2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

A comparative study is the act of investigating resemblance and differences about cultures across boundaries of discipline, nation, and languages. This chapter reviews the indigenous studies with a special focus on comparative studies on indigenous literature. The chapter presents a review of comparative studies of indigenous literature to divulge how the present research is unique from all other existing works. The literature review consists of two parts. In the first part, the review presents work done in relation to comparative study in the areas of indigenous literature and in the second part the review presents work done in relation to Dalit, Sami and Australian Aboriginal literature and deals with the need for and the relevance of present research. Eventually, the limitations of comparative studies in the areas of indigenous studies are explored, and the research gap is identified.

2.2 Comparative studies in the area of indigenous literature

Gilroy et al. in their article “Yuin, Kamilaroi, Sami, and maori people’s reflections on experiences as ‘indigenous scholars’ in ‘Disability Studies’ and Decolonisation” (2018) explain about the need of decolonising disability research in a universal level. This study reports on the reflections of these scholars experiences on the disability research. The findings of this research shows that “although Indigenous peoples are from different tribes/nations and countries, there are similarities and differences between each of the Indigenous disability researcher’s approach to decolonisation in disability research. The paper concludes that Sami, Australian Aboriginal people, and Maori people can learn from each other to advance the decolonisation of disability research, service and policy, at local, national and international levels”.

Kumari in her study “Contemporary perspective of the Fourth world Literature” (2017) explains that the fourth world perspective has linked the Aboriginals of Australia with
the indigenous groups of America, Canada, New Zealand, India, etc. Kumari observes that Aboriginal literature encourages cultural nationalism, literary talent and Aboriginal pride, and the emergence of Aboriginal literature has initiated Aboriginal writers into social and literary activism.

Solberg in his thesis “Indigenous Internal Self-determination in Australia and Norway” (2016) analyses the history and the social condition of Indigenous people in Norway and Australia. This research reveals that though Australian Aborigines and Sami people are indigenous people their standard of living is not the same. Today Sami people of Norway enjoy living to that of first world country people and they have more voice than Australian Aborigines. The Sami people have their own parliament in Norway, Sweden and Finland. On the other hand the Australian Aborigines face communal struggle and socio-economic problem even today. The study reveals that the relation between Sami people and Nordic people are good until the thirteenth century but Sami people are gradually colonized by the Nordic people from the thirteenth century. Sami people are pushed northwords between 1500 and 1700 that made the Sami people move away from fishing and hunting. The study also explains that Dutch and French people explored Australia from seventeenth century but they never settled like British people. The geopolitics and the economic benefits made the British people to settle in Australia and in the beginning of the British settlement they used indigenous people as guides, sexual partners and labourers. Therefore the conflict between the natives and the settlers started in Australia. The Aborigines resist the settler’s dominance from the beginning and 1970s is the great time of resistance of both Aboriginal and Sami people.

Swamy in his article “Dalits and Tribes: The People of Fourth World” (2016) observes that Dalits, Indigenous people of America, Aboriginal people of Australia are the native people who lived before Europeans or other colonizers invaded and settled in their
lands. Therefore, the time has come for the Dalits, tribals and other native people to fight the battles against their subjugation and retrieve their space in social, cultural, and political realms of the earth. It also reveals that that evolution of the fourth World writing is a reflection of the socio, economic, literary and cultural circumstances that affected the lives of the natives.

Kalpana & Saranya, in their article “The Study of Similarities between Dalit Literature and African – American Literature” (2016) draw the parallels between the politics of Caste and Race in Indian writing and the Black American writing with reference to Bama’s Karukku and Alice Walker’s The Color Purple.

Banerjee in “Tracing the Fragments of Unwritten History: Indian Dalit Personal Narratives in the Light of Folklore and Indigenous Culture” (2015) explains that Dalit autobiographies are recalled texts, a family or community story mainly articulating the painful past of being elbowed out as untouchables from the conservative society.

Saulnier in her article “Aboriginal Self- Determination: A Comparative study of New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America” (2014) explains how New Zealand, Australia, and United States try to provide Aboriginal inhabitants with a degree of self-determination. In this paper, the author clearly reveals that colonization and subjugation have created significant barriers to indigenous people’s well-being.

Ozai in “Politics of caste and race perspectives from Dalit Literature and Black American Writing” (2013) explains that if the Dalit is the protagonist of India’s boycotted society, the African American is the protagonist of Black America. One is robbed and degraded by the White society and the other one by Savarna society.

Ozai in “Literature of Bias: Intercultural and Cross- Border Comparisons between Dalit Literature and Black American writing” (2013) discusses the similar experiences of humiliation and marginalization which bring out collective shame and anger for both the
communities. The study reveals that marginalised groups all around the world have the same system of oppression but in different forms. In India, the oppression is because of caste and in the western world it is because of race. Ozai draws the similarities between caste and race. The marginalised sections are distanced from the dominant people or power centers due to the deprived economic, political and religious power.

Sreenivasa Rao & Sreenivasula Reddy, in their article “Fourth World Literature: An Introduction” (2013) say that the indigenous people of America, Aboriginals of Australia, Maoris of New Zealand, Aboriginals of Canada, Dalits and Tribes of India are considered as fourth world people, and also explains that Fourth World literature refers to literature of indigenous people and Fourth world people refer to the indigenous people who lived before colonizers invaded their home lands.

Durnin in her article “Indigenous Literature Comparability” (2011) discusses the barriers in doing comparative studies on indigenous literature and non indigenous literature and explains about the recent critical and theoretical approaches.

Maria de los Dolores Figueroa Romero in “Comparative Analysis of Indigenous Women’s Participation in Ethno-politics and Community Development: The Experiences of Women Leaders of ECUARUNARI (Ecuador) and YATAMA (Atlantic coast of Nicaragua)” (2011) investigates the activism of native women and their part within their socio-political organizations to face the different forms of communal and ethnic bias.

Woods in her thesis “Indigenous Identity, Oral Tradition, and the Land in the poetry of Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Luci Tapahonso, and Haunani-Kay Trask” (2010), brings out postcolonial and eco-critical based assessment that gazes at their different ways of using poetry to portray the indigenous people’s association with the land.
William Mackay’s “At the Confluence of Poetry and politics: Comparing the Lives and Works of Oogeroo Noonuccal and Hone Tuwhare” focuses on the convergence of politics and art of Australian Aborigines and Maori in indigenous perspective.

Roy’s research study on “Speaking Subaltern: A Comparative Study of African American and Dalit? Indian Literatures” (2010) examines the two marginalized groups, African Americans and Dalits and demonstrates how these two communities are subjugated by the dominants who delimit their identities. The study exposes that African- Americans negotiate their identities whereas, in India, the Dalits try to realize the identities guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

Gorelova’s, “Postmodernism, Native American Literature and Issues of Sovereignty” (2009) reveals that it is premature to use postmodern theory since it deconstructs the past (history) and identity which are still to be created in Native American Writings.

Scarpino’s “Resilience and Urban Aboriginal women” (2007) discusses the resilience of urban aboriginal women in the women’s narratives and reveals that persistence has allowed the women to move through hard times and towards a sense of who they are as Aboriginal women.

Balzer in his thesis, “Decolonizing the classroom: Reading Aboriginal Literature through the Lenses of Contemporary Literary Theories” (2006), adopts literary theories relevant to the study of Aboriginal literature and it advocates that more exposure to critical theories may facilitate decolonising Canadian classrooms.

Elizabeth Mckay’s thesis “Engaging Feminism: A Pedagogy for Aboriginal Peoples” (2005) exploits feminism theories to examine the marginalisation of Aboriginal women in the Patriarchal society, and how feminism seems to be a foundation of empowerment for Aboriginal people.
Nielsen et al. in their article “Colonialism and Criminal Justice for Indigenous Peoples in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America” (2003) observes that “Colonial processes impact the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in criminal justice”. The natives are simply represented as offenders and criminals by the colonial masters. The colonial rule marginalizes the indigenous people through many processes and that include “depopulation, legal control, the use of ideology through religion, education, media, urbanization, and paternalism”. The study also states that colonialism resulted in marginalization of indigenous people.

Hyndman’s article “Postcolonial Representation of Aboriginal Australian culture: Location Past to Location Present in National Geographic” (2000) looks at how the Australian magazine has naturalised and sexualised indigenous people of Australia.

Scigulinska’s “Oral Tradition in Native American and Australian Aboriginal Culture” posits that oral tradition and story-telling have an unavoidable place among the indigenous cultures and communities such as Australian Aboriginals and Native Americans. In this article, the author says that though there are differences among indigenous cultures, there are many similarities in historical events and indigenous culture.

2.3 Research work on Dalit, Sami and Australian Aboriginal Literature

Hamalainen in his article “Sami yoik, Sami history, Sami health: a narrative review” (2018) explains that yoik is the part of Sami community and it plays a vital role in regulating the emotions and stress relief of Sami people. This article also investigates the functions of yoik in promoting the health factors of Sami community.

Anoop Kumar, in her article “Language and Cultural Discourse of Indian Dalit Literature From A Subalternist’s Perspective” (2017) traces the relationship between culture and the language from the subaltern perspective and reveals that before the advent of Dalit writing the dominant people defined Dalit people as irrational and uncivilized and that gives
undo repression to them. Study reveals that “Dalit works are associated with the perception of age-old isolation from the society”.

Friborg in his article “Resilience to Discrimination Among Indigenous Sami and Non-Sami Populations in Norway: The SAMINOR2” (2017) reveals that minority “participants with a strong Sami identity (N=1,270) were least negatively influenced by discrimination, whereas majority ethnic Norwegians (N=5,233) were most negatively affected. The strong Sami subgroup thus showed a remarkably resilience despite considerable exposure to discrimination” due to their individual or persona strength.

Rajan et al. in his article “Fabric-Rendered Identity: A Study of Dalit representation in Pa. Ranjith’s Attakathi, Madras and kabala” (2017) observes that one of fundamental problems in India is the caste. This article deals with the analysis of Ranjith’s three films to know the representational politics involved in the marginalised Dalit community with the assist of costumes.

Sathya in her article “Australian Aboriginal: Sense of Feel and Interpretation of Haunted Historical past in literature” (2017) explains that indigenous people of Australia are the minority people within their own country but “their sense of feel in literature and commemorating the history in their writing shows that the indigenous writers are longing for their old days to return”.

Sen in his “Dalits aren’t just rising Politically, They’re A Powerful Literary Voice Too” (2017) observes how Dalit people started re-writing the mainstream people’s discourses, how Dalits over the years have been misrepresented culturally, historically and politically. Further, the expansion of Dalits in Indian cultural and political mainstream not only counters the existing socio-historical aspects in South Asia, but also provides a new epistemological vision to incorporate marginal ideas into the center, in re-writing the culture, history, and politics.
Kristina’s “Extractive violence on Indigenous Country Sami and Aboriginal Views on conflicts and Power Relations with Extractive Industries” (2017) explains the conflict and power relations due to extractive industries on indigenous land in a new perspective.

Upadhyay in his article “Dalits in the Era of Globalisation: A Sociological Study of a Village in Amethi District of Uttar Pradesh” (2017) analysis the status of Dalits in India, socio-economic status of dalits in the era of globalisation and the impact of globalisation on educational and health status of Dalits. The findings of the study shows that majority of Dalits in India still experience the inhuman practice of untouchability but there is a gradual change in the living pattern of Dalits. The Dalits who have received higher education do not experience untouchability whereas Dalits who are educated upto intermediate still experiences untouchability. This shows that receiving higher education reduces the stigma of untouchability. But there are miles to go for the Dalit people before they can achieve a better socio-economic, educational and health status.

Anoop Kumar in her article “Indian Dalit Literature- A reflection of Cultural Marginality” (2016) traces the Indian literature which focuses on identity and equality of Dalit or marginalized people.

Babenysheva in his article “Ethnodemographic processes among the Sami of modern Norway” (2016) states that stable economic situation improves the conditions of Sami people. At the modern era, special conditions for keeping the Sami’s ethnic identity are arranged in Norway, and the basis of ethnic identity formation of Sami people is developed by giving importance to Sami language.

Ram et al. in his article “The persistent caste divide in India’s infant mortality: A Study of Dalits (ex-untouchables), Adivasis (indigenous peoples), Other Backward Clssses, and Forward castes” (2016) examines caste and its significance in life expectancy of Indians. This study reveals that lower caste people like Dalits, Adivasis and Backward class people
“are significantly more likely than forward-caste children to die young”. The study also states that socio economic conditions play a vital role in mortality among backward or lower caste people.

Mandavkar in his article “Indian dalit Literature: Quest for Identity to Social Equality” (2015) examines the history of Dalit writing which includes the scope of Dalit Literature and Dalit movements. It also traces the factors which controls the dalits and non dalits in their interaction with each other. This article also analyses the journey of “untouchables in India from socio-economic-political exploitations to developments”.


Verma in his research, “History of Dalit Movement and Identity in Uttar Pradesh: 1900-2000” (2015) traces the identity formation of the Dalits from pre-colonial to contemporary periods through Dalit discourses on identity process. The study also reveals that Dalit identity formation primarily relates to the Bhakti movement and it differs from the identity of the Brahminical structure of identity. But for fake identity Sanskritization assisted the striving lower castes to improve caste hierarchy by pretending to look like the superior castes in the Brahminical social category. The Bhakti movement helped lower caste people of India in identity formation in pre-colonial era. Adi (indigenous) movement in colonial period paved the way for socio-political identity of the Dalits.

Cocq’s “Traditionalisation for Revitalisation: Tradition as a concept and Practice in contemporary Sami Contexts” (2014) studies the traditionalisation and illustrates the reflection of ‘tradition’ in Society - Firstly, it creates belongingness to a particular society; Secondly, it creates an insider/outsider dichotomy.
Duncan in his thesis “The Role of Aboriginal Humour in Cultural Survival and Resistance” (2014) examines the purpose of humour and its significance in the survival of Aborigines against odds in their life. This thesis shows how humour “worked in particular settings as a complex institutionalised practice central to Aboriginal culture, and how and why it could be used to regulate social behaviour by jocking and shaming tactics”.

Sutradhar in his article “Dalit movement in India: In the light of four Dalit literatures” (2014) observes that Dalit people show their protest through their writings and forming movements like Dalit Panthers. The Dalit movement aimed for the change in the society replacing the old Indian traditions. The Dalit movement accepts “caste that is deeply rooted in peoples mind cannot be erased. So here social change would mean to get rid of discriminatory practices and get rights, necessary for the upliftment of the back ward section of society-the Dalits”

Pallickal Jose in his article “Psychosocial determinants of Dalit Identity: Evidence from Dalit Women of Tamilnadu in South India” (2014) examines the influence of “Socio-demographic variables such as education, living status, rural residence and monthly income substantially improved positive identity” of Dalit women.

Joseph & Jayakar’s “The predicament of Dalit in ‘Untouchable Spring’” (2014) aims at explaining the historiography of deprived rights of Dalits through the novel ‘Untouchable Spring’. In this study, the authors posit that Aryans from North Asia and South Europe arrive in India around 1500 B.C and dominated the native Indians through Caste system. The study also exposes the predicament of Dalits.

Ramachandran in her article “When Feminism Overpowers Caste Marginalisation: A Study of the Feminist Agenda of Female Paraiyar Writers” (2014) analysis Bama’s novel Sangathith to reasons why the writer “prioritise the sufferings of Paraiyar women over that of the Paraiyar community on the whole”.

Ramanathan in his paper “Situating Dalit Literature in Indian writing in English” (2014) says that in the Indian subcontinent, the Aryans have no culture of their own and importance. They settled down and created and propagated the caste system by treating the indigenous natives as untouchables. This paper also proves that Dalits have their own culture and traditions, but many works written on them did not mention their cultural aspects but focuses merely on oppression due to upper caste Hindus.

Blix et al. in their article “Struggles of being and becoming: A dialogical narrative analysis of the life stories of Sami elderly” (2013) explores the relationship between elderly Sami’s individual life stories and “narratives attached to cultural and institutional formations”.

Martin Renes in his article “Kim Scott’s Fiction within Western Australian Life-Writing: Voicing the Violence of Removal and Displacement” (2013) deals particularly with the semi-biographical fiction of Kim Scott in the context of voicing the violence of removal and displacement in Australia.

Kumar in his article “Exploring Converging Dimensions: Dalit and Australian Aboriginal Autobiographies” (2012) ascertains that Aboriginal Writings and Dalit writings are forms of ‘resistance’ and ‘narratives of pain’. Both writings have promulgated their literary discourse by first narrating their lived-stories and voicing their ‘resistance’.

Colquhoun & Alfred Michael Dockery’s, “The link between Indigenous culture and wellbeing: Qualitative evidence for Australian Aboriginal peoples” (2012) advocates that the wellness of Indigenous community is improved when they preserve their conventional culture.

Majid in his article “Future of Untouchables in India: A Case study of Dalit” (2012) observes that though Indian constitution abolished untouchability, the discrimination in the name of caste still prevails in India especially more in the rural areas. In many states the Dalit
people are in fear because of threats from upper caste. They are deprived of economic, political and social rights. The Dalit people who are very active in politics use the political linkages to improve their life. The research suggests that “The government and non-governmental agencies should formulate policies for improving the health condition as well as the economic, educational and social status of the Dalit” people.

Rathna in her thesis “Predicament and the Prospects of the Marginalised: A Study of Selected Dalit and Aboriginal Autoethnographies” (2011) attempts to open, rather a new path in the study of marginalised literature, i.e., focusing on the life writings of these marginalised writers through the autoethnographical lens.

Margrethe Bals et al. in their paper “The relationship between internalizing symptoms and cultural resilience factors in Indigenous Sami youth from Arctic Norway” (2010) study whether enculturation factors like cultural activities, racial pride and indigenous language proficiency have relation to decrease, internalizing and externalizing signs in native Sami youth from Arctic Norway. The study reveals that the past trauma, cultural defeat, and ongoing subjugation have been linked to psychological health problems in Indigenous youths in the Arctic.

Thomas in his thesis “The process and importance of writing Aboriginal fiction for young adult readers Exegesis accompanying the novel Calypso Summers” (2010) examines the representation of Aboriginal people in films and the role of Calypso summers in supporting indigenous literary development.

Walter’s (2009) “An Economy of Poverty? Power and the Domain of Aboriginality” explains that indigenous people are excluded from all privileges in the society by the Non-Aboriginals.

Vaibhav Singh’s “Autobiographies of Dalit writers are Narrative of Pain” (2008) reveals that the life narratives help the Dalit people to express the real sufferings they have
undergone. Dalit writing not only criticises the Brahmanical caste hegemony but also blames the inequality among the Dalit community. The basic philosophy of Dalits is that their real agony and their pain, suffering can be portrayed only by themselves.


Balikova’s “Preserving and Restoring Identity in Traditional and Modern Communities of Aboriginal Australians; Assimilation Programs and Issues” (2005) illustrates the different features of the cultural and personal identity of Indigenous people of Australia. It also deals with the differences between the traditional and contemporary Aboriginal communities regarding their search for identity and self-respect. The study also reveals that racism forms a barrier to education and employment and the Aboriginal people have to confront with the racist atmosphere. As a result, the Indigenous workers often fail to keep up their artificially increased self-respect and find it difficult to handle their job in such a hateful environment.

Ahren in his article “Indigenous people’s Culture, Customs, And Traditions and Customary Law-The Sami People’s Perspective” (2004) observes that indigenous people are the most marginalised people on earth. Their culture is viewed as very inferior to that of colonizers and colonizing societies which fail to respect indigenous people’s customary law. It also illustrates indigenous problems in the context of Sami people and reveals the various conflicts that can be attributed to the lack of respect for Sami community.

Kuokkanen’s work “Towards an ‘Indigenous Paradigm’ From a Sami Perspective” (2000) reveals that colonization and imperialism exploited indigenous people around the world in many ways. The educational institutions run by the colonizers teach western values,
habits, and behaviour and colonizes the indigenous people’s mind. Further, it discusses ‘the need, significance and objective of an Indigenous paradigm’ (412) through the lens of Sami cultural practices.

Kumar in his article “A Comparative perspective on subalternity/marginality: dalits vs aboriginals” posits that Dalit writing in India and Aboriginal writing in Australia have begun to appear discursively as a powerful form of protest against the recorded history of mistreatment both in socio-politically materialistic and discursive realities.

2.4 Homogeneity among Indigenous Literature

Lasania’s “Drawing Parallels between Dalit and African- American rights in India and US” (2017) asserts that there are similarities in the discrimination faced by African-American in the US and Dalits of India due to racism and casteism respectively.

Ratnna in her article “Tracing the Homogeneity between Dalit and Australian Aboriginal Communities: A Historical and Literary Perspective” (2014) points out that there is an amazing “homogeneity between the Dalit and the Aboriginal communities in their ethnicity, their distinctive ethos, predicament and prospects” (20) and explainss about the marginalization of Dalit and Aboriginal Australians because of the destructive nature of the dominants. The Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their rights, cast out of their land and were fated to live as a subhuman due to colonial invasion. In India Dalits have been marginalised for centuries in the name of caste ladder instituted by the Vedic practice.

Hazri in her article “Exploring Dyche: A Reading of Yoikana” (2014) compares Adijan and Sami community and explains that indigenous philosophy is parallel among indigenous cultures across the globe and this philosophy is set in distinction to the migrant philosophy which is anti-art and anti-cosmos and that controls and cripples the whole humankind.
Savelkova in her study “Indigenous Peoples - Creating New ‘Borderlines’?” (2011) conceptualizes indigenous people and explores what type of borders are more needed for indigenous people’s identification - geographical or symbolic.

Pramod K. Nair in his article “Postcolonial ‘Testimonio’: Reading Aboriginal Narratives” (2009) explains that even within the postcolonial nation-state Aboriginal communities, tribals and ‘First People’ have been marginalized in favour of an urban elite. Aboriginal writing from Australia, New Zealand and Canada, Dalit Writing from India have gained a significant readership for their identity politics and have offered some of the most incisive social critiques in modern-day postcolonial cultures.

Acharya in her article “Representation of Indigenous Women in Contemporary Aboriginal Short Stories of Australia and India: A Study in Convergences and Divergences” (2009) explores the tribal condition with a special focus on the tribal women of India and Australia.

2.5 Conclusion

Thus the literature review as shown above proves that much research on comparative study of indigenous literature have been carried out by many researchers. The most common themes and perspectives in the contemporary discourse of Indigenous studies are Indigenous Identity, Intercultural and Cross Border comparison of Indigenous people, Post colonial representation of indigenous people, Post modernism and indigenous literature, Engaging feminism in indigenous literature, Resilience of indigenous women, Indigenous people culture, custom and tradition and Homogeneity among Indigenous people.

The backdrop shows that very limited studies have been conducted on the psychological aspects of the indigenous communities in interdisciplinary research. Moreover, extensive research on Sami people of Norway, Dalit people of India and Australian Aborigines have not been attempted earlier through the lens of indigenous psychology.
Therefore it is the need of the hour to study these indigenous communities through the lens of Dyche for healing the psyche of indigenous people for their liberation. It is also significant to study these indigenous communities through indigenous psychology to reconstruct their wounded psyche for their emancipation.