of hierarchy and social, cultural and political exclusion. In the Indian context, marginalised people are the rural poor, urban, slum-dwellers, manual workers in unorganised sectors, scheduled castes, tribes, women, and other such categories.

An analysis of historical facts reveals that the pre-existing arrangement of distribution of power is hierarchical in nature. This process of hierarchicalisation has arranged social groups in the steep ordering of people with a powerful “few” at the social and economic command, deciding the mainstream of the society, polity and the economy. On the other hand, within the same arrangement, the vast majority have remained powerless, occupying the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and surviving at the periphery or the margin of the social order. Here power as an enabling provision has deprived the powerless of the chance to decide the course of their lives by themselves.

While talking of authority (legitimised power) as the accompaniment of empowerment, James Herrick points out that authority, in general, is used in the following contexts: (a) regulatory, based on one’s formal position and status in relation to others; (b) expert knowledge, where the expert may possess the power to define ordinary people or to withhold knowledge from those whose well-being is affected by it; and (c) relationship ability or interpersonal skills, where power comes from interpersonal influence based on abilities to work with people.18
In human society, however, everybody has no equal authority as people have unequal access to the resources that determine power. Indeed, those who have power are those who have control over material resources, knowledge and ideology.

Hence the process of gaining control over self, ideology, material and knowledge resources, which determine power, may be termed empowerment. Thus, the process of gaining control over resources is to be seen within the given context of devisal deprivation, the structure of hierarchy and the process of legitimisation and reproduction. Indeed, the process of empowerment endeavours to construct an alternative context for equal access to the resources that determine power.

Dynamics of Power Relations: The meaning of power in empowerment practice needs to be examined in terms of power relations. First, that there should be the ability to exercise power in a given context as having power is not the same as exercising it. Second, the exercise of power takes in the objective reality of empowerment the structural conditions that affect the allocation of power; seizing or creating opportunities in the environment, changing structural conditions. Third, power relations can be symmetrical or asymmetrical.

Relations of symmetry are those where relatively equal amounts and type of power and authority are exercised and are based on reciprocity Relations of asymmetry those involving unequal amount and types of authority and are those of subordination and super-ordination. It is the latter case power relations of asymmetry, which we suggest is the major stage for empowerment practice.

Principle of Change and Transformation:

The process of empowerment challenges the power structures of subordination. In the words of Sen and Crown empowerment is concerned with the transformation of the structure of subordination. It
implies a process of redistribution of power within and between families/societies and a process aiming at social equality, which can be achieved only by disempowering some structures, systems and institutions. To Sharma, it is having a specific focus for the disadvantaged sections. The processes of the demolition of the pre-existing structure of subordination and redistribution of power, however, are not automatic.

These also involve participatory approaches that enable people to emancipate themselves, a process of the creation of new knowledge, a process of conscientisation and new identity formation with alternative sensibility. Indeed, the process of empowerment is a social movement that looks for a radical change in the systemic arrangements of society.

Hence, empowerment is viewed not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end a strategy to bring liberation from all domination. Liberation from all domination to Freire is the fundamental theme of this epoch. This liberation is not a mechanical process but the critical thinking of the socio-historical reality of the life; ability to intervene in reality with a commitment is the harbingers of liberation. To quote Freire:

Men emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality, as it is unveiled. Intervention represents a step forward from emergence and results from the conscientisation of the situation. Conscientisation is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristics of all emergencies. By achieving awareness, they come to perceive reality differently.

In developing countries like India, development practices were geared towards “growth with stability”. In the fifties and early sixties with the basic thrust being for industrialisation, agricultural modernisation and expansion of infrastructure, education and mass
communication was given top priority. However, in the backdrop of imbalanced economic development, increased class inequality, gender segregation and sharp downward mobility of a vast section of the population along with increased levels of poverty, illiteracy and ill health, development policy was reoriented in India in the early seventies to incorporate the philosophy of “social justice” in the development discourse.¹⁹

This reorientation of “development with justice” envisaged strategies to integrate the hitherto neglected “underprivileged”, “weaker sections”, “deprived and marginalised groups” into the mainstream of society by providing various state-sponsored economic (employment, access to productive resources, etc.) and social (education, training, healthcare, water, housing, etc.) benefits to them.

The development practice in India has been reoriented once again since the mid-eighties to associate the notion of empowerment with “development”. This reorientation aims at ensuring the necessities of life to the people “by sharing power” with them through institutionalised means, i.e., laws, legal procedures and international obligation. The significant point of departure here is that while the earlier discourses saw the poor people as “beneficiaries”, the emergent one has recognised them as “partners in development”.

Accordingly, there has been a new coinage of the term “social/human development” since the mid-eighties with the recognition that the “human person is the central subject of development”. The context of this reorientation, however, has been globalisation and the structural adjustment programme that implicitly or explicitly looks for the reduction of state expenditure in the social sector health, education, food security and other basic needs and the encouragement of privatisation. Thus, the state has emerged as “central to economic and
social development not as a direct provider of growth, but as a partner, catalyst and facilitator”.

**Active Role of the State in Planning:**

It is necessary to recognize that for the vast majority of the discriminated groups, State intervention is crucial and necessary. Similarly, the use of economic and social planning as an instrument of planned development is equally necessary. Thus, planned State intervention to ensure fair access and participation in social and economic development in the country is necessary.

**Improved Access to Capital:**

The poverty level among the SC and ST cultivators is 30% and 40% respectively, which is much higher compared with non-scheduled cultivators (18%). Similarly, the poverty incidences of those in business are very high 33% for SC and 41% for ST compared with only 21% of non-scheduled businesses. The viability and productivity of self-employed households need to be improved by providing adequate capital, information, technology and access to markets. It is a pity that though the STs do own some land, they lack the relevant technological inputs to improve the productivity of their agriculture.

**Improved Employment in Public and Private Sectors:**

There is a need to review and strengthen employment guarantee schemes both in rural and urban areas, particularly in drought-prone and poverty-ridden areas. Rural infrastructure and other productive capital assets can be generated through large-scale employment programmes. This will serve the dual purpose of reducing poverty and ensuring economic growth through improvement in the stock of capital assets and infrastructure.
Education and Human Resource Development:

Firstly, lower literacy/level of education and the continual discrimination of SC/STs in educational institutions pose a major problem. The government should take a second look at the Education Policy and develop major programmes for strengthening the public education system in villages and cities on a much larger scale than today. There is a necessity to reallocate government resources for education and vocational training. For millions of poor students located in rural areas, the loan schemes do not work. We should develop an affordable, uniform and better quality public educational system up to the university level. Public education system is our strength and needs to be further strengthened. Promotion of such private education systems that creates inequality and hierarchy should be discouraged.

Marginality is a living condition that affects millions of people throughout the world. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in earning their share from the society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation. This has a tremendous impact on the development of human beings, as well as on society at large. As the objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy a productive, healthy, and creative life, it is important to address the issue of marginalization.

Educational Levels among Social Groups:

The differences in the levels of education among the different social groups are examined on the basis of the data shown in the Table 2. It presents the area-wise and sex-wise educational levels among the social groups in India during 2009-10.
It is observed from the table that among the rural males, the rate of illiteracy ranges from 35.8 per cent among the ST, 33.1 percent in the case of SC, 25.3 percent for the Other Backward Class (OBC) and 17.4 per cent in the case of others. This indicates that the proportion of an illiterate population is considerably higher among the ST and SC communities than among the OBC and others. Among the literates, the proportion of those with primary level of education is higher among the ST (26.4 per cent) and SC (27.6 percent) than among the OBC (25.2 percent) and others (23.1 percent), which underlines the fact that among the marginalised section (ST and SC), educational level is mostly centred at the primary level. This is underscored more so by the fact that at higher levels of education, the rate is less among the marginalised section than among the OBC and others.
Area and Sex-wise Levels of Education among the Social Groups in India, 2009-10

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social Groups</th>
<th>Levels of Education</th>
<th>Not Literate</th>
<th>Upto Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Hr. Sec</th>
<th>Diploma/Certificate</th>
<th>Graduate &amp; Above</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td><strong>Rural Male</strong></td>
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*Note:* Figures in percentage.  
Moreover, such difference aggravates with the level of education. For instance, at the middle school level, the difference in rate between the marginalised section and others is only 1-2 per cent, which grows to 2-5 per cent at the level of graduation and above.

**Food Security Programs:**

The public distribution system should also be revived and strengthened. In distributing Fair Price Shops in villages, priority should be given to the SC/ST female and male groups, as some studies have pointed out that they are discriminated upon in the Public Distribution System and Mid-day Meal schemes.

**Public Health System:**

The public health system in rural areas has also been by and large neglected. Therefore, the primary health system in rural areas and public health system in urban areas must be revived, and more funds should be allocated for the same.

**Untouchability and Discrimination:**

The practice of untouchability and a large number of atrocities inflicted on Dalits continue even today mainly because of hidden prejudices and neglect on the part of officials responsible for the implementation of Special Legislations; i.e. the Protection of Civil Rights Act (PCRA) and the Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA). The Government should make a meaningful intervention in this regard so as to mitigate the sufferings of Dalits due to the practice of untouchability and atrocities inflicted upon them and should also treat this matter on a priority basis to ensure that the officials and the civil society at large are sensitized on this issue.

**Vulnerable Groups in India:**

In India, there are multiple socio-economic disadvantages that members of particular groups experience which limit their access to
health and healthcare. The task of identifying the vulnerable groups is not an easy one. Besides there are multiple and complex factors of vulnerability with different layers and more often than once it cannot be analysed in isolation. The present document is based on some of the prominent factors on the basis of which individuals or members of groups are discriminated in India, i.e., structural factors, age, disability, mobility, stigma and discrimination that act as barriers to health and healthcare. The vulnerable groups that face discrimination include Women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Children, Aged, Disabled, Poor migrants, People living with HIV/AIDS and Sexual Minorities. Sometimes each group faces multiple barriers due to their multiple identities. For example, in a patriarchal society, physically challenged women face double discrimination of being women and being physically challenged.

Human right applies universally to all. The process of identifying vulnerable groups within the health and human right generated from the pressing reality on the ground that stemmed from the fact that there are certain groups who are vulnerable and marginalized lacking full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including rights to political participation, health and education. A vulnerability within the right to health framework means deprivation of certain individuals and groups whose rights have been violated from the exercising agency. Certain groups in the society often encounter discriminatory treatment and need special attention to avoid potential exploitation. This population constitutes what is referred to as Vulnerable Groups. Vulnerable groups are disadvantaged as compared to others mainly on account of their reduced access to medical services and the underlying determinants of health such as safe and potable drinking water, nutrition, housing, sanitation, etc. For example, persons with disabilities often don’t get
employment or adequate treatment or people living with HIV/AIDS, face various forms of discrimination that affects their health and reduces their access to health services.\textsuperscript{20}

Structural forms are attached to the different relationships between the subordinate and the dominant group in every society. A group’s status may, for example, be determined on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, skin colour, etc. The norms act as structural barriers giving rise to various forms of inequality. Access to health and healthcare for the subordinate groups is reduced due to the structural barriers.\textsuperscript{21} These are all explains the structural discrimination faced by the groups and their human right violations.

In India, members of gender, caste, class, and ethnic identity experience structural discrimination that impact their health and access to healthcare. Women face double discrimination being members of the specific caste, class or ethnic group apart from experiencing gendered vulnerabilities. Women have low status as compared to men in Indian society. They have little control on the resources and important decisions related to their lives. In India, early marriage and childbearing affect women’s health adversely. About 28 percent of girls in India get married below the legal age and experience pregnancy (Reproductive and Child Health-District level Household Survey 2002-04, August 2006). These have serious repercussions on the health of women. Maternal mortality is very high in India. The average maternal mortality ratio at the national level is 540 deaths per 100,000 live births (National Family Health Survey-2, 2000). It varies between states and regions, i.e., rural-urban. The rural MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate) is 617 deaths of women age between 15-49 years per one lakh live births as compared to 267 maternal deaths per one lakh live births among the urban population (National Family Health Survey-2, 2000). In most cases, the deaths
occur from preventable causes. A large proportion of women is reported to have received no antenatal care. In India, institutional delivery is lowest among women from the lower economic class as against those from the higher class.

Women face violence, and it has an impact on their health. During infancy and growing years, a girl child faces different forms of violence like infanticide, neglect of nutrition needs, education and healthcare as adults they face violence due to unwanted pregnancies, domestic violence, sexual abuse at the workplace and sexual violence including marital rape and honor killings. The experience of violence and its impact on health varies according to the women’s caste, class and ethnic identity.

Caste also perpetuates inequality. Caste in Indian society is a particular form of social inequality that involves a hierarchy of groups ranked in terms of ritual purity where members who belong to a particular group or stratum share some awareness of common interest and a common identity. The caste system is linked to the possession of natural resources, livelihood resources and in the Indian context also to land economy and land-based power relations. Traditionally, caste relations were based on the hierarchy of occupations where work related to leather, cleaning dead cattle from village grounds, work related to funeral ceremonies, etc. were placed at the bottom. People or castes who were performing the task of eliminating the polluted elements from society were considered ‘untouchables’ vis-à-vis the Brahmins who were highest in the order based on the purity-impurity principle. Structurally the lower castes were economically dependent on, the higher castes for existence. The Scheduled Caste remained economically dependent, politically powerless and culturally subjugated to the upper caste. This impacted their overall lifestyle and access to food, education and health.
A major proportion of the lower castes and Dalits are still dependent on others for their livelihood. Dalits does not refer to a caste but suggests a group who are in a state of oppression, social disability and who are helpless and poor. They were earlier referred as ‘untouchables’ mainly due to their low occupations, i.e., cobbler, scavenger, sweeper.24

In a caste-dominated country like India, Dalits who comprises more than one-sixth of the Indian population (160 million approx), stand as a community, whose human rights have been severely violated. Literacy rates among Dalits are only about 24 per cent. They have meagre purchasing power; have poor housing conditions; lack or have low access to resources and entitlements. In rural India, they are landless poor agricultural labourers attached to rich landowners from generations or poor casual labourers doing all kinds of available work.

In the city, they are the urban poor employed as wage labourers at several work sites, beggars, vendors, small service providers, domestic help, etc., living in slums and other temporary shelters without any kind of social security. The members of these groups face systemic violence in the form of denial of access to land, good housing, education and employment.

Structural discrimination against these groups takes place in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse that receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system. Physical segregation of their settlements is common in the villages forcing them to live in the most unhygienic and inhabitable conditions. All these factors affect their health status, access to healthcare, and quality of health service received. There are high rates of malnutrition reported among the marginalized groups resulting in mortality, morbidity and anaemia. Access to and utilization of healthcare among
the marginalized groups is influenced by their socio-economic status within the society.

Structural discrimination directly impedes equal access to health services by way of exclusion. The negative attitude of the health professionals towards these groups also acts as a barrier to receiving quality healthcare from the health system. In the case of women, discrimination increases by the complex mix of two factors being a woman and being a member of the marginalized community. A large proportion of Dalit girls’ dropout of primary school inspite of reservations and academic aptitude because of poverty, humiliation, isolation or bullying by teachers and classmates and punishment for scoring good grades. The scavenger community among the Dalits is vulnerable to stress and diseases with reduced access to healthcare.

The Scheduled Tribes like the Scheduled Castes face structural discrimination within the Indian society. Unlike the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are a product of marginalization based on ethnicity. In India, the Scheduled Tribes population is around 84.3 million and is considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Their percentages in the population and numbers, however, vary from State to State. They are mainly landless with little control over resources such as land, forest and water. They constitute a large proportion of agricultural labourers, casual labourers, plantation labourers, industrial labourers, etc. This has resulted in poverty among them, low levels of education, poor health and reduced access to healthcare services. They belong to the poorest strata of the society and have severe health problems. They are less likely to afford and get access to healthcare services when required. The health outcomes among the Scheduled Tribes are very poor even as compared to the Scheduled Castes. The
Infant Mortality Rate among Scheduled Castes is 83 per 1000 live births while it is 84.2 per 1000 per live births among the Scheduled Tribes.\textsuperscript{26}

Among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, the most vulnerable are women, children, and aged, those living with HIV/AIDS, mental illness and disability. These groups face severe forms of discrimination that denies them access to treatment and prevents them from achieving a better health status. Gender-based violence and domestic violence is high among women in general in India. Girl child and women from the marginalized groups are more vulnerable to violence. The dropout and illiteracy rates among them are high. Early marriage, trafficking, forced prostitution and other forms of exploitation are also reportedly high among them. In situations of caste conflict, women from marginalized groups face sexual violence from men of upper caste i.e., rape and other forms of mental torture and humiliation.

**Most vulnerable Marginalized Groups:**

Some of the most vulnerable marginalized groups in almost every society are Women: Under different economic conditions, and under the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal and religious factors, marginalization of women can be seen from their exclusion from certain jobs and occupations. Women belonging to lower classes, lower castes, illiterate, and the poorest region have been marginalized more than their better off counterparts.

**People with Disabilities:** People with disabilities have had to battle against centuries of biased assumptions, harmful stereotypes, and irrational fears. The stigmatization of disability resulted in the social and economic marginalization of generations with disabilities and thus has left people with disabilities in a severe state of impoverishment for centuries.
**Ageing:** Being passed middle age and approaching old age; rather old. Ageing is an inevitable and inexorable process in life. For most nations, regardless of their geographic location or developmental stage, the 80-year-olds, or over-age group is growing faster than any younger segment of the older population. Elderly women form the majority of marginalized groups among them.

**Ethnic minority:** a group that has different national or cultural traditions from the majority of the population the term, ethnic minority, refers to marginalised people of the same race or nationality who share a distinctive culture. A minority is a sociological group that does not constitute a politically dominant voting majority of the total population of a given society. It may include any group that is subnormal with respect to a dominant group, in terms of social status, education, employment, wealth, and political power. Every large society contains ethnic minorities. They may be migrant, indigenous or landless nomadic communities, or religious minorities that have a different faith from the majority.

**Caste Groups:** The caste system is a strictly hierarchical social system based on underlying notions of purity and pollution. Brahmins are on the top of the hierarchy, and Shudras or Dalits, or the Scheduled Castes constitute the bottom of the hierarchy. The marginalization of Dalits influences all spheres of their life, violating basic human rights such as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Literacy rates, purchasing power and poor housing conditions among Dalits are very low. Physical segregation of their settlements is common. However, in recent years due to affirmative action and legal protection, the intensity of caste-based marginalization is reducing.

**Tribes:** In India, the population of Scheduled Tribes is around 84.3 million and is considered to be socially and economically
disadvantaged group. They are mainly landless with little control over resources such as land, forest and water. They constitute agricultural, casual, plantation and industrial labourers. This has resulted in poverty, low levels of education and poor access to health care services. In the Indian context the marginalized are categorized as the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, denoted tribes, nomadic tribes, and other backward classes.

To sum up, making sure that everyone has a chance to develop their potential through education is an important challenge for all countries. Equal opportunity in education is a basic human right. Moreover, fair and inclusive education is one of the most powerful levers available for making societies more equitable, innovative and democratic. Overcoming the extreme and persistent disadvantages that marginalized groups experience is a vital element in the wider agenda for inclusive education. Extending opportunity to these groups requires more than the general expansion of education and the improvement of average learning achievement levels. It requires policies that target the underlying causes of disadvantage in education and beyond.

The pertinent question, therefore, is where do the marginalized groups stand today? Though there has been some improvement in certain spheres and despite some positive changes, the standard of living for the marginalized communities has not improved. Therefore, what Minimum needs to be done? The reasons for the high incidences of poverty and deprivation among the marginalized social groups are to be found in their continuing lack of access to income-earning capital assets (agricultural land and non-land assets), heavy dependence on wage employment, high unemployment, low education and other factors. Therefore, there is a need to focus on policies to improve the ownership of income-earning capital assets (agriculture land, and non-land assets),
employment, human resource & health situation, and prevention of discrimination to ensure fair participation of the marginalized community in the private and the public sectors.

References:

7. Prof. Lal Dena, Historical Perspectives of the process of Marginalization: A Study of the hill people’s experience in Manipur.2014.
8. There is a lot of discussion on the heterogeneous nature of backward classes as it is alleged that some of the OBCs in the rural areas handle atrocities on Dalits. The question of atrocities on Dalits is different from that of the educational backwardness
of a caste. It is also true that there are one or two OBC castes that have emerged as dominant in mobilizing their kinship relations in the democratic process. But that cannot be cited as an argument against their educational improvement as education is a universal right and is to be extended to everyone. It is the failure of the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act 1955 that failed to book the dominant OBCs or others who are perpetrating crimes against Dalits. It is ironic that those who sympathise with the Dalits do not raise their voice against discrimination. (Backward Classes (BC) and OBCs are used interchangeably.

9. The directive principles of state policy are not themselves justifiable, but it is "the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws."(Art. 37). Mere conformity with Directive principles' does not make a measure constitutional; "the directive principles or State policy run, as subsidiary to the Chapter .of Fundamental Rights” Stat of Madro1s V. Champakam Dorairajan, (1951) S.C.J. 313, 316. But these directive principles are to be taken into account in determining the scope and application of Fundamental Rights. Md. Ranif Q.ucrishi v. Bihar, A.I.R. 195B S.C. 73I.


15. Shelly Shah, Role of Civil Society (NGOs) in the Empowerment of Marginalised People in India.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
21. Structural discrimination refers to rules, norms, generally accepted approaches and behaviours in institutions and other social structures that constitute obstacles for subordinate groups to the equal rights and opportunities possessed by dominant groups. Such discrimination may be visible or invisible, and it may be intentional or unintentional.
22. Only 16 percent of the women in India received all the antenatal care, i.e., at least three antenatal check-ups, and at least one tetanus toxoid injection and supplementary iron in the form of iron folic acid tablets/syrups daily for 100 days as recommended by the RCH Programme. (RCH-DLHS-3, 2002-04)
23. In India, the percentage of home delivery is highest (59 percent), whereas institutional delivery (public and private health
institutes) accounts for only 40.5 percent. Home delivery assisted by skilled birth attendants’ accounts for 7.1 per cent. Institutional delivery by background characteristics shows that only 22 percent childbirths of Scheduled Tribes women take place in institutions as compared to 33 per cent births to Scheduled Caste women. (RCH-DLHS-3, 2002-2004, pg 98)

24. Dalits in India are poor, deprived and socially backward. They have faced severe forms of human rights violation. They have been involved in a long struggle to abolish Untouchbility and caste discrimination
