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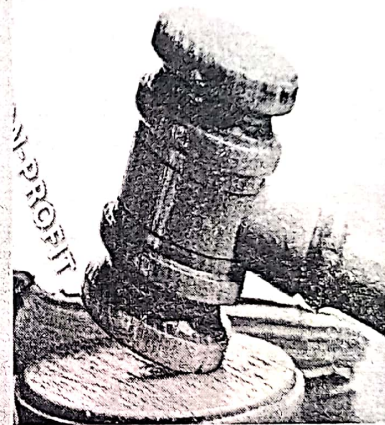
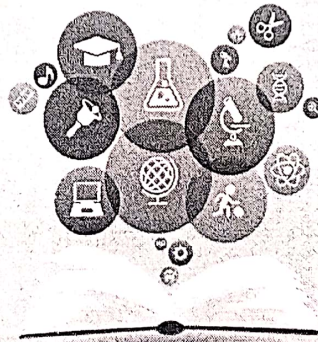
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The struggle for establishing as an African Americans in America: an overview.

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Journey of African people in search of Promised Land of prosperity to America dismayed them. It was replaced with slavery, scattering of their families and added with perennial torture of lynching, mutilations, pushing through backdoors and what not? Dream of prosperity turned in struggle as Negro Americans. They fought for more than four hundred years to establish themselves as an equal citizen of America. Journey of Negro Africans to Afro-Americans, and hyphenised African-Americans to the equal African Americans took more than four hundred years and thousands of lives. Their life in America was like the term 'margin'. Margin means a blank space to the left side of the printed or written matter of the page. This is the unused part, and it has no relevance to the content of the page. In the same way, 'blacks' had had no relevance to the main stream of the American society. When we apply this term on broad scale as 'marginalization', it conveys the feelings of oppressed, depressed and suppressed people by colour, caste, creed and shape. It also reveals the agony of the people who were socially, politically, economically and also religio-culturally discarded from the main stream of the society.

In general sense one may say 'Marginalization' in a social context as: Social exclusion or social marginalization is the process in which individuals or entire communities of people are systematically blocked from (or denied full access to) various opportunities, rights and resources that are normally available to members of a different groups, and which are fundamental to social integration within that particular group (e.g. employment, health care, housing, civic engagements, democratic participation and due process).

Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Frederick Douglass* has brought about a great revolution so far as African American literature is concerned. He has awakened not only the people of his own fold; but also the white Americans to the cruel slavery of the whites. In fact, the narrative has certainly marked an epoch in the history of African American literature. Even John F. Callahan offers a special mention in his introduction to the book, *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison* (2005), for his bridging classical and vernacular idioms and techniques used by Douglass to represent the most urgent need to abolish slavery of the then blacks. The narrative conspicuously puts forth the incessant suffering and angst of the Negro slave and of their women in particular. Douglass' experiences are so revealing that they do dilute the common heart and provoke the mature mind.

Undoubtedly African Americans were the backbone of agricultural and industrial prosperity of American civilization, but their contribution remained unnoticed. Instead they treated them with humiliation, even bitter than animals. They enforced them to adopt their religion, culture, and superiority. Only their *African soul* remained to them that too without conscience. John Hope states in *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* that it was the general view of American landlords about Negroes:

Slaves are not persons but property, and should protect the ownership of such property, should protect the whites against any danger that might arise from the presence of large numbers of Negroes. It was also felt that slaves should be maintained in a position of due subordination in order that the optimum of disciplines and work could be achieved. (155)

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Africans were treated as slave and that too not as a human being, but as a machine, or a movable property, which could be sold or bought. While supporting the slavery and righteousness of white supremacy, Kenneth B. Clark states: "The basic myth of racism is that white skin color brings with it superiority that the white is more intelligent, more virtuous more sexually controlled by the mere fact of being white." (228)

The historical evidences show that whites were hardly sexually controlled. Creation of illegal progeny against nature does not mean that whites were more intelligent. Sending slave women to death or throwing mulattoes to starve, obliterate the fact that whites were more virtuous.

The overambitious nature of the European colonizer exploited them. With God-gifted Nile, the African river, they irrigated the African soil and fertilized it, but their innocence, honesty and faithfulness were deceived by European colonizer and added to the profit of their colonies. They also possessed innocent African American with them. The African Americans believed and went with them, in the hope of 'Dreamland'. The white colonizers enslaved them, made them work on agriculture field like cattle and also made a commodity out of them. In this way, they scattered the African Americans' families, relatives, disturbed their social and cultural life, and also made them forget their own nation and identity. Such enslavement of the African American people, with great cultural heritage, could be related to the crucifixion of Jesus. They were chained everywhere. They were everywhere; but nowhere. And the circumstances made them forget their own racial pride, culture and even identity. They were made underground, unseen and invisible. Thus it was the death of the African American race. Resurrection of Jesus Christ was on the third day, Sunday but the resurrection of the African American may be called to have taken place after three hundred years of slavery in the form of revolt, reformation and literary movements.

But in the last phase of the twentieth century, the African Americans could successfully draw attention of the world towards racism. They made UNESCO organize a series of 'The World Conference against Racism' at international level by inviting many of the countries undergoing the same discrimination. Four conferences have been held so far, in 1978, 1983, 2001, and 2009 respectively.

The First World Conference against Racism was held in Geneva, Switzerland in 1978. The conference dealt with the apartheid policies of South Africa, the Second World Conference against Racism was also held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1983 dealing with the same issue, the Third World Conference against Racism was held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 from 31 August until 8 September 2001, the Fourth World Conference against Racism was again held, in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2009.

Though the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) is not legally binding on any of the nations; it has a strong moral value and serves as a basis of need of eradication of all kinds of discrimination in the world. It helps bring atrocities taking place in the world in different forms. It embodies the firm commitment of the international community tackling discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, ethnicity, race, etc. It has taken the global form as no country in the world can claim to be free from racism or xenophobia. The global concern of discrimination is tackled by the UNESCO at the universal level.

The proclamation of the President, George W. Bush of the Super Power America, may be a responding step to the DDPA-2001, for the eradication of racial discrimination in America. He proclaimed February 2002 as National African American History Month, which was celebrated all over the United States of America in memory of Fredrick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. It gives all Americans a reminder of the global history of people of African descent. It also reminds the need to celebrate the diverse heritage and culture, and continue efforts to create a world that is more just, peaceful and prosperous for all.



There is a radical passage of changes in America taking place in later years as is seen by the world. The United States Presidential Election, 2008 and 2012 there came a crucial step forward in race relation in America. The world has borne witness to American whites' generosity in electing Barack Obama, the country's first African American President. Surprisingly, Barack Obama received greater percentage of the white votes, i.e. 43%, than that of the previous Democratic white candidate for President John Kerry, 41%. It means the people of the US – comparatively a new-born country, occupied the position of Super Power in the world for its higher ambitions and innovations. The wide acceptance of the African Americans as their brethren in the form of the President for two consecutive terms proves their generosity marching towards perfect humanity.

Martin Luther King Jr., in his outstanding speech at Lincoln Hall (1963- I Have a Dream) had spontaneously expected from the Americans to have Thomas Jefferson's Proclamation come true: of all men equal and his four children would not be judged by their skin colour; but the content of their character. Today, after a space of fifty years, one sees the America in changing scenario with the prophetic vision of Martin Luther King Jr. taking its substantial form in the America.

It would be appropriate quoting the promising President of the US, Barack Obama, which would help underline the change, took place in America:

...I am absolutely certain that generations from now, we will be able to look back and tell our children that this was the moment when we began to provide care for the sick and good jobs to the jobless; this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal; this was the moment when we ended a war and secured our nation and restored our image as the last, best hope on earth. This was the moment -- this was the time -- when we came together to remake this great nation so that it may always reflect our very best selves and our highest ideals. (Speech in St. Paul, MN, June 3, 2008)

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