CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION: FOURTH WORLD LITERATURE
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"Etymologically, Fourth World follows the First World, Second World and the Third World" (wikipedia.org/Fourth World). So, to understand the term, "Fourth World", it becomes important to understand these three terms first. The terms "First World", "Second World", and "Third World" were used originally to divide the world's nations into three categories. Since the above mentioned terms are related to the World War II, it is important to know a little history about the World War II.

These terms are studied from an economic point of view. After World War II, the two superpowers of the world, the United States and the Soviet Union were competing for ultimate global supremacy. This led to the Cold war. The Cold war primarily meant an ideological struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold war means:

A conflict over ideological differences carried on by methods short of sustained overt military action and usually without breaking off diplomatic relations: specifically often capitalized C&W: the ideological conflict between the United States and
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics during the second half of the 20th century. (merriam-webster.com/cold war)

These two countries, created two camps known as blocks. So, after the cold war, the world split into two large geopolitical blocks. These two large geopolitical blocks were known as the communists and the capitalists. They were also known as the Western Block and the Eastern Block. The concept of the First World originated during the cold war.

The term, “First World”, was used to describe the countries that were aligned with the United States during the cold war. These countries fall into two categories - the Democratic and Capitalists. In other words, “First World countries are generally thought of as industrial and developed countries that aligned with the United States after World War II” (wikipedia.org/First World). It included countries like North America, Western Europe, Australia and Japan. But, this definition of the “First World” has become a little outdated today.

In today’s society, “First World” means, the countries that have the most advanced economies, the greatest influence, the highest standards of living and most progressive and latest technology. There are different definitions of the “First World”, but they all follow the same ideas. The past president of the Academy of International Business, John D. Daniels, defines the “First World” as consisting of “High-income industrial countries” (wikipedia.org/First World). Scholar and Professor George J. Bryjak defines the First World to be “Modern, industrial, capitalist countries of North America and Europe” (Bryjak, and Soroka 8) L. Robert Kohls, former director of training for the U.S. Information Agency and the Meridian International Center in Washington, uses
"First World" and fully developed as synonyms. The term "Second World" means -

The term "Second World" is a phrase used to describe the communist states within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence or those countries that had centrally-planned economies. Along with "First World" and "Third World", the term was used to divide the nations of the Earth into three broad categories. In other words, the concept of "Second World" was a construct of the Cold War and the term has largely fallen out of use since the revolutions of 1989, though it is still occasionally used to describe the countries that are in between poverty and prosperity, many of which are communist and former communist countries today. (enotes.com/Second World)

After the World War II, the world was divided into two large geopolitical blocks - the Communists and the Capitalists. The capitalist countries included the United States and other countries aligned with it during the Cold war. The term "Second World" was used to describe the Soviet Union and its allies during the Cold war. It was basically the Communist world. It also included countries like China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea. Today, the term Second World means modern, wealthy and industrialized nations. All these nations were under the Communist control. The Second World countries in Europe are also known as the Eastern Block.

This leads to the term "Third World". The term Third World also originated during the Cold war.
The Economist, Alfred Sauvy coined the term “tiers monde” i.e. “Third World”, in an article in the French magazine known as L’observateur of August 14, 1952. He described it as the people of the world that are “Unknown, exploited, and scorned”. Sauvy wrote, “Like the third estate, the Third World has nothing, and wants to be something”.
(Thirdworldtraveler.com/Third World).

The term Third World was generally used for countries that remained non-aligned or neutral with the Communist block or the Capitalist block. These countries are also known as Global South, developing countries and least developed countries.

Developing nations are commonly referred to as Third World. These developing countries can be found in Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America. These countries were at one point colonies which were formally led by imperialism. The end of imperialism forced these colonies to survive on their own. With lack of support, these colonies started to develop characteristics such as poverty, high birth rates and economic dependence on other countries. The term was then affiliated to the economic situation of these former colonies and not their social alliances to either capitalism or communism.
(Investopedia.com/third world)
In today's society, Third World countries are technologically less advanced or developing. These countries are generally characterized as poor and having economies distorted by their export of primary products to the developed countries. They have high rates of illiteracy, disease, population growth and unstable governments. The Third World countries were highly oppressed and exploited by the two superpowers of the world that feared that these neutral nations were in danger of falling into alignment with the enemy. These nations were often colonized by another nation in the past.

Some of the countries included in the Third World are located in Africa, Latin America and Asia. With the end of imperialism, these countries are still developing in the economic terms. The term Third World is not universally accepted. Some prefer other terms like - Global South, North industrialized countries, emerging nations, mal-developed countries etc. In recent times, the connotation of Third World is “underdeveloped” or simply “poor”. It shall be easy to understand the concept of Fourth World following the description of the First, Second and the Third Worlds.

George Manuel coined the term “Fourth World”. In the book by George Manuel *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* in 1974 “Fourth World” has been defined as - “Indigenous peoples descended from a country’s aboriginal population and who today are completely or partly deprived of the right to their own territories and riches” (suite101.com/fourth-world). The term “Fourth World” means, “The poorest and the most underdeveloped states on the world” and “Any oppressed or underprivileged victim of a state” (cwis.org/Fourth-World). The term “Fourth World” also means, “Internationally unrecognized states that are engaged in a struggle to maintain or gain some
degree of sovereignty over their national homeland" (cwis.org/Fourth World). The term “Fourth World”, in the publications like *Fourth World news and Resurgence, the Journal of Fourth World* has been defined as:

The Fourth World embraces small nations of under twelve million inhabitants, groups working for their autonomy and independence at all levels from the neighbourhood to the nation, minority groups whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious and those in the fields of peace, action, ecology, economics, energy resources, women's liberation and the whole spectrum of the alternative movement, who are struggling against the gigantism of the institutions of today's mass societies and for a human scale and a non-centralized, multi-cellular, powder-dispersed world order. (cwis.org/Fourth World)

**Fourth World Literature**

For the present perspective it is important to understand what Fourth World literature is. No specific definition can explain what Fourth World literature is. But, at the same time, Fourth world literature would mean literature written about and by the oppressed, poor, underprivileged and marginal people of any nation. The feminine writings of the Third World and the writings by the women of the Third World are also included in the Fourth world literature. Some of the important issues dealt with are social expulsion and discord, racial discrimination, injustice, untouchability, colonization etc. For the oppressed, poor and the underprivileged people of any nation, writing was a
tool through which they could express the injustice, discrimination and cruelty meted out towards them. This kind of writing can be defined as the Fourth World literature. For example, the Dalit and Tribal literature of India, the Igbo literature of Nigeria and the Black literature belong to the Fourth World category of literature.

1. Dalit Literature

To begin with Dalit literature, the writings by Dalits are considered as a part of the Fourth world literature. A question may arise in the minds of non Indian readers as to who are the Dalits? What does the word Dalit mean? The constitution of India has recognized some Indian population groups as Scheduled castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). These Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes were previously called the “depressed classes” by the British. They comprise over 24% of India’s population. Some Scheduled castes in India are known as Dalits. “The word Dalit comes from Sanskrit meaning ‘ground’, ‘suppressed’, ‘crushed’, or ‘broken into pieces’” (wikipedia.org/Dalit).

“Dalit” refers to one’s caste rather than class; it applies to members of those menial castes which have borne the stigma of “untouchability” because of the extreme impurity and pollution connected with their traditional occupations. Dalits are “outcasts” falling outside the traditional four-fold caste system consisting of the hereditary Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra classes; they are considered impure and polluting and
are therefore physically and socially excluded and isolated from the rest of society. (antiessays.com)

The word Dalit is used for a group of people affiliated to low cadre jobs in society. Dalits are a mixed population all over in India and speak various languages. They comprise nearly one quarter of India’s society, with a population around 250 million people. Dalits live at a risk of discrimination, dehumanization, violence and enslavement through human trafficking everyday. The Dalits constitute the largest number of people categorized as victims of modern-day slavery. The Dalits in India have been the most widely oppressed caste for more than three thousand years. Indian Dalits comprise nearly 1/4th of the total population. Dalits are considered as “outcastes” of the Indian society - the “untouchables”.

The word Dalit, owes its genesis to the nineteenth century writings of Jyotirao Govindrao Phule as well as the literature of the Dalit Panthers. Dalit Panthers was a political group formed in 1972 in the state of Maharashtra. Mahatma Gandhi used the term *Harijans* or *Children of God* for the Dalits. A large majority of Dalits in India are Hindus.

The caste system is an integral part of the Indian society which was prevalent even when the Aryans invaded India. The caste system in India has been prevalent for three thousand years. Each caste is historically and genetically linked to an occupation and represents a strict hierarchy of society and status into which people are born and can never change their identity.

At the top of the caste system are the Brahmins, then come the Kashtriyas, then the Vaisyas and finally come the Shudras who are the peasants and the
slave class. Beneath the four main castes is a fifth group, the Scheduled caste or the Untouchables. They are not even given ‘caste’ status. In the Hindu society, Dalits have often been historically associated with the occupations regarded as ritually impure like butchering, removal of rubbish, removal of waste and leatherwork.

The Dalits work as manual labourers, cleaning latrines, gutters and cleaning away rubbish. Engaging in these activities was considered as polluting the individual and this pollution was considered contagious. The Dalits were not allowed to let their shadows fall upon a non-Dalit caste member and they were required to sweep the ground where they walked to remove the ‘contamination’ of their footfalls. The Dalits were not allowed to worship in the temples. They were not even allowed to draw water from the same wells as for the upper caste Hindus. The Dalits lived in segregated neighbourhoods outside the main village. Even today, in India, the Dalit villages are situated a kilometer outside the main village where the other Hindu castes reside.

After understanding what Dalit society is, one can very well understand what is meant by Dalit literature. As mentioned earlier, Dalit literature is literature written by the Dalits. Dalit literature, the literature of the oppressed class forms an important and a distinct part of Indian literature. Dalit literature is often compared to the African-American literature especially in the depiction of issues of racial segregation and injustice as seen in slave narratives.

The Dalit literature that today occupies a place of pride is actually born out of the heinous system of untouchability and caste discrimination that have been practised in India for many years. The concepts of ‘purity’ and
'pollution' made life a living hell for the untouchables. The caste system denied education to the untouchables. Therefore, anti-caste writings were a way in which the oppressed (untouchables) were retaliating against the oppressors (the upper caste Hindus). It was a psychological liberation for the untouchables who believed that they were “not to break ourselves, but to break the system” (museindia.com).

Like the Black literature, Dalit literature was characterized by a new level of pride and sophisticated creativity. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of the Dalits.

Dalit literature includes writings of Dalits and also of people who have emerged out of the masses suffering from indignities and social insecurity in the society and who have raised a rebellion against exploitation. Dalit literature highlighted the disabilities, difficulties, atrocities and the inhuman treatment meted out to the Dalits. Dalit literature produced a social awakening among the untouchables or the Dalits. Today’s Dalit literature rejects the degraded Hindu social caste system. The main purpose of the Dalit Writers is to expose the inhumanities and the prejudices of the caste system in the Hindu society. The Dalit writers through their writings instill a new social and cultural consciousness among the downtrodden in the society.

2. **Tribal Literature**

The Tribal Literature of India is also a part of the Fourth World literature. To understand, how the tribal literature in India came into existence, we must first
have some kind of knowledge about the tribes in India. As mentioned earlier, the constitution of India has recognized some India population groups as Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, which comprise over 24% of the population of India.

India has the largest concentration of tribes after Africa. There are about 533 tribes in India. The tribal population constitutes a significant portion of almost every Indian state. Different cultures, costumes, languages and handicrafts distinguish one tribe from the other. Amongst a total of 533 tribes, the major communities are namely Nagas, Mizos, Khasis, Boros and Jaintias. The tribal people are also known as Adivasis.

*Adivasis* is a term used for the ethnic and tribal groups believed to be the aboriginal population of India. *Adivasi* societies are particularly present in Indian states of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Mizoram and other Northeastern states. There are many other smaller tribal groups in every state in India. The tribal people live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forests in India. Their livelihood is based on primitive agriculture, a low-value closed economy with a low level of technology that leads to their poverty.

The literacy and health level of the tribal community is low. The tribal communities have developed their own distinctive culture, language and religion. They are a closed and segregated community who do not have much contact with other people. The tribal population constitutes 82% of the nation's total population according to 2001 census.
The roots of India’s literary tradition go back to the rich tribal or Adivasis (the first inhabitants) literature of India. Tribal literary traditions have been oral in nature. There are numerous languages spoken in India. But today only a limited number of languages are recognized and promoted by the eighth schedule of the constitution of India. After the development of printing and publishing technologies during the nineteenth century, the fate of oral language became precarious.

Until the practice of printing and publishing literary works became well established during the nineteenth century, literature in India, especially tribal literature existed mostly in oral traditions. Privileged languages found a place in print technology, while others were not accepted. They suffered a gross cultural neglect. The reorganization of Indian states was along linguistic lines. So, the languages that had scripts were counted and accounted for. The languages that did not have scripts did not get their own status.

The tribal languages did not get their own recognition. The tribal languages did not have scripts or any printed literature. Schools and colleges were established only for the official languages. So the languages without scripts, even if they had a stock of wisdom were carried forward only orally.

The tribal languages were not lucky enough to find their way into educational institutions. Because of this neglect the tribal literature was carried forward only orally. The history of tribal community during the last sixty years is filled with stories of forced displacement, land alienation, increasing marginalization, eruption of violence and the counter-violence by the state.
The situation of the tribal communities that have been pastoral or nomadic has been even worse. In spite of fighting against all odds in life, the tribal communities have preserved their languages and have continued to contribute to the linguistic diversity of India. There are many tribal languages spoken by the tribal communities. There exist nearly ninety different tribal languages in India. Tribal languages including Kukna, Bhili, Gondi, Mizo, Garo, Santhali, Kinnauri, Garhwali, Dehwali, Warli and Pawri have their own oral tribal literature in oral form. When one speaks of Indian tribal literature, one oral necessarily speaking of all these.

3. Igbo Literature

The Igbo literature of Nigeria, like the Dalit and the tribal literature of India is also the part of Fourth world literature. Before understanding what Igbo literature is, it first becomes necessary to know who the Igbo people are. Igbo are the largest ethnic group in Africa. Igbo people are also known as Ibo (e), Ebo (e), Eboans or Heebo. Igbo people are generally found in the Eastern and Southern Nigeria. They constitute about 17% of the total population in Nigeria. The Igbo people are the largest and the most influential ethnic group in Nigeria. Nigeria is made up of a number of different tribes. It is believed that these tribes came from different parts of Africa many centuries ago. Historically, these tribes originated from Sudan, Egypt, North Africa and other territories. Among the early settlers in Nigeria were the Igbo, Hausas and the Yourba tribes.
However, the origins of the Igbo people have been a subject of much speculation. It is believed that the home of the Igbo people is Igboland. Igboland covers most of the South and the East of Nigeria. Most of the culture, traditions, and religion of the Igbo people have originated from the village of Nn. Today, the village Nn is in the Anambra state. It was founded by its progenitor, Eri around 900 AD. The Nn people from this village spread all across what is now called the Igboland, mixing with its indigenous people and also assimilating their culture with them.

The traces of the ancient Igbo civilization can be found in the village of Ukwre, near Onitsha. The Igbo people called themselves Umu Igbo Ngidi. Umu Igbo Ngidi means the children of Ngidi. The Igbo people can also be found in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. The states in which the Igbo people are found are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Delta, and River state in Nigeria. There is a significant number of Igbo people found in other parts of Nigeria, such as the city of Lagos.

The language that the Igbo people speak is also known as Igbo. Igbo is both, spoken and written language, mainly in Southern Nigeria. Igbo language is spoken by eighteen million people in Nigeria. Igbo is a tonal language. It has two distinctive tones, the high and the low. Igbo language is written in Latin alphabets along with Nisbidi pictograms developed by the Ekoi people.

Igbo is a very unique and distinctive language. The Igbo language is made up of hundreds of dialects and Igbodian languages. For example, Enuani (linguistics) and Ekpeye dialects. Since, there are a number of dialects in the Igbo language, it is considered to be one of the hardest languages to learn. It
is not spoken anywhere else in the world because it is very difficult to learn it. However, Igbo is a very rich language and has a lot of variations in it.

The most commonly used orthography for the Igbo is currently the Onwre alphabet. Igbo language has borrowed many words from European languages and especially from the English language. Thus we can say that the word Igbo has three meanings. The word Igbo is used for the Igbo people, the territory of the Igbo people and the language that the Igbo people speak.

So what is Igbo literature? And how did it originate? In simple words, Igbo literature can be defined as the literature of the Igbo tribe living in Nigeria. The root of Igbo literature was oral literature. Igbo literature began with the oral tradition pioneered by the unsung heroes of our literary past like royal bards, warriors, story tellers, priests and many others. Literary elements like folklore, folksongs, folktales, proverbs, riddles, drama originated by these unknown literary soldiers.

Igbo literature thus today, owes its giant strides in the international literary scene to the rich oral tradition. Igbo literature originated because of the missionary activities (around 1840s) in Nigeria. The need to translate The Bible for the new converts necessitated a number of publications by the missionaries. Prominent among such publications were, A Grammar of the Ibo Language (1840) by the pioneer missionary, Rev. J.F.Schon This publication not only served the primary religious purpose but also as a sound foundation for the written literature, in which folklores and other genres of oral tradition were recorded and woven into poetry, short stories and novels in the Igbo language.
4. Black Literature

The term Black literature refers to works by Black writers about black people. Afro-American literature is Black literature. "In broad terms, Afro-American literature can be defined as writings by people of African descent living in the United States of America" (Dickson-Carr 10-11).

African American literature is a body of literature written by Americans of African descent. Beginning in the pre-Revolutionary War period, African American writers have engaged in a creative, if often contentious, dialogue with American letters. The result is a literature rich in expressive subtlety and social insight, offering illuminating assessments of American identities and history. Although since 1970 African American writers, led by Toni Morrison, have earned widespread critical acclaim, this literature has been recognized internationally as well as nationally since its inception in the late 18th century. (britannica.com/black history)

Afro-American literature is focused on themes of particular interest to Blacks living in the United States. Afro-American Literature explores the issues of freedom and equality which were long denied to Blacks in the United States. The other important themes in Afro-American literature are: Afro-American culture, the condemnation of racism, religion, slavery, a sense of home, exploration of black identity and the celebration of the unique aspects of Afro-American culture.
Afro-American oral culture is rich in poetry, including spirituals, Afro-American gospel music, blues and rap. Afro-American literature—especially written poetry and prose—incorporates all of these forms of oral poetry. One of the first published Afro-Americans was Phillis Wheatley, whose collection of poetry precedes the U.S. Revolutionary War by three years (1773). Eighteenth-century “Slave Narratives,” journals of personal experiences by slaves, is a source of insight and inspiration to readers.

Afro-American literature of the 1800s was dominated by autobiographical works like Booker T. Washington’s Up from Slavery. The early twentieth century produced many influential Afro-American writers, like Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison. Contemporary authors such as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Maya Angelou continue to expand Afro-American literature.

**Major Fourth World Writers and Their Works**

1. **Major Dalit Writers and Their Works**

One of the first Dalit writers in India is Madara Chennauah, an 11th century cobbler saint. He is regarded as the ‘Father of Vachana poetry’. *Vachana* is a form of writing in Kannada. In modern times, Dalit literature got impetus in Maharashtra because of the legacy of Mahatma Phule and Babaroe Ambedkar. Through their works and writings, they highlighted the problems of the Dalits which created a new trend in Dalit writing and inspired many Dalits to come forward with their writings in Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi and Tamil.
In the 1960’s Dalit literature saw a new crop of fresh writers like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav and Shakaro Kharat. The formal form of Dalit literature came into existence with the Little Magazine movement which was a kind of rebellious manifestation of the educated youth of those days against the establishment. These Dalit youths found inspiration in the movement of Blacks in North America and their Black literature. This protest gained its first expression in the form of a new literature called Dalit literature.

Dalit literature is experience-based. Dalit literature interrogates main stream literary theories and caste ideologies. It also explored the neglected aspects of life. The Dalit writers use the language of the outcastes and the underprivileged in the Indian society. Shame, anger, sorrow and hope are some of the important themes that occur frequently in Dalit literature. Because of the anger against the age-old oppression, the expressions of the Dalit writers have become sharp.

The contribution of the Dalit literature is of far reaching importance because it effectively threatened the Brahmanic hegemony from literature. Dalit literature made the Dalit intellectuals think and inspired the Dalits for assertion, protest and mobilization. Some of the important Dalit writers in India are - B. R. Ambedkar, Baburao Bagul, Namdeo Dhasal, Kaviyoor Murli, Dagdu Maruti Pawar, Om Prakash Valmiki, Annabhau Sathe, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Ayyankali, Mariamma Chedathy, Bhauroa Krishnaji Gaikwad, Kancha Ilaiah, Jyothee Thass, Krishnammal Jagannathan, Martin Macwan, P. Kakkan, Vitthal Ramji Shinde, Raja Dhale, Arun Kamble, Shantabai Kamble, Amar Sheikh, Malika Amar Sheikh.
Baburao Bagul was the pioneer of Dalit writings in Marathi. His first collection of stories, *Jevha Mi Jat Chorali* (1963) which was translated in English as *When I had Concealed My Caste*, created a stir in Marathi literature. His stories taught other Dalit writers to give a creative interpretation to their feelings and experiences. He also wrote a collection of Dalit poems which was titled as *Akar* and which was published in 1967. His collection of short stories *Maran Swasta Hot Ahe* (*Death is Getting Cheaper*, 1968) has been highly acclaimed.

Lakshman Mane wrote an autobiographical narrative called *Upara* (* Outsider*) in 1980. He speaks of his first experiences in school in this book. The entire narrative uses Kaikadi language. The narrator in the book explains the problems of his situation as a Dalit in an alien environment in an educational institution in two ways. First, he is the first one to go to school from his family. Second, he is a bilingual who is forced to write Marathi as a third language.

Namdeo Dhasal, the poet, published his epoch-making first collection of poems *Golpitha* named after the notorious centre of prostitution in central Mumbai where he grew up. His poems incorporated many words and expressions exclusively used by Dalits. Dagdu Maruti Pawar wrote about the atrocities experienced by the Dalits or untouchables under the Indian caste system. He wrote a novel called *Baluta*. The novel recounts the “experiences of an untouchable struggling for a peaceful existence, mentally tormented but incapable of retaliation in word and deed” (wikipedia.org/Dagdu Maruti Pawar). His other famous works are Dalit *Jaanivaa* and *Chavdi*. Kondvada was his first collection of poems about the atrocities and oppressions of the Dalits.
Kancha Ilaiah was also a Dalit writer from South India. His book, *Why I Am Not a Hindu* is about the life-experiences of the Dalits and shows that their poverty-ridden experience holds little connection to the Brahmin religious experience. Vitthal Ramji Shinde was born in Jamkhandi a small princely state which is now part of Karnataka. He was a prominent campaigner of the Dalit movement in India and established the Depressed Classes Mission of India to provide education to the Dalits. He wrote *Bhartiya Asprushyatecha Prashna* (*India's untouchability question*) which was published in 1933. He rejects the caste system, idol worship, inequalities against women and depressed classes and he has written extensively on these topics.

Despite the lack of formal education, Annabhu Sathe wrote thirty five novels in Marathi. His novels have been translated into twenty seven Indian and non-Indian languages. The most famous novel written by Annabhu Sathe is Fakira (1959). His book *Fakira*, was not concerned with the Dalit protest but it established the untouchable (Mang) as a hero. *Fakira* deals with anti-British revolt by the untouchables and the other low-castes in the nineteenth century. Annabhu Sathe novels celebrate the fighting spirit in their characters who work against all odds in life.

Jyotirao Phule was also one of the most famous Dalit writers in India. His novels *Phakira* and *Varanecha Vagha* are known for their sensitive portraits of individual Dalit heroism within complex social realities of their village communities. Jyotirao Phule wrote a book called *Gulamgiri*. *Gulamgiri* was translated into English and was titled as *Slavery*. In this book he urged the Untouchables to wage a decisive war against the unjust social caste system of the Hindus. He wrote this book for the salvation of the untouchables. Phule's
most comprehensive work is *Shetkatyaca Asud* which was translated in English and was titled as *The Whipcord of the Cultivators*. It deals with three main issues. 1) The extortion practised by Brahmins under the guise of religious festivals 2) The indigenous inhabitants overcome by the Aryans 3) The exploitation of the Dalits by Brahmin bureaucracy and the British.

The leading Dalit poet and fiction writer, Om Prakash Valmiki, wrote an autobiography which is known as *Joothan: A Dalit's life*.

Poet and short story writer Valmiki presents his autobiography, one of the first (according to the translator) that identifies itself as part of Dalit literature. He recounts the difficulties of growing up as one of India's most oppressed people (once known as the untouchables) from the 1950s to the present. He chose his title after a Hindi word that roughly refers to leftover food or scraps eaten by someone else, with Hindu notions of pollution attached to both the term and the status of the Dalits. (powells.com)

In this book, Om Prakash Valmiki tells the story of growing up in a village in the newly independent India. This book tells the story of survival, of oppression and slavery and later on victory as the author is empowered with education and becomes a spokesman for his own community. *Joothan* is Om Prakash Valmiki's autobiography about his own birth and upbringing as an untouchable or Dalit in the newly independent India of the 1950's. It is one of the first portrayals of Dalit life in North India from an insider's perspective. The title of the book *Joothan* means scraps of food left on the
plate, which is generally thrown in the garbage or given to a family pet in a middle class urban home. The untouchables in India have been forced to accept and eat Joothan since time immemorial because of their poverty and circumstances. Even after untouchability was abolished from the constitution of India, Dalits in India still continue to face discrimination, economic deprivation, violence and ridicule. Traditionally, Indian literatures have shown the untouchables as victims in need of saviours and as objects without voice or feelings. In this autobiographical novel, Om Prakash Valmiki has broken new ground with an authentic recording of the unpresented experiences, giving a voice to the voiceless.

He tells the stories of life in the untouchable caste of Chuhra, his preordained life of perpetual physical and mental persecution; the cruel obstacles he overcame to become the first high coming to consciousness under the Dalit political leader B.R. Ambedkar; and his transformation into a speaking subject bearing witness to the oppression and exploitation that he endured as an individual and as a member of stigmatized and oppressed community. (powells.com)

Dalit women writers also made a noteworthy contribution to Dalit literature. However, Dalit women’s writing as a genre suffered from the discrimination on the grounds of gender. Dalit women writers started to appear in the literary scene in the 1980’s. The Dalit writings of the Dalit women reflected self-experience and burning indignation.
Muktabai, an untouchable girl was the first example of a Dalit woman writer. Some other important Dalit writers like Kamud Pawade, Jyoti Lanjewar, Urmila Pawar, Hira Bansode, Aruna Lokhand etc. from Maharashtra also wrote about the Dalit women, the atrocities on Dalit women, the problems of non-educated Dalit women etc. Dalit women writers like Shantabai Kamble, Mukta Sarvagod, Kumud Pawade and Babaytai Kamle started to write autobiographies thus adding gender point of view to Dalit life.

In the extract Naja Goes to School—and doesn’t from the autobiography Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha by the Dalit woman writer Shantabai Kamble, the protagonist of the story, Naja, suffers from class, caste and gender discrimination. Naja, the protagonist is from one of the biggest Dalit communities in Maharashtra. The local government grants Naja a scholarship so that she can continue with her studies. Naja is very happy. But, in her class, there is a girl called Shaku who belongs to the Brahmin class. After a while, Shaku stops attending school and so the headmaster sends Naja to Shaku’s house to see what is happening. When Shaku’s mother sees Naja, she shouts at her and does not let her enter the house. Naja is isolated, marginalised and excluded by Shaku’s mother.

In the end, Naja passes the annual test in school while Shaku fails. However, when Naja starts school again, her new headmaster advises her to change school and enrol in a girls’ school. Naja is discriminated on the basis of her gender. Naja finally quits school. She is cocooned within a world of prejudices and trapped within the prison of her own gender and cast.
Kumud Pawade has published articles on culture, social education and women’s problems. She has also written a book called *Antahspho* which was translated in English and was titled as *Inner Burst*. *Antahspho* means outburst. In this book, she attempts to analyze the experiences of individuals and communities. She argues that just as the analysis of communities and individuals in society cannot exclude caste so also the analysis of the lives of women cannot ignore exploitation based on gender. She further asserts that Dalit women are victims of this double exploitation.

The writings of Mrs. Asha Thorat and Sugandha Shende are impressive and self-disciplined. They generally write on subjects like atrocities on Dalit women, the problems of non-educated Dalit women and the ugly outlook of the educated Dalit women towards non-educated Dalit women. Meena Gajbhiye, Surekha Bhagat, Hira Bansode and Jyoti Lanjewar are some of the important Dalit poetess in India. Dalit woman writer Urmila Pawar in her short stories *Sahav Bot* and *Chauthi Bhunt* provides a glimpse into a wide range of women’s experiences across caste, class, age and gender.

Hira Bansode has explored the implications of urban sisterhood in her poem *Sakhi* from her collection of poems called *Phiryad* which was published in 1984. A Brahmin friend of a Dalit woman visits her house after work. This Brahmin friend has taken a giant step for justice when she visits the Dalit woman’s house and shares the food with her. However she cannot resist criticizing the way the Dalit woman serves the food. Since the plate is arranged very differently and the last course is not served with yogurt which is a Brahmin custom, the friend remarks, “Your caste is never going to learn and improve” (Natrajan 375).
Very few non-Dalit writers have written about the life of the Dalits. Most of these writers wrote out of mere sympathy. But mere sympathy does not produce great literature. In literature written by the non-Dalit writers, the image of the Dalit and the interpretation of his life are distorted. An important aspect of the Dalit literature is self-criticism or self-protest. The Dalit writers do not hesitate to attack the inferiority and superiority complexes among themselves. Dalit literature is a declaration of independence. It is impossible to understand the revolutionary quality of Dalit literature without understanding the people to whom it is addressed. It speaks for them and to them.

2. Major Tribal Writers and Their Works

Many of the tribal languages in India, now, gave their own scripts or have taken recourse to the state scripts. Some tribal languages in India are - Kukna, Bhili, Gondi, Mizo, Garo, Santhali, Kinnaur, Garhwali, Dehwali, Warli and Pawri. But the tribal languages of India are yet to develop as languages of literature. These languages have a very rich oral literature but most of it is yet to be collected, complied and published.

A lot of effort is being made to encourage tribal writing and its publication. The Central Institution of Indian Languages in Mysore has published phonetic readers and grammars of many tribal languages of India. The Old and New Testaments have been published in large numbers in different tribal languages by the Bible Society in India. Religious books like Ramayana, is also available in tribal languages like Khamti and Karbi.
The place of Khasi is foremost among all the literary tribal languages of India. Some important Khasi writers in India are - Rabon Singh Kharsuka, U. Jeebon Roy Mairon and U. Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang. They are also the earliest Khasi writers in India. U. Jeebon Roy was a scholar who had in-depth knowledge of the Khasi language. He translated the *Hitopadesh*, the *Ramayan, Chaitanya* and *Buddhadeo Charit* and *History of India* into Khasi language. He also published *Kitab Khasi* in three volumes in 1899.

U. Radhon Singh published the first periodical in Khasi language which was called *U Khasi mynta*. Khasi creative writing has found full expression in the three genres poetry, prose and drama. Some famous playwrights of Khasi literature are - U. Peace Roy Pariat, U. Mondon Bareh and U. Victor Bareh. U. Soso Thom is a very famous poet in Khasi language. His collection on poems called *Ki poetry Khasi* was published in 1952. Like Khasi, Santali is also becoming a literary language.

The tribal community of India have also taken to writing these days. Some years ago, when the Dalit literature started drawing the nation's attention, it was usual to think of even tribal writers among the Dalit movement. For example, in Marathi, Atmaram Rathod, Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikwad were from the nomadic tribal communities but were thought to be Dalit writers.

Laxman Mane was born on June 1, 1949 in a nomadic Kakadi tribe in India. He wrote an autobiography called *Upara*. The book brought to light the problems of nomadic tribes arising out of their social and economic conditions. He also wrote another book called *Bundh Darwaja*. In the last twenty years, various tribal voices and works have started making their presence felt. L.
Khiangte’s anthology of Mizo literature and Govid Chatak’s anthology of Garhwali literature appeared in English and Hindi translations.

Tribal oral literature includes works from scriptures to folksongs and drama. Even after the medium of printing became well established in India, some of the oral traditions have survived. They include plays, songs, stories and aphorisms. But the last two decades have shown that tribal literature is no longer just the folk songs and folk tales.

It now includes other complex genres such as the novel and drama. Over the last four decades, a mainstream writer like Mahashweta Devi has been writing on behalf of the tribal community. The situation has changed now. The voice of the tribal community, themselves is now beginning to be heard. Magazines such as Chattisgarhi, Lokakshar and Dhol have started appearing which provide space for the tribal poets and writers.

*Painted Words: an Anthology of tribal Literature* written by G. N. Devy has writings in a rich variety of genres by the Adivasis and other tribal communities of India. This anthology includes the tribal versions of Mahabharat and Ramayan, colorful legends, rhythmic epics, songs, oral histories and a simple play depicting the routine exploitation of the tribal communities of India. Painted Words shows a rare and a barely understood facet of India’s tribal cultural heritage. It also shows how deeply intertwined are the mainstream and tribal traditions of India. Painted Words was published in 2002 and it is the first anthology of tribal literature ever compiled in India. In the book, G. N. Devy, points out that tribal language should be considered
as literature and not as folklores. He also points out that tribal speech should be seen as a language and not as a dialect.

3. **Major Igbo Writers and Their Works**

The Igbo people were greatly influenced by the Europeans because of colonization and the Atlantic Slave trade. The effects of colonization and the Atlantic slave trade can be seen in the language, literature, culture, politics etc. of the Igbo people. The Igbo language and culture has been demonstrated in the works of some prolific Igbo English writers like John Munonye, Buchi Emecheta, Chukwuemeka Ike and Nkem Nwako.

John Munonye’s first novel is *The Only Son* (1966) which describes the separation of a mother from her son because of religious differences. *Obi* (1969) is a sequel to *The Only Son*. It broadens the theme to an extended family and the clash between African traditions and European beliefs.

Buchi Emecheta was an Igbo writer. She began to write about the role of women in Nigerian society in the novel *The Bride Price* (1976). Her novel *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) is an account of women’s experiences bringing up children in the face of changing values in a traditional Igbo society. Her other novels include *Destination Biafra* (1982), which is set during the civil war in Nigeria. *The Rape of Shavi* (1983) is an account of European colonisation in Africa.

Chukwuemek Ike wrote *The Bride Price* (1965). This novel deals with love and the problems that married couples from different ethnic backgrounds face.
Ike's prose style includes dialogue, wit, and satire. The novels are not merely historical, political and sociological documentation but have distinctive styles with skilful use of irony, metaphor, comedy and tragedy. He has also written *How to Become a Published Writer* (1991).

Olaudah Equiano was a Nigerian writer. He was believed to be an Igbo. He was an ex-slave, who was one of the first Africans to produce an English language literary work. He published an autobiography in 1789 called *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa the African*.

Autobiographical work from the eighteenth century merchant seaman. His was the first influential slave autobiography. It exceeded all expectations for the quality of its imagery and description as a literary style, as well as its profoundly shaming narrative towards those who had not joined the cause of slavery abolition. (google.co.in/The Interesting Narrative)

It is the story of how he was kidnapped as a boy of twelve from his village of Essaka near Benin and sold to a white slave trader, and how he eventually obtained his freedom. This book was the first to give the West the true picture of Africa and the evils of slavery. The Igbo life based on Olaudah Equiano’s life in his hometown of Essaka has been described in detail in the first and the second chapters of this book. This book featured seventy nine Igbo words.

Pita Nwana published a book *Omenuko* which in 1933. Pita Nwana was the first Igbo to publish fiction in the Igbo language. This book is considered to
be a classic in Igbo literature. This novel is set at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. It is said to have been based on the actual events in the life of the hero Omenoko. The novel consists of fifteen chapters. It deals with Omenuko's life and deeds in the land of his refuge, his rise to and fall from power there, his efforts to locate and repatriate those whom he had wronged and his eventual return to his native place without suffering the wrath of the villagers. Omenuko is shown to be adept at exploiting both the British colonial officials and the traditional practices of his home area. Pita Nwana following many Igbo customs has employed many proverbs throughout the text.

Igbo literature in English had flourished since the publication of Achebe's first novel and has contributed immensely to the development of Nigerian and African literature. Chinua Achebe is one of the most popular Igbo writers in English. King has rightly noted that Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), marks the beginning of the real tradition of Nigerian literature, English and Igbo literature:

> It begins a tradition not only because its influence can be detected on subsequent Nigerian novelists, such as T.M.Aluko, but also because it was the first solid achievement upon which others could build. Achebe was the first Nigerian to successfully transmute the conventions of the novel, a European art form, into African literature. His craftsmanship can be seen in the way he creates a totally Nigerian texture for his fiction. Ibo idioms translated into English are used freely; European character study is subordinate to the portrayal of communal life; European economy of form is
replaced by an aesthetic appropriate to the rhythms of traditional tribal life. (Bookrags.com/achebe-chinua).

Chinua Achebe’s themes revolve around the impact of European civilization upon traditional African society and the role of tribal values in modern urban life. His novels reflect the cultural traits of the Igbo people.

As mentioned earlier, the effects of colonization and the Atlantic Slave trade can be seen greatly in the language and literature of the Igbo people. To understand how the British rule affected the language and literature of the Igbo people, one has to go back into the past and understand the history of how these Igbo people came in contact with the Britishers living in Nigeria. For this, it is first necessary to know why, when and how the Igbo people living in Nigeria came in contact with the British. Contact with the Europeans began with the Portuguese ships in Nigeria. The British, the French and the Dutch soon followed. Soon after their arrival, the trade in goods was replaced by the trade in slaves. The slave trade which took place in the nineteenth century affected the Igbo heavily. Most of the Igbo slaves were taken from the Bight of Biafra.

Violence and inter tribal warfare increased. Many Igbo people were sold as slaves to the Europeans in exchange for things such as guns, metal jewellery and liquor. The colonial impact on the Igbo people by the Europeans and the Slave trade are some of the most important themes of Igbo literature and especially in the novels written by Chinua Achebe. The horrors of the slave trade are shown in many novels written by the Igbo writers. When the Europeans came to Nigeria, neither the colonizer not the colonized, Igbo
people had any real insight into the alien cultures they were confronted with. There was a huge cultural and a language gulf between them. So the relationship between the Igbo people and the Europeans was manipulated to suit the demands of the British.

Language was a major barrier for the Europeans and the Igbo people. The Igbo people suffered a lot due to the language barrier. They realized that being on good terms with the Europeans was the only way to get along. For this, it became necessary to know even Basic English. Chinua Achebe's novel, Things Fall Apart shows the real difficulties encountered by the Igbo people due to the language barrier. After three hundred and fifty years of slave trade, the Europeans decided that the slave trade was immoral. Christian missionaries brought Western education to Nigeria. So Christianity quickly spread throughout Southern Nigeria. These missionaries were used by the colonial power to acquire new colonies. This fact has been keenly displayed by Chinua Achebe in the novel Things Fall Apart. The intersection of the African tradition (particularly the Igbo people) and the modernity, embodied by the European colonialism is one of the most prevalent themes in Chinua Achebe's and many other Igbo writers' novels.

Chinua Achebe's novel Things Fall Apart is one of the most popular novels that deal with Igbo and their traditional life. The novel, Things Fall Apart is a fictional account of the clash between the new influences of the Europeans and the traditional life of the Igbo people. In Chinua Achebe's novel Anthills of Savannah there is a character called Sam Okoli, who is the president of Kangan. He embodies the tension between African traditional and Western influence. Nadine Gordimer of New York Times Book Review commented that
the novel, “is a work in which twenty-two years of harsh experience, intellectual growth, self-criticism, deepening understanding, and mustered discipline of skill open wide a subject to which Mr. Achebe is now magnificently equal” (mannmuseum.com/chinua achebe works). In Achebe’s novels; the colonial impact on the Igbo people is not only affected by the individuals from Europe, but also by the institutions and urban offices. The character of Obi in the book No Longer at Ease succumbs to the colonial-era corruption in the city. The temptations and of his position overwhelm his identity and fortitude. In the novel, Things Fall Apart too, the courts and the position of the district commission clashes with the tradition of the Igbo and removes their ability to participate in structures of decision making.

The depiction of Igbo culture is paramount in Chinua Achebe’s novels. Things Fall Apart has become one of the most important books in African literature. The book gives a vivid description of the Igbo life to the readers. Okonkwo is a yam farmer who is caught between two pulls—the upkeep of his father’s legacy and the complications and contradictions arising out of the white missionaries arriving in his village, Umuofia. In this novel Achebe deals with the subject of cultural conflict, particularly the encounter between Igbo tradition and Christian doctrine.

Language is a powerful instrument of control used by the colonizers. Language plays a significant role in the culture of any people. It is through their language that they express their folktales, myths, proverbs and history. For this reason, the colonizing powers tried to stamp out the native languages of the Igbo people. The two possible responses to this control can be - rejection and subversion. Chinua Achebe has chosen the idea of subversion rather than
rejection. Chinua Achebe uses the language of the colonizer to convey the Igbo experience of colonization in the book *The African Trilogy*. He points out the way in which language can act as a barrier between two cultures.

In the book, *Arrow of God*, language is still barrier to communication, yet the Igbo have been forced to realize that the acquisition of English is crucial to understanding the white man and his religion. *Arrow of God* (1964) by Chinua Achebe is a political and cultural novel. It is set in Nigeria in the early twentieth century when colonization by British government officials and Christian missionaries was well underway. In this novel two cultures confront their differences. It is the story of Ezeulu who is the chief priest of the God Ulu and who is the patron deity of an Igbo village. Ezeulu is responsible for initiating the rituals that structure village life because he is the chief priest. After his village rejects his advice to avoid war with a neighbouring village, Ezeulu finds himself at odds with his own people, but is praised by the British administrators. The British, seeking a candidate to install as village chieftain, make him an offer. But Ezeulu rejects this offer. Caught in the middle with no allies, Ezeulu slowly loses his grip on reality and slips into senility.

Achebe in this novel has presented a picture of the Igbo people's lives, conflicts, and culture. Achebe portrays the disrupting effect an externally imposed power system (the British) has, on an internally imposed power system (African tradition and customs) and also the conflicts within the Igbo society. He has also shown the assimilation of the Western beliefs and value in the Igbo culture which leads to a loss of Igbo cultural identity.
Besides Chinua Achebe, there are many other Igbo authors writing in English. Some of the other Igbo writers in English are - Cyprian Ekwensi, Flora Nwapa, Ben Okri, Elechi Amadi. Flora Nwapa has been called the mother of modern African literature. Nwapa is best known for re-creating Igbo life and traditions from a woman’s point of view. Her most famous novel is *Efuru*. It was published in 1966. It is the first published book written by a Nigerian woman to be published. The protagonist of the novel is Efuru, who is a strong and beautiful Igbo woman. The story of the novel is set in a rural community. Efuru lives in a small village in colonial West Africa. She loses her child and has two unhappy marriages. Even though she is an independent-minded woman and respected for her trading ability, Efuru wishes to be a mother. At the end she goes to the lake Goddess, Uhamiri. Uhamiri gives her worshipers wealth and beauty not children. Her other important novels are - *Never Again* (1975), *One is enough* (1981) and *Women are Different* (1986). Flora Nwapa also wrote short stories and poems like - *This is Lagos and Other Stories* (1971), *Cassava Song and Rice Song* (1986) and *Wives at War and Other Stories* (1980).

Elechi Amadi has written four novels: *The Concubine*, *The Great Ponds*, *The Slave* and *Isiburu*. *The Concubine* is a story of a young woman, Ihuoma. She belongs to Nigeria’s Igbo ethnic group. She was said to be the wife of the mythical Sea King deity. This gives her great status in the present, but portends doom for any mortal man who seeks to marry her. Later on, Ihuoma is wed and widowed three times, as a result of the wrath of the Sea King toward those who would marry bride. Obiechina wrote in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* essay that, “the strength of The Concubine rests on the
fact that it is not folklore but realistic-style fiction, in spite of its strong penetration by the super-natural” (africansuccess.org).

*The Great Ponds* is set in the years before World War I. The plot of the novel is about a long struggle for control over a part of the Niger River delta. Two villages battle one another over communal fishing rights at the Wagaba pond. The main characters in the novel are the warrior Olumba who is from the Chiolu village, and Wago, who is a famed leopard-killer from neighbouring Aliakoro.

*The Slave* is a story, set in a rural West African village. It is about the fate of Olumati, who is the last in his family line. His parents were ostracized long ago and had to flee their home village. Since then they have been forced to serve as slaves to a God at a cult shrine in another village. Olumati too is expected to do the same. He tries to restore his family’s standing, but forces conspire against this plan.

*Estrangement* is the last of Amadi’s novels. It was published in 1985. The novel relates the story of a woman-Alekiri and is about the trauma she experiences during the Biafra civil war. Her marriage ends. After that, she falls in love with an army officer and is romantically involved with him. She struggles to regain her footing after the hostilities end.

Cyprian Ekwensi was a great Nigerian writer. His novels are generally about the Igbo village life, customs, beliefs and their religious practices before they came into contact with the Western world. His most important book is *People of the City*. It is the story of a young crime reporter who doubles as a dance bandleader in a large West African city. He eventually realizes that what he
can do for the developing country he lives in is more important than the varied personal pleasures he can find in the hectic city life.

His novel *Drummer Boy* is based on the life of Benjamin ‘Kokoro’ Aderoynmu. This novel gives a powerful description of the wandering homeless and poverty stricken life of a street artist. His most successful novel was *Jagua Nana* which was about a Pidgin-speaking Nigerian woman who leaves her husband to work as a prostitute in a city. She later on falls in love with a teacher.

*Burning Grass* was published in 1961. It is basically a collection of vignettes concerning a Fulani family. It gives an insight into the life of pastoral people. Ekwensi based the novel and the characters on a real family with whom he had previously lived. Between 1961 and 1966 Ekwensi published at least one major work every year. The most important of these were the novels, *Beautiful Feathers* (1963) and *Iska* (1966), and two collections of short stories, *Rainmaker* (1965) and *Lokotown* (1966). Ekwensi continued to publish even after the 1960s. Some of his most important works after the 1960s are — *Divided We Stand* (1980), the novella *Motherless Baby* (1980), and *The Restless City* and *Christmas Gold* (1975), *Behind the Convent Wall* (1987), and *Gone to Mecca* (1991).

Ben Okri was a Nigerian novelist, short story writer, poet and one of the leading African writers. His first novel was *Flowers and Shadows* which was published in 1980. It is about a successful businessman whose jealous relatives make his life difficult. He follows the realistic tradition. Ben Okri often employs Nigerian dialects. Okri’s second novel, *The Landscapes Within* was
published in 1981. It is about the adventures of a young and poor painter in Lagos. Okri’s next two works, *Incidents at the Shrine* and *Stars of the New Curfew*, mark a new phase in his artistic development. Several of the stories deal with the Biafra War, seen from a child’s point of view.

Okri’s most important novel is *The Famished Road* and its sequel *Songs of Enchantment*. It has been called the classic magical realist novel of West Africa. The story is set on the eve of the independence of Nigeria. Its narrator is Azaro. Azro is a “spirit-child” an *abiku*. It is believed, that an *abiku* is a child who has had a hard time deciding, that it wants to be born into a mortal existence. For this reason, it keeps coming and going between this world and the spirit world until it finally decides which world it wants to live in. Usually a child is called an *abiku* when it is born to a woman who has had repeated miscarriages or children who die at a young age. The child who finally survives is called an *abiku* because it is believed to be the same spirit that tried to be born as the other children. So parents often perform rituals or do special favours to persuade the *abiku* child to choose mortal life over its spirit life. Okri describes Azaro’s struggle to resist his fate and to survive with his family hunger, disease, and violence. The story is simultaneously situated in the world of dream, of those waiting to be born and of dead. Arazo’s spirit-companions are constantly trying to pull him back into their spirit world. Arazo’s father undergoes a series of mythic battles and his mother keeps the family together with her courage and hard work. Finally Azaro must choose between the mortal life and the land of spirits. The title is taken from a poem written by Wole Soyinka—*May you never walk / when the road waits, famished*. The themes and the techniques used in the novel
The Famished Road are carried forward in its sequel called *Songs of Enchantment*. Okri has also published a volume of poetry titled *An African Elegy*.

The Igbo writers have established an Igbo identity in style, culture and linguistic experiment. Their works represent an ethnic variety of Nigerian English based on local experiences, needs and situations. But the Igbo written language, as mentioned earlier, derives from the oral tradition. Igbo literature can be said to be rooted in the language and culture of the Igbo people. The Igbo writers write in the tradition of Igbo literature because of their general indebtedness to a unique oral literary heritage and the circumstances which have made English their language of expression.

4. **Major Black Writers and Their Works**

Lucy Terry is the author of the oldest known piece of African American literature or Black literature - *Bars Fight*. This poem was not published until 1855. It was transmitted orally for more than hundred years. It consists of twenty eight lines in irregular iambic tetrameter. This poem commemorates white settlers who were killed in an encounter with Indians in 1746. Poet Phillis Wheatley published her book *Poems on various subjects* in 1773. She was especially fond of writing in the elegiac poetic style, perhaps mirroring the genre of oration taught to her through the women in her African American tribal group.
Jupiter Hammon was another African American writer. He published his poem *An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries* 1761. In 1778 he wrote *An Ode to Phillis Wheatley*, in which he discussed their shared humanity and common bonds. A number of former slaves such as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass wrote realistic slave narratives which a real picture of slavery. Frederick Douglass was an American author, abolitionist, and lecturer wrote three autobiographies during his life-time. *A Narrative on the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, My Bondage and My Freedom* and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* are the three autobiographies that he wrote.

In *A Narrative on the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, he has narrated the story of his life under the bonds of slavery. He gave a very moving account of slavery and his escape from it. The themes of this narrative are - the value of freedom, social justice, equal rights, and condemnation of violence against those who do not have the legal power to protect themselves. *My Bondage and My Freedom* is an autobiographical slave narrative written by Frederick Douglass. It was published in 1855. It is mainly an expansion of his first *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. It discusses in greater detail his journey from slavery to liberty. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* shows Douglass dedicated to the ideal of building a racially integrated America in which skin colour would cease to determine an individual’s social value and economic options.

Harriet Jacobs wrote the autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* which was published in 1861. She wrote the autobiography under the pen name of “Linda Brent”. Harriet Jacobs in the autobiography wrote about the
humiliation she had to face as a slave. It also shows the particular tortures inflicted on women who are captured as slaves. In the book, she has described the punishments that a male slave has to endure at the hands of slave holders, but she also feels that although she finds the punishment brutal, it is nothing compared to the suffering that a young slave woman has to face.

After the end of slavery and the American Civil War, many African American authors continued to write nonfiction works about the condition of African Americans in America. Among the most prominent of these writers are W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington and Paul Laurence Dunbar. Dunbar became popular for his 1896 *Ethiopia*. It is a poem in the collection *Lyrics of Lowly Life*. In this poem Dunbar presents ideas of Ethiopia as a mother. This poem also shows a pride in the African-American people. The poem encourages hope as well as racial pride in the African-American people. It inspires the African-American people to believe in a brighter future for them.


The Harlem Renaissance from 1920 to 1940 attracted greater attention towards African American literature “The Harlem Renaissance was a movement toward
re-creating a unique African-American identity and celebrating black voices in the arts” (enotes.com/African American literature).

T. Langston Hughes and Richard Wright wanted to create a “New Black” identity that would change racial stereotypes. Some other famous writers of this period are - Zora Neale Hurston who wrote Their Eyes were Watching God. Hurston also wrote three other novels - Jonah's Gourd Vine (1934) which is an autobiographical novel. It is a novel about her father’s rise from an illiterate labourer to a respected Baptist minister, Moses, Man of the Mountain (1939), which recreated Mosaic biblical myth in an African context and Seraph on the Suwanee (1948), which is about a woman’s search for selfhood within the confines of marriage to a man who sees all women as inferior. Jean Toomer wrote Cane. Cane is a famous collection of stories, poems, and sketches about rural and urban Black life.

Dorothy West wrote the novel The Living is Easy, which described in detail the life of an upper-class Black family. Countee Cullen’s books include the poetry collections Color (1925), Copper Sun (1927), and The Ballad of the Brown Girl (1927). Countee Cullen describes everyday black life in his poems. Frank Marshall Davis has written a collection of poems like Black Man’s Verse (1935) and I am the American Negro (1937). Wallace Thurman wrote a novel titled The Blacker the Berry: a Novel of Negro Life (1929).

In the 1970s Alex Huxley’s novel Roots was published which deals with the history of slavery in America. Haley showed that slaves did not give up all their ties to African culture. In the novel, the slave Kunta Kinte valued his heritage so much that he insisted on being called by his real name Kinte and
not by his slave name Toby. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was his first major work. It was published in 1965. It had an immense effect on the black power movement in the United States. The autobiography depicts Malcolm X’s experiences of racism in small towns, racial violence, criminal life, and his imprisonment.

In 1970, Toni Morrison published her first novel *The Bluest Eye*. It is a story about a poor African girl called Pecola Breedlove. Pecola is a troubled young girl with a hard life. Her parents are constantly fighting. Pecola is continually being told and reminded of what an “ugly” girl she is. Pecola’s life is full of hardships. Her father is a drunkard. Her father rapes her and Pecola becomes pregnant. In the end Pecola’s child is born prematurely and dies.

Ideas of beauty, particularly those that relate to racial characteristics, are a major theme in this book. Throughout the novel, Pecola wishes that her eyes turn blue. To Pecola, blue eyes symbolize the beauty and happiness that she associates with the white, middle-class world. She believes that after having blue eyes all her troubles will end. *Beloved* is her most famous novel. It is acclaimed as Morrison’s masterpiece. This story is about a slave who found freedom but killed her infant daughter to save her from a life of slavery.

Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* is an inquiry into the reasons why beauty gets wasted in this country. The beauty in this case is black. [Miss Morrison’s prose is] so precise, so faithful to speech and so charged with pain and wonder that the novel becomes poetry...I have said ‘poetry,’ but *The Bluest Eye* is
also history, sociology, folklore, nightmare and music.

(bookbrowse.com/bluest eye)

Another important novel is *Songs of Solomon*. The story deals with materialism and brotherhood. Morrison is the first African American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. The most recurring themes in her novels are —

1) **Sense of Loss** — Morrison feels deeply the losses which African-Americans experienced in their migration from the rural South to the urban North from 1930 to 1950 and wrote about it in her novels. They lost their sense of community, their connection to their past, and their culture.

2) **Roots, Community, and Identity** — to have roots is to have a shared history. A whole community-everyone-is needed to raise a child. The lack of roots, the disconnection from the community and the past, cause individuals to become alienated. This also forms an important theme in her novels.

3) **Ancestors** — Ancestors are necessary. They provide cultural information, they are a connection with the past, they protect, and they educate. The ancestors may be parents, grandparents, teachers, or elders in the community. In *The Bluest Eye*, M'Dear is the ancestor figure. Morrison believes that the presence of the ancestor is one of the characteristics of black writing.
4) **Extreme Situations** — Morrison places her characters in extreme situations. She forces them to the edge of endurance and then pushes them beyond what we think human beings can bear.

5) **Good and Evil** — Morrison shows understanding of and, often, compassion, for characters who commit horrific deeds, like incest-rape or infanticide. Her villains are not all evil, nor are her good people saints.

6) **Loss of Innocence** — Innocence has to be lost in order for the individual to grow. Claudia, a narrator in *The Bluest Eye*, loses her innocence as she watches Pecola’s destruction.

In the 1970s, Alice Walker wrote a famous essay that brought Zora Neale Hurston and her classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* back to the attention of the literary world. Alice Walker’s first novel was *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. It is a novel about three generations of domestic violence. The story is about the life of a young African American girl, Ruth Copeland, and her grandfather, Grange. As an old man, Grange learns that he is free to love, but love does not come without painful responsibility. At the end of the novel, Grange summons his newly found knowledge to rescue his granddaughter, Ruth, from his brutal son, Brownfield. For the rescue, Grange would have to kill his own son.
Alice Walker also wrote *The Color Purple* which is an epistolary novel. The story is told in the form of diary entries and letters. It is a story about a young uneducated poor black girl called Celie. *The Colour Purple* is dedicated to black women’s rights. The narrative in the novel is derived from her own personal experience, growing up in the rural South as an uneducated and abused child. This book inspires and motivates Black women to stand up for their rights. In the novel, Celie, the protagonist, undergoes an inner transformation. From a submissive, abused wife she becomes a confident and independent black woman and also businesswoman. There are other minor themes in the novel too such as — the rejection of the traditional, Christian, “white-man’s” God. Walker’s work describes the emotional, spiritual, and physical devastation that occurs when family trust is betrayed. She focuses on African-American women who struggle to achieve independent identities and fight against male domination. The characters in the novel are strong but still vulnerable. In her novel, women gain strength and draw inspiration from other women.

Lorraine Hansberry wrote a play called *A Raisin in the Sun* which focuses on a poor Black family living in Chicago. *A Raisin in the Sun* was the first play written by a black woman to be produced on Broadway. Set in the aftermath of World War II, the Younger family is facing problems of racism in the Chicago slums. America’s complicated history of racial tension between black Americans and white Americans is ingrained into the Youngers everyday lives.

Single mother (and grandmother) Lena Younger, her daughter Beneatha, and her son Walter, Walter’s wife Ruth and their son live in a run-down two-bedroom apartment. These characters feel confined by their physical home
space, and also feel restricted by the social roles they've been assigned. For example, Beneatha studies to become a doctor, despite the financial strain it puts on the low-income family. Walter works as a chauffeur for a white man, but he dreams of opening liquor store with his friends so that he can earn more money for his family. His wife Ruth draws no attention to her own desires; she just wants her family to be happy.

Toward the beginning of the play, we learn that Ruth is pregnant. The family is not rich enough to provide for another child. So Ruth decides to abort her child. But the Youngers have a chance for a new beginning. Ten thousand dollars is coming in the mail, and Lena must decide what to do with it. Bennie hopes for tuition money, Walter hopes for the down payment on his liquor store and Ruth just wants her family to be happy. When the money arrives, Lena decides to buy a house for the family in a white neighborhood and entrusts the rest of the money to Walter advising him to save a good amount for Beneatha's schooling.

But Walter loses all the money in the liquor store scam. The family's morale goes from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. When a white man, Karl, comes to buy out the Younger's new house, Walter decides that giving in to the man is the only way to get some money for his family. In the end of the play, Walter must decide between standing up for his family's rights and standing up for his ego and role as the breadwinner of the family. Finally, Walter decides to stand up for his family's rights and rejects Karl's offer. The family will move into their new home.
The play explores the complications inherent in turning dreams into reality. *A Raisin in the Sun* creates a situation where the Younger family is asked to put its dreams on hold in exchange for money. The play demonstrates how race can complicate the American Dream. Amiri Baraka also wrote controversial off-Broadway plays.

Maya Angelou was called, “America’s most visible black female autobiographer” (wikipedia.org/MayaAngelou). Maya Angelou’s five-volume autobiography commenced with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* in 1970. This autobiography is about the first seventeen years of her life. The book takes the reader from Marguerite’s arrival in Stamps, Arkansas, to the birth of her son.

In the novel, we can read about Maya Angelou’s insecurity, her love of family, her church and school experiences which were so important in her growing up, and her visits to her mother and father. The novel has rich and diverse characterization. Chief among these are her determined, strict, and wise grandmother Annie Henderson, her crippled and bitter uncle Willie Johnson, her bright and imaginative brother Bailey Johnson Jr.; her playboy father Bailey Johnson and her beautiful, brilliant, and worldly mother, Vivian Baxter Johnson.

Angelou also wrote a book titled, *All God’s Children Need Travelling Shoes* (1986) which is also autobiographical in nature. This book is about Angelou’s experience living in Ghana in the 1960’s with a group of Black Americans. Through her powerful prose, she explores the issues of identity and self-discovery. She also wrote *My Painted House* and *My Friendly Chicken and

Ralph Waldo Ellison was a novelist, literary critic, scholar and writer. His most famous novel is *Invisible Man*. This book deals with themes of individuality, identity, history, and responsibility. He also wrote *Shadow and Act* (1964). It is a collection of political, social and critical essays. This book is a collection of essays and book reviews written during the middle years of the twentieth Century — the Forties, Fifties and early Sixties, a time of increasing racial tensions between Negroes and whites. Negro was the term used for the African-Americans.

This term is used throughout this book. Its use in this analysis is therefore reflective of this usage, and of the socio-cultural-literary context in which it was written. The essays include reviews and criticisms of a number of books, capsule biographies of well-known black performers and authors, and analysis of the origins of several key elements of Negro culture (this includes jazz, racism and family life). Throughout the essays, several common themes emerge, including the relationship between American society and the Negro, the relationship between art (music, literature) and life, and individual versus group identity.

*Going to the Territory* (1986) is also a book written by Ralph Ellison. In *Going to the Territory*, Ellison provides us with dramatically fresh readings of William Faulkner and Richard Wright. He also gives new perspectives on the
music of Duke Ellington and the art of Romare Bearden. In this book, he analyzes the subversive quality of black laughter, the mythic underpinnings of his masterpiece Invisible Man, and the extent to which America's national identity rests on the contribution of African Americans.

Many similarities can be found between Dalit literature, Igbo literature and African-American literature. Dalits had been pushed to the margins of Indian society for centuries. They were denied education, access to power and privileges. So they started writing in different Indian languages to express the injustice meted out towards them. These Dalit writers focus on themes such as survival in brutal conditions, sense of alienation from the literature and culture of the mainstream, and their own writing as a means of discovery and self recovery. To promote equality, freedom and justice is the main concern of Dalit literatures in Indian languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil. The tribal people of Africa and African-Americans had been geographically dislocated, deprived of a sense of history, denied a sense of community and even inherited language due to colonial domination and exploitation which is similar to the grip of caste hierarchy. Black and Dalit literatures though evolved in different historical conditions celebrate the spirit of human survival and triumph of stubbornness in the face of most horrifying conditions of existence. Both writers feel that their literature has a social function and responsibility. Dalit writers feel that literature should be an instrument to inspire action.
Comparison of Dalit, Tribal, Black and Igbo Literature

Dalit, Tribal, Igbo and Black Literature have several parallels, though each is also very distinctive. One of the earliest Dalit writers in India is Madara Chennauah — ‘Father of Vachana poetry’. Young Dalit writers were inspired by the movement of Blacks in North America.

As is common in all Fourth World Literature, the writers have a voice to express their problems, injustice and oppression heaped upon them. Besides this, it also shows the world their culture, values and beliefs. The themes that occur are shame, anger, sorrow, hope and so on. The Igbo were colonized by the British. The Dalits were doubly colonized — by the upper-caste Hindus and then the British. Dalit Literature became a medium of assertion, protest and mobilization. Baburao Bagul was a pioneer of Dalit writing in Marathi. His stories were translated into English. In Igbo literature revolt against the British forms an important component as it does in Dalit literature too. Annabhu Sathe’s Fakira deals with anti-British revolt by the untouchables and other low castes of the nineteenth century.

The celebration of the fighting spirit of the under trodden is equally significant in all literature written about the dispossessed people. Just as the Black narratives treat the theme of slaves, so do Dalit narratives such as Jyotirao Phule’s book Gulamgiri (Slavery). Jyotirao Phule urges the untouchables to wage a decisive war against unjust caste system of the Hindus. In Joothan: A Dalit’s Life, again Om Prakash Valmiki tells the story of survival, oppression and slavery of the Dalits.
Just as women Black writers contributed greatly, Dalit women writers also contributed greatly to Dalit Literature. Dalit women writers faced discrimination on grounds of gender and could appear on the literary scene only in 1980’s. They reflect the tortures inflicted on women by patriarchy and caste ridden injustice. Muktabai, an untouchable girl was the first example of woman Dalit writer. Other women Dalit writers are Urmila Oawar, Aruna Lokhand, Shantibai Kamble etc.

Igbo women writers have also contributed in creating awareness about the oppressive structures that trap women. A noteworthy women writer is Adichie. Flora Nwapa, known as the mother of modern African literature is well-known for re-creating Igbo life, culture and traditions from a woman’s point of view.

One thing remarkable about Dalit writers is their self-criticism or self protest especially the harbouring of complexes among themselves. Their voices speak of them, for them, by them. Their voices now also reach society. In the post-modern world, as the marginalized gain access to the centre, tribal writers also have their voices heard.

Tribal languages in India have their own scripts. Some tribal languages which have come to be known are Kukna, Bhili, Gondi, Mizo, Garo etc. One problem with their development is that most have rich oral literature and the Tribal languages have yet to develop as languages of literature. Tribal writers have drawn attention to the Tribal experiences which no one would have otherwise known about. For example, Laxman Mane belongs to a nomadic tribe Kakadi. His autobiography work *Upara* brings to the reader’s attention the problems of nomadic tribes arising out of their social and economic
conditions. Like Igbo oral literature, Tribal oral literature includes plays, songs, stories and aphorisms, folktales and songs. Tribal voices can be heard also because they can be translated into Hindi and English.

Igbo literature voices the encounter between their traditional values and culture as they collide with Western beliefs. This is a common experience of colonization - especially India and Africa. At the same time, the writers get an opportunity to write about their traditional beliefs, aphorisms and culture.

The Igbo people first came into contact with the Europeans to trade in goods as well as slave trade in the nineteenth century. They were particularly affected by the slave trade and the Igbo writers talk about the horrors of the slave trade. The way the untouchables were treated by high caste Hindus in India is similar to the way slaves were treated in Africa.

All colonized countries faced the language and cultural barrier. Another common influence in Africa and India is the work done by Christian missionaries. To the untouchables, they pose conversion to Christianity a viable option towards a better and more just life. To the Igbo, conversion is also a passport to achieve a better life.

Chinua Achebe shows the clash of cultures renders an individual impotent - in his inability to choose the best option. They seem to be caught in a "no man's land." Other Igbo writers who write in English are Cyprian Ekwensi, Flora Nwapa, Ben Okri etc. The Igbo writers have, like the Dalit and the Tribal writers of India established their own identity. The English language has helped in gaining a wider audience.
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