African American Literature and Dalit Literature project realistic narratives that deal with the sufferings of the tens of thousands of dispossessed persons in the riot-torn society of discrimination. Maya Angelou, a Black American writer, stating her own experience, voices for the Blacks. Mahasweta Devi, one of the two authors taken for parallel study does not belong to the marginalized community, yet she voices for the poor. Maya Angelou, born in 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri, experienced the brutality of racial discrimination. She absorbed the unshakable faith and values of traditional African-American family, community, and culture. Maya Angelou an autobiographer through her own life divulges the state of affairs of the Blacks. Mahasweta Devi, born in 1926 in the city of Dhaka of undivided India, is a rare combination of a writer and a crusader against oppression. She has led a battle on the behalf of the de-notified tribes of India-indigenous groups who were branded natural criminals by the British Colonial State, who face discrimination to this day, despite being de-notified.

In the colonial era, the Africans had to undergo unspeakable violence in the hands of their White bosses. The colonization of Africa by European powers such as Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal brought the country into the world economic system as a major target for exploitation. Africa provided Europeans with a source of raw materials what they viewed as raw – the uncivilized, savage natives, conquered their land and exploited labour. It is the prevailing caste system in the society that causes discrimination among the people in India. The Dalits, low caste people and they are placed in the lowest rungs of the society. Women and children of the deprived communities are always treated as doormats by their own male folk and
by the Whites in the US and the Zamindars in India. Hence they suffer double marginalization. The traumatic experiences and the wanton extermination pictured in the select works of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi owing to racial, caste and class discrimination and subordination form the theme of the dissertation. The study seeks to reveal that on the surface level, the works of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi are about the painful themes of racism, casteism and classism. In a deeper level the novels present a cauldron of ideological divisions that have sown the seeds of hatred and violence in society. The investigation has detected a psychic shift from illogical fanaticism to enlightened moderation.

The introductory chapter discusses briefly, the growth and development and the diverse issues of the African American and the Dalit Literatures, the sexual and social exploitation of the Blacks and the Dalit women in the male dominated society. It enumerates writers and their works which deal with marginalization of the underprivileged. The chapter also includes the life and works of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi, the novelists taken for parallel study with abstract of the select works chosen.

The second chapter, *The Muted Voices of the Marginalized* brings out the voices of the marginalized that are muted in the novels of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi. Their works are oppressive stories of racism in America and casteism and classism in India. In the autobiographical novels, Maya Angelou reveals the horrors of racism – a life threatening, non-nurturing force that terrorize the Black Americans. Mahasweta Devi points out that the Dalits are laden with casteism and classism, aggressive, bullying powers. The novelists reveal through their works, the African-American race and the Indian Dalits, who are ghettoized, viciously
persecuted and brutally outlawed from all avenues of decency, hope, progress and livelihood. Maya Angelou portrays the excruciating pain and traumatic experiences of the Blacks in South America and Africa. The autobiographical novels, as a chronicler of her own life, narrates the novelist’s views, perceptions and fears faced during segregation without inhibition. Angelou is in need of identity in the cruel world of the Whites, and liberation from the oppressors. Similar to the Black cotton pickers of America, who work all day long to pay their debts, the Dalits in India are also debtors to the high caste Maliks and are bonded labourers. The Dalits are compelled to contribute money and free labour for the festivals of the Maliks. Mahasweta Devi depicts the Naxalites who suffer for the poor, are brutally killed, and their voices crushed and crumbled. The discrimination brings with it pain, sorrow, bloodshed, death and the negation of an entire race, caste or class.

The third chapter *Double Marginalization* brings out the sufferings of the African American and the Indian doubly marginalized women, of the novels of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi. The novelists examine the various facets of typical marginalized women’s birth, childhood, adulthood, marriage, and life patterns. In the autobiographical novels, Angelou discerns her struggles as a woman, to come out of the cultural schizophrenia of the Blacks. Mahasweta Devi, in her oeuvres discerns caste based slavery in India that is stamped upon the hapless population by the institutions, quite detrimental to women. They address the subordinate positions of the Black and the Dalit women which are of realistic life experiences than artistically designed. The novelists reveal the sufferings of women who are used as objects and as essential to men for pleasure, and needs of the family. The male dominated society into which they find their existence, impose unlimited controls. Angelou pictures the men of her own community who have cheated her. Mahasweta Devi treats of child
marriages and the tortures of mothers-in-law. Maya Angelou portrays the Black women as victims of male chauvinism, her sufferings as a teenage mother, deceived by men under false pretences of love, introduction to drugs and illicit activities, and the hardships of bare economic survival.

The fourth chapter *Spacing the Marginalized* provides space for the victimized – the marginalized and the doubly marginalized. The Blacks and the Dalits occupy low status in society. They break up at some point in their lives to seize a new space for liberation and freedom. The novelists exhibit the marginalized, after eras of long suffering, moving to the centre of the society. Society is not likely to change, unless there is awareness and resistance on the part of the victimized. In a society, where the Whites and upper castes have monopolized the polity and the economy, the Blacks and the Dalits have become conditioned and are ashamed of them. The paralyzing state of impasse would be overcome only by achieving collective self-consciousness. The marginalized community has to recognize and honour its own institutions by entering into mutual relations. The oppressed groups protest, to uphold rights, and establish their identity. Black feminism vociferously protests against the male notion that women are a bunch of voiceless creatures like domestic animals created for sexual pleasures of men. Dalit feminism in India brings to limelight the hardwork done by women to save their family from poverty. Dalit and Black feminism peter out the male notion that the male alone is intelligent. There are instances in the novels of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi that are cordial to the Blacks, the Dalits and the doubly-marginalized in the days of apocalypse. Thus the marginalized could assume optimistically, that the future world would be better, bereft of racial prejudice, divisions, and caste.
Summation sums up the investigations made and reiterates the success of Maya Angelou and Mahasweta Devi, who essentialise their social concerns in their narratives. The study explores different perspectives on a range of social problems such as poverty, homelessness, caste and racial and gender inequality. Maya Angelou delineates the sufferings of the poor Blacks in South America and Africa. She is tormented and agonized to find colour discrimination in the second visit after five years in Stamps, Arkansas. Similar to the bigotry of colour in America, Mahasweta Devi depicts the segregation of low caste by the upper class. The novelist presents the high caste as rich, cunning masters utilizing all tricks to usurp land and extract free labour from the poor and demarcates the loose, worldly and sophisticated life of the rich and the trauma of the poor, and the care and love of the Naxalites for the poor. Maya Angelou powerfully presents the subordination of the Black women, victims of male chauvinism from her own experience. Mahasweta Devi reveals the sufferings of the lower caste women by the upper caste males. Thus Angelou and Mahasweta Devi bring to luminosity the resilience, revolution and awakening of the downtrodden.