The third world context which forms the backdrop of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Chinua Achebe has certain characteristic socio-economic features. And it is against this socio-economic scenario that problems like alienation, neo-colonialism, exploitation, starvation, growing gap between the rich and the poor, poverty, illiteracy, corruption and erosion of values in public life have to be examined. The strange irony of it all is that this situation prevails despite numerous policies and programmes of individual governments to promote economic growth and to accumulate national wealth as far as possible so as to increase the per capita income and the gross national product. It is moreover assumed by the policy-makers that the benefit of development will accrue to the entire population including the poor and the marginalised in course of time.

The flaw underlying this assumption is that it ignores the existing socio-economic structures that favour the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few and keep the vast
majority of the population in want and misery. The lacuna becomes glaring as it dawns on us that poverty need not be the real problem of the third world countries. We are obliged as a consequence to examine the dynamics of society and the mechanisms that operate within the socio-economic structures in order to unravel the problem. Julius K Nyerere has stated this issue forcefully and clearly thus:

Poverty is not the real problem of the modern world, for we have knowledge and the resources which will enable us to overcome poverty. The real problem of the modern world - the thing which creates misery, wars and hatred among men - is the division of mankind into rich and poor. We can see this division at two levels. Within nation states there are a few individuals who have great wealth and whose wealth gives them great power. But the vast majority of the people suffer from varying degrees of poverty and deprivation. And looking at the world as a
collection of nation states, we see the same pattern repeated: there are a few wealthy nations which dominate the world economically and therefore politically; and a mass of smaller and poor nations whose destiny, it appears, is to be dominated.

(Nyerere: 8).

It is in this context of shocking disparities and imbalance between individuals and between nations that social thinkers, religious and spiritual leaders down the decades have addressed themselves to the question of social justice. Social justice has been variously defined. Time there was when social justice was made out to be a harmonious balance of the three traditional types of justice, namely, the commutative justice (the relationships between individuals among themselves), the distributive justice (the relationship of society with regard to the members) and the legal justice (relationship of individuals to the common good). It should be conceded that a purely political and secular notion of justice as propounded by Aristotle was later modified radically by the introduction of man's relationship to God as provident Father as the basis of all justice. It was the scholastic philosophers and in particular St. Thomas Aquinas who
maintained an intrinsic and almost inseparable relationship between love and justice. The definitions of the three kinds of justice have been derived from Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*.

While the notion of social justice comprehends all these above ideas and values, it cannot be restricted to the economic order only. Popes Leo XIII (in his epoch-making encyclical *Rerum Novarum* 1891) and Pius XI (in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931) have attempted to further refine and clarify the term "social justice" by applying it to the specific and new economic situations arising out of new developments in industry. Both these Pontiffs were concerned about the reformation of the economic order by advocating the reign of social justice. Social justice was propounded as the directing principle of all economic life, activities and relationships. Although both the Pontiffs were explicit in making the common good the purpose of social justice, "this common good is the economic common good," (Drummond: 1955:27).

It was Pope Paul VI who in his outstanding encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) defined social justice in its most comprehensive scope as "the integral development of everyman and of all men" (Pope Paul VI 1967 - article 5). Probably the inspiration for this global vision of social justice was provided
by the teachings of the Vatican Council II. Its document titled the "Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" a major highlight of the council affirmed that the Church in today's world must be committed to the creation of a better world, to the promotion of justice, to the development of peoples and to the defence of human rights.

Pope Paul VI in his encyclical sounded a note of urgency by recommending bold transformations, innovations that go deep and urgent reforms without delay if the human race, the peace of the world and the future of civilization should have a chance to survive.

It is in the context of all these history-making events, declarations, pronouncements and socio-economic developments, that the meaning and import of the word 'liberation' is to be sought. Probably a practical way of elucidating the term "liberation" is by studying its origin in the Latin American Continent. Segundo Galilea, a leading exponent of Liberation Theology in Latin America, sums up the process by which the term "liberation" came to be used popularly by the groups of people engaged in the struggle for freedom as well as the Theologians who began to reflect on the praxis of these people, in the following manner:
Its immediate antecedent is to be found in Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* (1967). Before this Encyclical was issued (that is to say during the 50's and a good part of the 60's), we spoke of 'development' as a project aiming to rescue the Latin American peoples from their poverty. Paul VI transcends this concept and speaks of 'integral development'. For it was felt that unspecified notion of development was inadequate; it was too closely related to the material and economic aspects of life and overlooked other dimensions of the human person. "Integral development", on the other hand, means man's advancement in all his dimensions, both moral and religious; it is every process that leads from "less human to more human conditions", (*Populorum Progressio*, art.20). This conception which goes beyond the pure and simple, 'desarrollismo' of the industrialised world, greatly influenced the second Latin American Episcopal
Conference, held at Medellin in 1968. Even before this event it exercised its influence, though a more limited one, on many Christians who in the early 60s were speaking of "liberation". It was in fact at Medellin that the word was used officially for the first time. Since then it has remained a key-word in the reflection and tasks of Latin American Christians.

(Segundo, 1978: 336)

"Liberation", according to the same writer has richer shades of meaning as compared with the term "integral development" and it posits man as the subject of his own destiny and history. "Liberation" thus achieved legitimacy not only among the people but amidst theologians of the Church in Latin America.

Pope Paul VI indirectly gave his seal of approval to use the term "liberation" by himself using the term in his apostolic letter Evangelii Nuntiandi (1975). For him liberation signifies "the effort and struggle to overcome everything which condemns those peoples to remain on the margin of life: famine, chronic disease, illiteracy, poverty, injustices in international
relations and specially in commercial exchanges, situations of economic and cultural neo-colonialism, sometimes as cruel as the old political colonialism". (Pope Paul VI 1975: art.30)

While we are not directly interested in a detailed analysis of the theology of Liberation, we can’t altogether ignore certain of the premises, methodological sources and tendencies of this brand of theology. This position can be justified by the fact that the theology of liberation is localised or situated in the liberative praxis of the masses. Hence liberative praxis or actions for justice or the socio-economic reality of the people becomes the locus of theological reflection and elaboration. And this is precisely the arena where changes, be they slow or revolutionary, take place as a result of the liberative praxis of the people, aware of their dehumanizing situation and of their collective power to overthrow such oppressive structures.

Liberation theology starts off from human, social and historical reality, ponders the existing relationships based on injustice in a global frame and analyses the mechanism by which the poor are oppressed. This theological reflection is obviously done in the light of the Christian faith in the context of Latin America but the assistance of human science, specially of the scientific tools of societal analysis available in Marxism is sought.
What interests us here is the liberation dialectics that is not the preserve of Latin America, but can be, and in fact, is a reality in other third world countries such as India and continents such as Africa. Liberation is the universal clamour and experience of all oppressed people in one form or the other. It may have its cultural and historical nuances and specificity. For instance the socio-economic reality in India has been certainly affected by the historical event of colonialism and her multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-racial cultural milieu. Similarly we could suppose that the socio-economic situation of Africa, apart from the common factors of domination and oppression of the majority by a dominant minority is marked by "its colonial past, racism or apartheid, non-literate culture, multiplicity of tribes and languages and neo colonialism.

In this connection it may be fruitful to state what Aloysius Pieris, S.J., one of the front-line Asian Theologians from Sri Lanka has to say. Speaking about the indigenization of theology of liberation in the context of Asia's Socio-political and cultural reality, he observed that "the religiousness of the poor and the poverty of the religious masses together constitute the complex structure of Asian reality which is the matrix of an Asian Theology".

The same writer concludes to a new paradigm of liberation emerging in Asia as a consequence of an inversion of values effected by Marxism, a widespread and popular ideology in many Asian countries today. The two old models of liberation found in India were the elitist exercise of retiring to a sequestered and comfortable nook for pursuing philosophical or religious speculations and the other of renunciation of or flight from the world in order to have a 'desert' or 'forest' experience. The new paradigm of liberation emerging today has none of the features or elements of the former model which was elitist but has apparent links with the latter model. "In the eyes of many enlightened "proletariate" it is the elite of the leisure class including religious leaders that need to be liberated and this liberation can be achieved only in and through the self-redemptive action of the masses, the commoners, the hoi-polloi, the poor, the oppressed who are thought to be invested with a messianic mission for the humankind's total liberation."

(Pieris, 1986: 275)

And it is significant as Pieris points out that this model is akin to the twofold biblical doctrine of the renunciation of Mammon within one's inner self and indirect and silent
denunciation of a world order built on Mammonic values. Thus the two principal axioms of the new paradigm of liberation are:

a) The irreconcilable antagonism between God and Mammon (a universal spiritual dogma found in some form or other in all religions of Asia particularly in Hinduism and Buddhism).

b) The irrevocable covenant between God and the Poor (a specifically Biblical axiom that may prove explosively true if transposed to the context of a marxist analysis).

The messianic or the liberative role of the poor in third world countries particularly in India could be meaningfully viewed in the light of what the Bible says about the poor. George Soares-Prabhu, S.J., an Indian Biblical Scholar delineates the biblical portrayal in his paper "The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society", by qualifying the poor of the Bible as (a) a sociological group, (b) a dialectical group, and (c) a dynamic group. These three biblical tenets do bear resemblance to Marxist theory which sees the poor (proletariat) as a social class at once victim and creator of human history.

At this stage it may be useful to examine another important model of liberation dialectics. Karl Marx's elaboration of the tools for a scientific analysis of socio-economic reality merits a close study as it attempts to critique the existent older models
of liberation. The oft-used 'liberative praxis' as one term gives us clue to the importance or shall we say, primacy of praxis in the process of liberation in any milieu, as propounded by Marx. Let us investigate the original meaning of praxis before trying to understand Marx's theory.

The word 'praxis' is Greek and has invariably found favour with many commentators in preference to the English word 'practice' which does not adequately capture the nuances of meaning implied in the Greek usage. It is neither theory nor practice existing by itself. In one sense it combines the meanings and nuances of both in a unique fashion.

It was Aristotle who first posited three kinds of knowledge designated by the terms theoria, praxis and poiesis corresponding more or less to three kinds of living that we may call the contemplative life (philosophical), the practical life (political), and the productive life (survival activity) "Theoria" is directed to the life of contemplation.

....'Praxis', on the other hand, is concerned with the personal participation of the individual in the life of the 'polis'. More specifically praxis is directed to the right ordering of human behaviour in the socio-political world.... 'Poiesis', the third form of human activity, is a process of making
those things which are necessary for the survival of human being. Poiesis is about production: it is the exercise of technical skills by different people; it is creation of artifacts; it is a process of human making."

(Cited in Lane 1983: 34).

To summarise Aristotle’s ideas on theoria, praxis and poiesis, it should be pointed out that he never envisaged a separation or dichotomy between the three, although, "theoria" was for him an end in itself, to be supported by "poiesis" and "praxis". He advocated a unity and interplay of all three and further wanted to keep politics and philosophy, the practical life and contemplative life together.

We now proceed to an understanding of the ideas of Marx concerning praxis. By and large primacy of theory dominated the philosophical and theological thinking of the period preceding the Enlightenment. During the Enlightenment however, the shift from the individual as knower to the individual as Agent took place. The discoveries of science in the eighteenth century opened up hitherto unknown possibilities of human creativity. Kant reflected this new found enthusiasm and confidence in his critique of pure reason and his avowed preference for practical reason. "The human person is no longer
determined simply by a given cosmic order. Instead the individual as subject constructs his or her own world. However the problem with Kant was his failure to grapple with the social and historical conditions of human existence and to apply the importance of the turning towards the subject to the socio-political world. This failure of Kant undoubtedly influenced the works of Hegel and Marx significantly, "(Lane, 1983: 36).

Hegel postulated the Absolute Spirit at the centre of history and all reality. Praxis for him is the praxis of spirit reaching itself in history. Theory for him was the rational articulation by the individual of that praxis. Although Hegel posited unity between praxis and theory, this unity is between the praxis of the spirit and theory proposed by the individual. Hence he was not concerned with the praxis of the individual person in the world. This lacuna provoked Marx into developing his own particular view of theory-praxis relationship.

"Marx criticised Hegel's understanding of praxis as too idealistic and ultimately ideological. That praxis did nothing to change the course of history or to bring about freedom in the world. Marx replaced the praxis of the spirit with the praxis of human beings. The subject of world history is not Spirit guided by Providence but the praxis of individual human beings," (Lane, 1983: 38).
Marx’s understanding of praxis belongs to the large complexus within his works which consists of the existence of two streams referred to as Scientific Marxism and Critical Marxism. The 'scientific stream is that part of Marx’s thought that explains the structures of the capitalist society as governed by blind and necessary laws that maintain presently the capitalist mode of production but will eventually bring about a classless society. This introduces forms of materialism and determinism into Marx’s thought. On the other hand the critical stream is concerned with changing the structures of the social and political reality of day to day living. And this change according to Marx can be effected by adopting a creative praxis.

The two streams yield two perceptions of praxis, namely the blind praxis of unreflective labour of the scientific stream and the creative praxis of the critical stream. While the former is the source of alienation within society, the latter is directed towards changing the social conditions of the working masses whose basic aim is liberation. Taking the clue from Hegel, Marx affirms that the individual is what he or she does and the human person is shaped by praxis. At the same time the products of praxis embody some aspects of the individual as the individual puts something of himself or herself into his or her world of
product. These 'objectifications' of praxis become sources of alienation only when the products of one's praxis are taken over by others and turned into instruments for dominating, controlling and dehumanizing the person leading to alienation.

According to Marx it is life that determines consciousness and not the other way about as Hegel maintained. It is this principle that is at the basis of Marx's scientific materialism. And "historical materialism in Marx implied that the conditions of life, specially the historical mode of producing the material means of existence determines the shape of human consciousness. Theory is the expression and articulation of consciousness based on the material conditions resulting from praxis," (Lane, 1983: 41).

Marx's primary concern in his study is directed to a diagnosis of present social conditions. Therefore Marx is quite resolute that praxis must be informed by a critical analysis of societal dynamics. The only way to change the world is to diagnose the present circumstances via a "relentless criticism of all existing conditions... not afraid of its findings and just as little afraid of the conflict," (Cited in Lane, 1983: 42).
Marx advocates relentless criticism and the purpose of such criticism is the transformation of social reality. This criticism is expected to bring to self-consciousness the reasons why people are suffering and alienated and what they can do to alter the causes of such suffering. In his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach he states: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it." Thus at the bottom of his concept of revolutionary praxis (practical critical activity) we perceive the combination of critical understanding and human activity. Dermot A. Lane concludes his brief but perceptive analysis of Marx's concept of praxis by saying "praxis is a multi-layered concept embracing in varying degrees relentless criticism, human activity, historical change, labour, production and alienation," (Lane, 1983: 43).

And it is this conceptual richness and importance that compelled us to study at length its manifold aspects and meanings. Liberation theologians and thinkers have always insisted on "praxis" being clubbed with "liberation". Thus liberative praxis becomes the central concept and a very dynamic and rich instrument of theory and practice in the whole corpus of liberationist literature.
But what is common in all these different liberative experiences and models is the fact that men and women have begun to perceive or discover the world of the poor and the underprivileged as never before. It is a new awareness of an existent reality. A realization that people, individuals and groups of persons who have hitherto been on the fringe of society have begun to take their destinies into their own hands and to articulate fearlessly their frustrations, hopes and aspirations. Gustavo Gutierrez, one of the foremost and pioneering liberation theologians of Latin America, has captured the emergence of this new world and new awareness among this people in the following manner:

Recent years in Latin America have been marked by a real and demanding discovery of the world of the other—the poor, the oppressed and the exploited. In a social order that has been set up financially, politically and ideologically by a few for their own benefit, the 'other' of this society are beginning to make their voices heard. They are beginning to have their direct say. They are starting to rediscover less and less through
intermediaries now and are beginning to have their direct say. They are starting to rediscover themselves and to make the system aware of their unsettling presence. They are beginning to be less and less the objects of demagogical manipulation or thinly disguised social services and are gradually becoming the agents of their own history, forgers of a radically different society.

(Gutierrez 1983: 37)

It is a powerful depiction of the radically new situation that is emerging in the third world as a whole. The ideological underpinnings are not difficult to perceive. However, what is central to this action for liberation is the involvement or commitment. This commitment implies an active solidarity with the struggles of the masses in one form or the other. Gutierrez from his own and his people's Christian vantage point explains commitment thus:

The irruption of the 'other' onto one's own scene, the perception of the world of the poor, leads one to an active solidarity with that other's interest and struggles. It leads
to an involvement, a commitment, which translates into a pledge to transform a social order that generates marginalised and oppressed persons. Participation in the praxis of liberation places us at the very heart of a concrete conflictual history in which we meet Christ who reveals God to us as Father and reveals our neighbours to us as our sisters and brothers."

(Gutierrez, 1983: 38)

While liberative action calls for involvement and commitment marked by active solidarity with the struggling and oppressed masses, the degree of intensity of this commitment and mode or manner of involvement may vary from person to person. It is in this process that we situate the role of the intellectuals, writers and artists, as one of being at the service of the struggling groups and movements. Their role is primarily one of reflecting the level of consciousness of both the participants and others. It will be their task to capture the mood of the people, the ferment, the anger, the protest that is generated in the process. Moreover they aid the onward thrust of the process by projecting not merely the plight of the exploited
groups, but also by playing a prophetic role in terms of the future course of their praxis and the goal of all their endeavours. We have a very fine expose of this type of function of an intellectual in Paulo Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' wherein he dwells on 'conscientization' as a concept that signifies the process of the oppressed masses becoming aware of their ignoble and inhuman situation and power for changing it, by means of an educational programme rooted in their socio-economic and cultural milieus aided by the inspirational, animational and prophetic role of committed intellectuals.

In this brief examination of the evolution of the concept of liberation and the different models of liberation, we have consistently noticed that it has been interpreted variously depending on the dominant ideology or culture of a particular society or individuals at a given time. As in Latin America, in India and in African countries too the pendulum has swung from an elitist, personal, spiritualistic perception of 'salvation' to a more societal, grass-roots, change-oriented, poor-centred option for integral liberation. Several religious streams and philosophical strands have contributed to this evolution. Nevertheless the part played by Marxism in this process has been remarkable and unprecedented. The rapid spread of Marxist
ideology sweeping through most Asian and African countries has been in a large measure responsible for the radical rethinking of political and economic policies, programmes and goals in many of these countries. It should however be conceded that the almost one sided economic bias of Marxism in its analysis of societal dynamics has been criticised by Asian and African liberationist thinkers.

The dimension of culture so very deep-seated in the liberationist approaches, has been stressed as an indispensable constituent of the liberative processes of their countries. It has been pointed out that 'even the Latin American approach to liberation is one-sidedly economico-political and that it does not pay sufficient attention to cultural, historical and religious aspects of its reality.

In this context, what we have already said about the religiousness of the poor in India, assumes greater significance and relevance. If integral liberation must include cultural liberation, it means in terms of India, the role of religion which is the heart of their culture:

"While culture sets up the symbolic worlds that structure the life and relationships of a community, religion deals with the meaning of
it all, some would say, the ultimate meaning. Because of this it provides deeper goals and motivations. Religion, specially in its cultural expression, may be conditioned and limited in history. It can be abused and can become alienating. But it has also shown a prophetic power to challenge existing situations."

(Amaladoss, 268)

A concrete instance of religion's alienating and ambivalent role is the establishment and perpetuation of caste hierarchy and the division of people into high and low castes and ritually pure and impure. While certain individuals and groups or movements have attempted to concretise the prophetic dimension of religion by denouncing the caste-based inequality and untouchability as anti-God and anti-human, the fact is, casteism and untouchability have not been eradicated. Caste-based discrimination is reflected in all areas of the nation's social, economic and political life. The reason for this is perhaps that we have not attacked this social evil from a religio-cultural angle, systematically.

The prophetic role of religion lies also in its duty to denounce the values of consumerism and acquisitiveness which are an integral part of today's social fabric. The values of
voluntary poverty and the spirit of non-attachment of any religion, as we have pointed out earlier, may be one way to fight effectively oppressive poverty. In short, it should be affirmed that no project for the liberation of people in India can ignore the liberation potential contained in great religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

It is in this context that Gandhi's ideal of nonpossession, trusteeship etc., acquire great significance in terms of liberative praxis in India. Gandhian vision is in sharp contrast to the concept of class war advanced by the Marxian thought. The system of Gandhi is rooted in the basic goodness of individuals and built on an optimistic view of human nature. He was first and foremost a spiritual leader of the masses seized with a relentless quest for a more humane and just social order.

Gandhi recognising the fact of all being imprisoned in a situation of bondage and alienation, posited that individual persons should be liberated, so that the rest may attain liberation.

Gandhism "making an analysis of the behavioural struture, which is at work in an alienated social context, recognises the active and passive roles respectively of the oppressed and the oppressor in the process," (Statement of Indian Theological Association, 1985: 18).
Gandhi evolved strategies of non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience. In a bid to invest the whole exercise with a spiritual dimension, Gandhi imposed voluntary suffering or self-suffering not only as a sanction for the breaking of bondage and oppression but also as a source of strength to the participants and of emancipation to the oppressor, thus reconciling both in a new human fellowship.

Gandhism envisages a just and fraternal communion, a society functioning within the framework of a self-governing and self-supporting village or town without the paraphernalia of a huge centralised governing machinery:

"In this way, Gandhi brings the religio-spiritual heritage of India to the liberative task and at once merges it with the Christian model of Christ's suffering love which breaks the oppression of the sin of the world. Thereby he challenges Christianity to a rediscovery of the liberative potential of its own paradigm."

(Statement of Indian Theological Association, 1985: 18)

The Gandhian approach suffers from a lack of systematic socio-structural and political analysis as evidenced by his
implicit faith in the basic goodness of individuals and in the possibility of social transformation to emerge from a moral or spiritual conversion or mere change of behaviour.

"His vision of equality within Varnadharma again seems unrealizable in practice. Trusteeship likewise depends too much on the goodness of the individuals".

Despite all these deficiencies Gandhism has certain very valuable insights that can enrich the cultural components of the new paradigm of liberation.

The liberation movements and traditions of Africa have a marked cultural bias. The people of Africa have been particularly wary and resentful of the destruction of their cultural identity by the colonial powers. The impact of foreign cultures on theirs has been far too difficult to withstand. Hence the universal phenomenon of the people, the intellectuals and writers in particular, seeking above everything to restore dignity and respect to their native culture. Politically they may be free; but culturally and even economically they are dependent, and are objects of manipulation and exploitation by the foreign powers and their agents. Hence they are inclined to stress cultural liberation, more than economic or political liberation. This concern is perceived palpably in the works of writers from different African countries.
The above study reaffirms the idea that liberation can become an actuality only if the projects of liberation or the liberative praxis takes into account the peculiar cultural and religious traditions, perceptions and streams of the milieu in which it is immersed. It is all the more important as liberation is being worked out by the oppressed people themselves who, as we have asserted earlier, are not only poor but religious. Thus the religiousness of the poor and the poverty of the religious poor of the third world countries constitute the indispensable two-fold base on which the liberative praxis can become efficacious, subversive, historymaking and enduringly people-centred.
Mulk Raj Anand (1905 - ) has carved out for himself a niche among the all-time celebrities in the domain of the English novel in India. Hailed as one of the illustrious trinity, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao being the other two, Anand has dominated the scene for the past five decades and more. He is a prolific writer who has authored sixteen novels to date and has to his credit over half a dozen volumes of short stories. Being a versatile scholar, his interests encompassed a vast range of subjects. While his principal passion was tied up with the fortunes and vicissitudes of India's teeming millions, he wrote on sophisticated subjects like Indian art, poets, painting, architecture and even Indian cuisine. His Apology for Heorism is an autobiography of ideas, a remarkable literary venture at once fascinating and informative.

Anand was born at Peshawar in 1905. His father came of a traditional coppersmith stock, while his mother belonged to a sturdy Punjab peasant family. His father joined the army and distinguished himself as a disciplined soldier owing loyalty to the British. Anand must have inherited his insatiable thirst for adventure and novelty, his keen power of observation and attention to details, from his father whom he admired and