

Chapter 4

The Socio-Political Environment of Gandhiji and Ambedkar

4.1 Introduction

Gandhiji was called the father of the Indian nation whereas Ambedkar was entitled as a modern man in India. They played an epoch-making role in the Indian history. Both of them were opposite to each other in their socio-political, religious and economic thoughts and beliefs. After ceaseless efforts and endeavour, Ambedkar established himself as the leader of the 'Depressed Classes' and the Untouchables in India. In contrary to him, Gandhiji rose to power in Indian politics from a bania family of the Hindu society. He had a strong social and economic background. Naturally, it was not a very difficult task at all for Gandhiji to become a national leader from a high profile Dewan family. He ultimately became a national leader of the Indian National Congress. Therefore, the name of Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi and Ambedkar were inscribed as two distinct shining stars in the Indian history. They had played a never-ending epoch making role in Indian history, which had been expressed by themselves in opposite directions to each other. Both of them were opposite to each other's in their socio-political, religious and economic thoughts and beliefs and on the issue of Caste and Untouchability. In fact, the class characters of both of them were completely different and distinctive. In fact, the emergence of Gandhiji as a national leader from a 'Vaishya Bania Caste'¹ was easier than Ambedkar. But Ambedkar had to face Himalayan problems to rise as a national leader from 'an untouchable Mahar community' within the low stratum of the four-fold Varna system. Naturally, they were very much eager to protect their class interest in their own ways. Gandhiji played an important role to keep the interests of the privileged sections of the society intact whereas Ambedkar vehemently opposed the policy of Gandhiji and fought for the cause of the toiling masses in India. Some scholars pointed out that both of them played a vital role to establish the concept of 'Social Justice' in the Indian society. Under these unavoidable circumstances, Gandhiji came forward to serve the interest of the Harirjans in India, became famous worldwide and was entitled as the prophet

of the Harijans in India. In fact, the emergence of Ambedkar as a leader of the 'Depressed Classes' and Untouchables in India was a rare case like the blooming lotus in the cow dung. However, Gandhiji ultimately became an undisputed leader in the Indian National Congress who chose to protect the class interest of the privileged sections of the society. However, the political recognition of Ambedkar as a 'Dalit' leader was not an easy task under the then socio-political, religious and economic environment in the society. Gandhiji earned name and fame easily in Indian society. Therefore, it can be pointed out that the social inheritance and status of a person in the Casteist Hindu society was an important factor leading to political inheritance and status in the society, polity and economy in India. Both the cases of Gandhiji and Ambedkar were true in the real sense of the terms in this perspective. Therefore, the socio-political environment of the-then India under which Gandhiji and Ambedkar were reared up needs a close analysis as the following:

4.2. Deplorable Conditions of the Hindu Society before the Emergence of Gandhiji and Ambedkar:

The Hindu society had already come under the direct control of the caste system and untouchability before the emergence of Gandhiji and Ambedkar in India. None dared to violate these inhuman misconceptions by launching a direct crusade except a few exceptions and without much force. Naturally, they had been deprived of the basic civil rights and privileges so far. Caste system and untouchability did not even recognize the values of tranquility, liberty, equality, fraternity etc. In fact, the concept of caste and untouchability were really the negation of humanity that went completely against the doctrines of 'Human Rights and Social Justice'. Although there was no such untouchable Varna in the Rig Vedic Society at all. Manu the ancient lawmaker, who first institutionalized Caste System on the basis of heredity brushing aside the doctrine of Karma and virtuous deeds completely. The original four Varnas became watertight compartments and degenerated later into the present Caste System. However, its rigidity during the period of our study had reached extreme level in the Hindu society. The notion of Untouchability was the outcome of defilement, pollution, contamination etc. As a result inequality, disparity and hatred increased very rapidly among different caste-class sections that ultimately divided man from man, haves from haves not, privileged from unprivileged and proletariat from

capitalist. The never-ending psychological virus of the caste system and untouchability greatly stirred the social mind of the so-called Hindus during this time and they became the ardent followers of its. Even, most of the so-called intellectuals did not think beyond the circle of the caste system and the doctrine of 'touch-me-not'. Its impacts greatly affected the social health and political mind more than the time of Manu. Man, belonging to the low strata were gradually compelled to become slaves of these doctrines. The conditions of the 'Twice born babies' (Dwijas) were remained same as before. The Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya belonged to the privileged group. The chief architect of it was the Brahmana. Apart from these, there prevailed some inhuman-superstitious customs and practices framed by the Brahmins (such as Sati, prohibition of widow marriage, polygamy, polyandry, fear of sea voyage etc.) that created different types of acute social problems, which complicated the life style of the Hindu society in India. They gradually monopolized their rights and privileges in the society, polity, religion, economy, culture, administration etc. Even the British did little to modify India's religious and social customs. They adopted 'hands-off policy' to produce planned social change in their favour. They promised to keep complete religious neutrality and freedom of worship to the people. Under such conditions, many of the customs connected with caste continued to flourish. However, the Brahmins always tried to promulgate many dogmas to perpetuate their supremacy that gave strong religious backing to the maintenance of caste barriers throughout the ages. According to Ghurye; 'Most of the activities of the British Government were dictated by prudence of administration and not by a desire to reduce the rigidity of caste'².

As a result, caste and politics influenced each other during this time. Caste acted as a barrier to social progress. In fact, the doctrines of caste and untouchability became ultimately a death warrant to the untouchables (Sudras, Ati-Sudras etc.) in course time. Naturally, the dormant vibration of them stirred their ignorant minds to raise the voice against these inhuman practices. The term Dalit was used to denote the untouchables whereas Gandhiji marked them as Harrijan. They were traditionally considered as outcaste. They did not belong to the Four-Fold Varna System of the Hindu society. Generally, they belonged to the Pancham (fifth) Varna. But there was no such Pancham (fifth) Varna in the Vedic period at all. They were compelled to adopt the most ignominious professions or works in the society. Their position was

below the beasts and animals. They were bound to remain in the never-ending distressed conditions under the so-called socio-religious, political and economic environment. Even they were seldom treated as human beings. Their main jobs consisted of killing or disposing of dead body of human corpses or cattle or working with their hides or cleaning, washing, wearing the torned garments of the dead bodies or eating the remaining part of the used plates or dices, etc. Naturally, they took initiative to adopt other religion to get rid of the discrimination. In the long run, Indian law had now recognized and categorized the Dalit under the name of Scheduled Caste and had accorded their certain special privileges. Their day-to-day life had been very much inglorious and miserable. They were known in different names in different parts of the country viz. Out Caste, Untouchables, Pariahs, Panchamas, Ati-Shudras, Avarnas, Antyajas and Namashudras. They were treated as 'sub-humans, less than men, worse than beasts'³ by the so called Caste Hindus. Therefore, their social disabilities were numerous and harsh. Caste Hindus compelled the downtrodden to follow the principles prescribed by the lawmakers of the so-called Hindu Sastras. The Caste System itself a self-functionary and automatic machinery that always snatched away the rights of the ignorant masses. So the illiterate Untouchable community did not get chance to improve their lot against the Himalayan-Caste hurdles. They even were unconscious about their rights and privileges. Therefore, they were not able to unite themselves to fight against their ill-fated conditions, status, position, civil rights and privileges in the Indian society. Not only that but also the ruthless behaviour of the Hindus and their religious rules compelled them to remain in the same distressed conditions for ever. The Hindus treated the 'Voice', 'Shadow' and even 'Touch' of the Untouchables as 'Polluting'. Even they had no right to use the public roads. If they violated the rules, they were rebuked or beaten very badly. They had no rights to acquire knowledge through Public or Government schools and to accumulate wealth. Besides, they did not enjoy the worship of the Hindu God and Goddess as per the customs laid in the Sastras. They had no option to obtain minimum civic amenities to lead their day-to-day life. Under these unavoidable circumstances, the Untouchables did not get any chance to improve their socio-political and economic status, position and lot. Apart from these, their day-to-day life became hell under the inhuman policies based on the Sastras of the so-called Hindu Religion, which were adopted by the Caste Hindus towards the Untouchables. The Untouchables were forbidden to use certain metal ornaments,

choices- able dress and others. They had no right to take desirable food, dress, footwear etc. They were compelled to stay in the dirty, dingy and unhygienic outskirts of towns and villages. Their living places were miserable, smoky shanties or cottages. They were restricted to use public wells for drinking and other purposes. Naturally, they were forced to take filthy water to serve their day today purposes. Besides, they were forbidden from entering the Hindu temples. Even the barbers and washer men refused to provide their services to them. However, the Caste Hindus did not show minimum sympathy for the Untouchables. They did not give a little drop of water to the Untouchables. Their positions were brought down below the animals. They welcomed persons of other religions and threw sugar to their domestic pets and dogs rather than the Untouchables. Therefore, the Untouchables did not get any chance for bettering their socio-economic and political conditions. In fact, they were born as Untouchables, lived as Untouchables and ultimately died as Untouchables. It was the general rule prescribed in the so-called Dharma-Sastras. Apart from these, the Caste Hindus humiliated them in different ways. They were strictly forbidden to acquire knowledge of the Vedas. In fact, it was a very ridiculous matter that the Untouchables were allowed to worship the Gods of the Hindus and observed the same festivals yet. These types of dismal pictures of their social conditions and miseries did not end now. All services including police and military forces were closed to them. Under these inhuman and repressive measures, the Untouchables were compelled to follow the prescribed and hereditary occupations such as street-sweeper, scavengers, shoemakers etc. Some of them were compelled to live as village servants. They had to spare their day today live with the problems of insufficient accommodations, in sanitary surroundings and others along with acute and common social segregation of their livelihood. Hand to mouth was the main stay in their daily life. Under these unavoidable circumstances, they were born in debt and perished in debt for ages. But there was a great controversy regarding the origin and growth of Untouchability in the so-called Hindu society. According to some scholars, Untouchability was a perverted out come of the Caste System. However, Dr.P.T.Borale opined that the Untouchables originally were 'Broken Men' and then the followers of Buddhism. They did not assimilate themselves with the Vedic Hindus. They also did not give up beef eating. In the course of time, they were brought down in a degraded and segregated position as "Untouchables"⁴. However, the Orthodox Hindus gave a different opinion on this issue. They said that the Aryans abode this system to

preclude the possibility of racial mixture with the original inhabitants in India. The Untouchables did not accept the Aryan suzerainty. Therefore, they disturbed the presence of the Aryans in India by kidnapping their children, woman and harassed them by looting their wealth. As a result, the Aryans in course of time imposed several insufferable measures and disabilities upon them and they were ultimately entitled as Untouchables in Indian society.

4.3. Political conditions of India before the emergence of Gandhiji and Ambedkar

The emergence of different political associations before and after the 1857 made an epoch making event in the history of the political movement in India. These types of associations were founded with a view to protect their class-caste interest in a systematic way against the mighty British Government in India. The initial motives of these associations were based on myopic view. In course of time, they changed their outlook to raise their voice against the injustice imposed upon the Indians by their different policies. Under these circumstances, the so-called educated persons in India realized the gravity, necessity and importance of forming a united unanimous platform to fight against the British Government in India. As a result, the 'Land-Holders Society' of 1837 was established for protecting the class-caste interest of the Zamindars of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Radhakanta Deb was its president. The emergence of 'Bengal British Indian Society' also came out to protect the interest of the Indians in general in 1843. However, these two organizations unitedly formed the 'British Indian Association' in 1851. Raja Radhakanta Deb was its first president and Debendranath Tagore was its first secretary. Apart from these, the 'Madras Native Association' and 'Bombay Association' were formed beyond the close contact of the Zamindar class in the year of 1852. The wealthy Zamindar class played a vital role in forming and leading the associations for their stake before the revolt of 1857. The middle class too took active part in forming and leading different associations after 1857. Dadabhai Naroaji established the 'East Indian Association' in London in 1866 with its branches in India. The motto was to raise the problems of the Indians before the Englishmen of England. Justice Ranade founded the 'Poona Sarbajanick Sabha' in 1870. It was mainly the association of the high caste Brahmins. It addressed not only the problems of the upper and middle class but also the problems of the farmers.

Besides, the 'Bombay Presidency Association' was established in 1885. The 'Madras Mahajan Sabha' was formed in 1884 with a view of uniting hundred Samities of different areas of the Madras Presidency to organize a large-scale National Movement. It demanded the separation of the judicial department from the Revenue department and the extension of the Legislature. The 'Indian League' was established as a rival organization of the 'British Indian Association' in 1875. The main aim of this organization was to create the ideal of nationalism among the people. The name of Sisir Kumar Ghosh as a founder member of it may be mentioned in this connection. Surendranath Banerjee founded the 'Indian Association' in 1876 with a view to protect the class interest of the middle class and riots. On behalf of the farmers, the association declared in 1880 as follows: "The riots are practically unrepresented and the Association has undertaken the solemn duty of making known their wants and grievances"⁵. However, the British Government took repressive measures towards this movement and arrested their leaders. Under this situation owing to the issues of Ilbert Bill and the black rule of Lord Lytton, Surendranath Banerjee realized the necessity of a Nation-based conference to raise the voice against the British Government. The Colonial Government arranged of an international exhibition at Calcutta in 1883 and the people of different parts of India took part in it. As a result, an All-Indian Conference was called from 28 December to 30 December in 1883 at Albert Hall of Calcutta. It was perhaps the first greatest Political Conference in India. Surendranath Banerjee, 'The objects of the National Conference were not sectional, nor regional, but truly national. Our idea is to bring the national forces into a focus; and if possible to concentrate them upon some common object calculated to advance the public good'⁶. The meeting of the Indian National Congress was held at that time in Bombay. The 'Indian Association' of Surendranath Banerjee merged with the Indian National Congress for the sake of national interest. However, the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 heralded a new epoch in the history of the Indian politics. It added a new dimension in the context of the protest movement against the British Government in different aspects. The class characters of its members were purely based on the privileged sections of the society and the twice born babies were its chief architect. However, the emergence of Gandhiji in the Indian National Congress transformed its class character and social pattern and its membership was open handed and extended up to the grass-root level of the village irrespective of caste, class, sex, creed and religion. The policy of the Indian National

Congress against the British from 1885-1915 was mainly centered around the political needs and benefits of India. Even the Congress did not adopt any uniform policy unanimously to address the social problems like the caste system, untouchability, etc. during this period. It was divided into two camps on these social issues in course of time. Naturally, the minor group of the Congress did not success on these issues. It was completely guided and motivated for the sake of the upper caste Hindus and their political needs and personal benefits in the name of nationalism, autonomy, etc. In fact, the so-called leaders of different associations of India did not address the issues of caste and untouchability properly for permanent abolition before and after the revolt of 1857 at a large. Both the issues were the common factors in the social conditions of the Hindu life, which created the utmost obstacles of their daily life.

4.4. 1 Socio-Educational and Political Background of Gandhiji: Philosophical Influence upon Gandhiji

Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi was well known as the greatest thinker in the Twentieth century world. He was an undisputed leader of the Indian freedom movement. He was truly the real modern engineer of the doctrine of 'Ahimsa' (Non-violence) that was preached by Goutam Buddha⁷ and Mahavira⁸ in ancient times. His political philosophy and day-to-day works were completely based on the principles of 'Satyagraha' and 'Ahimsa'. The Bhagbad, the Gita and the Upanishad of the Hindu Religion and the Teachings of Jesus Christ⁹ were the primary sources of his inspiration in the context of Satyagraha and Ahimsa. Besides, he was very much impressed by the thoughts and believes and the writings of the contemporary thinkers. The name of John Ruskin¹⁰, Henry Thoreau¹¹, Leo Tolstoy¹² and others may be mentioned in this connection. In fact, he became an ardent follower of the doctrine of Ahimsa after the reading of a book of a Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy. The name of that famous book was 'The Kingdom of God is within you'. Apart from these, he was also influenced by the ideal of love in the context of Ahimsa as inlaid in the Bible. He made religion and politics inseparable. The Vedic literatures as well as the Hindu Sastras and scriptures were the primary sources of his social philosophy. He believed in God, Caste system, Untouchability, idol worship and the doctrine of incarnation and the other things that were described in the Hindu Sastras¹³. His attitude towards

the issue of caste and untouchability were completely traditional in nature and peculiar in character. He changed his attitude towards these issues in course of time when Ambedkar raised the voice against the socio-religious, political and economic injustice imposed upon the untouchables by the so-called caste Hindus and their Sastras. After signing the Poona Pact in 1932, Gandhiji gradually increased his attention to the problems of the Harijans. So he came forward to emancipate the Harijans that made him renowned worldwide. In fact, he could not do any thing beyond caste. Naturally, the political compulsion of the Congress on the problems of the Harijans forced Gandhiji to adopt required measures to deal with their problems. But he could not always keep his word to establish civil rights and privileges of the Harijans by launching Satyagraha movement against the Caste Hindus. Apart from this, his economic philosophy could not improve the lot of the Depressed Classes as a whole. Even his education policy towards the Harijans and women were completely based on caste discrimination as well as communal vibration. The political philosophy of him was based on idealistic point of view. Actually, he renewed the principles of Ahimsa and Satyagraha of Buddhism, Jainism etc. in this context. Most of his followers did not imbibe these principles into their hearts. Gandhiji was an ardent follower of these principles in his individual life. Naturally, most of the freedom movements launched by him became violent by his followers. Jinnah once pointed out that Gandhiji was the man who was responsible for turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism. He also considered Gandhism as dangerous to the Muslims¹⁴. However, it cannot be denied that Gandhiji was the only man who first time brought the common people under the umbrella of the Indian National Congress to fight against the mighty British to obtain independence. Again, he was the only Congress leader who came forward to establish the civil rights and privileges of the Harijans for the sake of humanity.

However, there are many divergent views about Gandhiji's personality and his methods and techniques on the issue of caste and untouchability. Perhaps his most important contribution to India's struggle for independence was his spiritual leadership, and his consequent influence over the mass of India's population. All his life he adopted two fundamental principles, i.e., a belief in 'Ahimsa' (non-violence), and the concept of Satyagraha (truthfulness) as he said; 'My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth'. 'What is more important is

'inner perfection, truth and love', in self-abnegating closeness to God who is the source of all life. Christ must be obeyed not for fear of hell, or sin, but because he teaches Truth. For Gandhi, it was all right to hate sin, but not the sinner; to fight aggression, but not the aggressor¹⁵ According to Gandhiji, 'Morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole objective' since there is no religion higher than Truth. His religion had always been morality. To him, 'Truth was God' and non-violence was the force created out of Truth and love. He was convinced that the non-violence preached by the Brahmins was mere passivity¹⁶. His role in establishing the civil rights movement of the Indians in South Africa and Harijan movement in India was really an epoch making event in the world history. He became a major political and spiritual leader of India and the Indian independence movement. He became the pioneer of Satyagraha-resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience, firmly founded upon ahimsa or total non-violence-which led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. Having led his people to freedom, he was to lay down his life for their sake. He is commonly known in India and across the world as 'Mahatma Gandhi' (Great Soul) and as 'Bapu' (Father in Gujarati). Green Martin pointed out very clearly that Gandhiji was particularly influenced by the writings of Tolstoy in developing his political philosophy both in South Africa and India, albeit it took quite some time for the non-violence to take shape as the fundamental creed¹⁷. However, Gandhiji ultimately became a great political leader and social reformer in India.

4.4.2. Family Background of Gandhiji

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2nd October in Porbondar of Kathiawar in 1869, the capital of a small principality in what is today the state of Gujarat in Western India, where his father Karamchand Gandhi, was a Diwan (Prime Minister). The name of his mother was Putlibai. She was a Hindu of the Pranami Vaishnava order. The term 'Gandhi' means grocer. Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi belonged to 'Bania by Caste' and devout Vaishnava Hindus by religious practice. However, for three generations, from his grandfather, they had been Prime Ministers in several Kathiawad States. His father Karamchand Gandhi was a lover of his clan, truthful, brave and generous. His mother Putlibai was a profoundly religious Hindu woman. She would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers. One of

her daily duties was to go 'Haveli', the Vaishnava temple. She fasted every alternate day during one 'Chaturmas'¹⁸. Literally a period of four months. A vow of fasting and semi-fasting during the four months of the rains. The period is a sort of long lent. But she vowed not to have food without seeing the sun during another 'Chaturmas'. In fact, to keep two or three consecutive fasts was nothing to her. She did not interrupt the observance of 'Chandrayana'¹⁹ vow during her illness. Living on one meal of a day during 'Chaturmas' was a habit with her. She and the rest of the Gandhi family belonged to a branch of Hinduism in which non-violence and tolerance between religious groups were considered very important. Living with a devout mother and surrounded by the Jain influences of Gujarat, Gandhiji learned from an early age the tenets of non-injury to living beings, vegetarianism, fasting for self-purification, and mutual tolerance between members of various creeds and sects. However, some scholars pointed out that Gandhi family of Gujarat was an 'Orthodox Vaishnava'. It was one of the main principles of Gandhian family to follow the rules and regulations very rigidly of Vaishnava Religion in the context of food habits, manners and others. Liberal views and ideas were not present in the context of religious thinking of the internal pattern in Gandhian family. His family background had later been seen as a very important explanation of why Mohandas Gandhi was able to achieve the position he held in Indian society. According to Hardiman David, "Although Gandhi was brought up in an atmosphere of religious tolerance; he developed an early antipathy to Christianity, which he experienced as a colonial subject. When still a boy in Rajkot, he had paused to hear a missionary who was preaching in the street and was disgusted by the way he poured abuse on the Hindus and their gods"²⁰.

4.4.3. Educational Background of Gandhiji

Gandhiji belonged to a wealthy and well-to-do casteiest- bania family. The nickname of him was 'Mohania'²¹. Perhaps he got admission into a primary school of Sri Birji Kamdar or Lanra Master at Porbandar in 1875 where most of the family members of Gandhi had completed primary education. However, his father left Porbandar after one year for Rajkot to become a member of the Rajasthanik Court and naturally, Gandhiji was put there into a Branch School of Rajkot. He read in class one and class two in the Gujarati Branch School at Rajkot during the session of 1877-1878. He got

admission in class three into the Main (City) Taluk school of Gujarati Branch of Rajkot on 21 January 1879. This Taluk School was traditionally and historically very famous at that time which was established in 1837. He attended the school for only 74 days out of 222 days in standard three. Therefore, he was not permitted to attend in the final examination for that session. Gandhiji read there up to class four until on 2 October 1880. He passed class three and four from this school and obtained first position in the Gujarati Standard 3 and 4 respectively. After completing primary education, Gandhiji got admission into Kathiaward High School in Anglo-Vernacular Standard one on 1 December 1880 at the age of eleven years two months and two days. He read in the class of Standard five in December 1884 and ultimately he was promoted in the class of Standard six. Standard 6 was called as pre-matriculation class. He read in the Kathiaward High School from Standard one to Standard 7. He spent seven years in this school to complete his high school education. He used to be very shy and avoided all company. He did not mix easily with the other children. His books and his lessons were his sole companions and he spent all his free time alone reading. However, the role and character of Harischandra and Shravana of the two different plays left a deep impression on his mind regarding the living realities of his life during his school days²². Besides, he was well versed in Gujarati grammar but he was very much weak in history, geography and mathematics. He had no special attention in school education as like his elder brothers. He was a mediocre student. However, Gandhiji was only thirteen when he was asked to be married soon. His parents had already chosen his bride. The bride-to-be lived in Porbandar and her name was Kasturba. In May 1883, at the age of 13, Gandhi was married through his parents' arrangements to Kasturba Makhanji (also spelled "Kasturbai" or known as "Ba"). Therefore, he had to marry Kasturba at the age of 13 in 1883. His father was very ill at that time. Therefore, he had to devote more time to serve his father. Naturally, he lost one year in his academic life due to this unavoidable circumstance. However, the constant inspirations of his teachers Gandhiji overcome this problem and able to obtain good result in the final examination in that year. Morarji, the teacher of Gandhiji, was the constant source of inspiration in his educational life. However, his father died at the age of 63 in 1885. Gandhiji broke into tears and felt woes in all his life, as he was not present at the time of the death of his father. However, Gandhiji passed the Metric Examination with good result in 1887 under the University of Bombay at the age of 18.

4.4.4. Gandhi's Attitude towards the Issue of Caste and Untouchability during his Study Life

Gandhiji was very much acquainted since his childhood regarding the curse of untouchability. His attitude towards these problems since childhood was very interesting. Gandhiji clearly stated in this regard that he was often touched by untouchables when he read in the school and he did not keep secret this incident to his parents. His mother told him that the best way of touching immediately the nearer Muslim friends for bringing immediate purity of him and he often did it most obediently to know his best regards to his mother. But he was deeply shocked on the issue of untouchability²³ Once Gandhiji said, "Cause without the people is a dead thing. Love of the people brought the problem of untouchability early into my life. My mother said, "You must not touch this boy, he is untouchable." "Why not, "I questioned back and from that day my revolt began"²⁴.

Gandhiji got admission into the Samaldas College of Vabanagar in Gujarat in 1888 and spent there some time for college education. He was unhappy at the college because his family wanted him to become a barrister. However, his aim was to become a doctor and to serve the ill-fated poor in the country. His family members did not like it and ultimately he had to go London to obtain law degree under the proposal of one of his family advisors. Therefore, there arose a great controversy among the members of the same caste and the same community of Gandhiji regarding the issue of his going abroad and ultimately they were agitated very badly over his going to London. They vehemently opposed to the decision of Gandhiji for studying abroad. However, Gandhiji was a man of strong determination and he did not change his plan of going aboard under the pressure of his caste-people. In fact, Gandhiji obtained his mother's permission and blessings in this perspective. His mother allowed him on some conditions which Gandhiji promised to follow. However, he became an outcaste in the eyes of the Orthodox Hindus on the issue of foreign journey. He was very much excited to fulfill his cherish dream. Therefore, Gandhiji dreamt of going to England. However, his caste-peoples were agitated over his going to abroad. A general meeting was summoned and Gandhiji was called to appear before it. He came before the meeting without the slightest hesitation. The Sheth - the headman of the community said, 'In the opinion of the caste, your proposal to go to

England is not proper. Our religion forbids voyages abroad. We have also heard that it is not possible to live there without compromising our religion. One is obliged to eat and drink with Europeans!’²⁵ Gandhiji answered straightway that it was not at all against his religion to go to England. He said that he intended to go there for further studies. He noted the fact that no Modh Bania had been gone to England up to now and if he dared to do so, he ought to be brought his name to book. He also stated that he had already solemnly promised to his mother to abstain from three things (fish, meat and wine) she feared most. He vividly noted that he was sure the vow would keep him safe. Therefore, Gandhiji could not alter his decision to go to England. The Sheth-the headman of the community said, ‘But, will you disregard the orders of the caste?’ Gandhiji said, ‘I am really helpless. I think the caste should not interfere in the matter’. That is why; the Sheth pronounced his orders: ‘This boy shall be treated as an outcaste from today. Whoever helps him or goes to see him off at the dock shall be punishable with a fine of one rupee four annas’²⁶. Under this ordinance of the Sheth-the headman of the community, the brother – in –law of Gandhiji refused to give him money for his journey and clearly stated that he could not afford to lose caste. Under this unavoidable situation, Bandrabandas Patwari appeared before Gandhiji and extended his helping hand to him. He gave financial assistance to Gandhiji for the expenditure of his foreign journey. Gandhiji stated that the storm in his caste over his foreign voyage was still brewing. It had divided the caste into two camps, one of which favoured him, while the other that identified him as an outcaste on the line declared by the Headman of their community. To please the opposition group his brother took initiative to give a caste dinner. That is why, his brother also arranged to give Gandhiji a bath in the sacred river before the preparation of a caste dinner²⁷. Taking his will to be law, Gandhiji mechanically acted as his brother wished. Practically speaking, the trouble about re-admission to the caste of Gandhiji was thus over. Gandhiji stated that he never tried to seek admission to the section that had refused it. Even he did not feel mental resentment against any of the headman of that section. Gandhiji scrupulously avoided hurting their feelings in spite of their opposition. He pointed out very clearly on the issue of caste problem as follows: ‘I fully respected the caste regulations about excommunication’²⁸. Under these circumstances, Gandhiji did not alter his decision to go to London for studies. After passing his high school examination, Gandhiji went to England to study and ultimately become a lawyer. But a headline was published on the historic departure of

a Bania student for England in the Kathiawar Times on 12 August, 1888. Gandhiji was given farewell in the local High school by his friends and well-wishers. They said, "We are certainly justified in entertaining the hope that you will make it an object of your special care and attention to promote the interests of India in England at the same time that you compete for medals and prizes"²⁹. He was the first Bania from Kathiawar who proceeded to England to prosecute his study for the Barrister's Examination.

Gandhiji was opposed by his same caste peoples relating to the Law Degree in London. On September 4, 1888, Gandhiji left Bombay for England. After reaching there, he made up his mind to fulfill his cherished dream. Therefore, he got admission into the 'Inner Temple' in London on 6 November 1888. However, Gandhiji did not touch fish, meat and wine in London. Therefore, he kept his word in course of time given to his mother Kasturba before his journey to London. In London, young Gandhi found everything around him strange. His attempt was to be an Englishman lasted only about three months, and then he gave up the idea. He soon became a serious student, and concentrated very hard on his studies. He tried his level best to complete the law degree and ultimately obtained law degree. Towards the end of his second year in England he came across two Theosophists brothers, in 1889, they talked to him about the Gita. They were reading Sir Edwin Arnold's translation – The Song Celestial – they invited Gandhiji to read the original with them. However, he felt ashamed and said that he had not read the Gita still now. Ultimately, he began reading the Gita with them. Gandhiji stated that the Verses of the second chapter made a deep impression on his mind and they still ring in his ears. However, this book struck him as one of priceless worth in life. He was introduced to Mrs. Anne Basant, the leader of the Theosophists Society during this period. He also came close to Narayan Hemchandra, the famous Gujrati writer, in England at that time. Although Gandhi experimented with adopting English customs—taking dancing lessons for example—he could not stomach his landlady's mutton and cabbage. She pointed him towards one of London's few vegetarian restaurants. Rather than simply go along with his mother's wishes, he read about, and intellectually embraced vegetarianism. He joined the Vegetarian Society, was elected to its executive committee, and founded a local chapter. He later credited this with giving him valuable experience in organizing institutions. Some of the vegetarians he met were members of the Theosophical

Society, which had been founded in 1875 to further universal goodwill, and which was devoted to the study of Buddhist and Hindu Brahmanistic literature. They encouraged Gandhi to read the Bhagavad-Gita. Not having shown a particular interest in religion before, he read works of and about Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and other religions. But Gandhiji ultimately passed the law examination. On June 10, 1891, he was called to the bar of England and Wales by Inner Temple. He admitted as a lawyer and the next day was formally enrolled in the High Court. The following day, June 12, 1891 he sailed for India.

4.5. Eventful Professional life of Gandhiji in South Africa

After obtaining the law degree, Gandhiji left England on 12 June 1891 to come back India. He heard the sad news of his mother's demise after returning to India. He spent some days with his family in Rajkot. He already set up his mind to practice as a lawyer in Bombay. However, after an unsuccessful beginning, he realized it very well that 'he was not qualified enough to practice law'. Naturally, Gandhiji decided to prepare himself to get another job. An offer suddenly came to him to go to South Africa on behalf of Dada, Abdulla & Co. The opportunity to see a new country and new people excited Gandhi, and he accepted the offer. It was painful for him to be parted from Kasturbai once again very soon, but he was determined to go. In April 1893, he left Bombay for South Africa. In South Africa Gandhiji noticed that the Indians were treated as untouchables there in every sphere of their day-today life. He had to face various troubles during his journey from India to South Africa. The Indians were hated there for their complexion. They were called as 'Coolie' and Gandhiji was identified as 'Coolie Barrister'³⁰ in South Africa. The Indians living in the South Africa had no civil right and privilege. Realizing the hard realistic conditions of the Indians in South Africa, Gandhiji said, "Some of the classes which render us the greatest social service, but which we Hindus have chosen to regard as 'untouchables', are relegated to remote quarters of a town or a village, called in Gujarati dhedvado, and the name has acquired a bad odour. Even so, in Christian Europe the Jews were once 'untouchables', and the quarters that were assigned to them had the offensive name of 'ghettoes'. In a similar way today we have become the untouchables of South Africa"³¹. Gandhiji fought for establishing their civil rights and privileges in South Africa. In fact, Gandhiji became a symbol of civil rights and justice to the Indians in South Africa and the blueprint and tactical

measures adopted by him in the Civil rights movement in South Africa were implemented in the Indian Independence movement.

4.6. Gandhi: A Native Indian identified as untouchable during his train Journey in South Africa (1893)

Gandhiji went to South Africa in the month of April 1893, as a legal advisor on behalf of Dada, Abdulla & Co. However, Gandhiji had to face severe troubles during the way of journey to South Africa. During the journey from Durban to Pretoria Gandhiji was vehemently insulted by a white man in 1893 who forcibly pushed out Gandhiji from the first class compartment. Therefore, he had to spend one night in a very cold and extremely bitter weather in the waiting room. Apart from this, he was compelled to sit on a coachbox of a driver in spite of his first class ticket of the train by the white man in charge of the coach. He told Gandhiji not to sit with the white passengers. What is even more surprising Gandhiji was once severely beaten when he refused to sit on the footboard of the coach as per the instruction of the white man? Besides, he showed his first class ticket during his journey when the guard came to examine it. However, the guard was angry to find him there and said to remove to the third class. There was only one English passenger in that compartment who opposed it. Therefore, the guard muttered: 'If you want to travel with a coolie, what do I care?' and ultimately went away³². Several biographers have acknowledged these incidents as a turning point in his life, explaining his later social activism. It was through witnessing firsthand the racism, prejudice and injustice against Indians in South Africa that Gandhi started to question his people's status, and his own place in society. It was a long journey from India to South Africa. Gandhi reached the port of Natal towards the end of May 1893. The first thing he noticed was that the Indians were treated there with very little or no respect at all.

4.7. Gandhi's Civil Rights Movement in South Africa (1893-1914)

He left for South Africa on behalf of a company. His experience on racialism in South Africa led him to raise the voice against social injustice and take up the rights of the Indian community and he soon emerged as their leader. He instituted a campaign of

passive resistance in response to the Transvaal Government's discriminatory policy, coining the term Satyagraha (truth force) for this new revolutionary technique. This method of resistance was later used to great effect in India's struggle for independence. Gandhiji realized it very well that the Indian immigration to South Africa started in 1890 when the White settlers there recruited indentured Indian labour, mainly from South India, to work on their sugar plantations. They and their descendents were mostly uneducated and had practically no knowledge of English. The merchant class that followed the plantation workers was mostly Muslims from Gujarat, and they too had practically no knowledge of English. The Indians suffered racial discrimination and humiliation but they had come to accept that as a way of life. On realizing, the importance of the condition mentioned above Gandhiji expressed his desire to better the conditions of Indians there and ultimately took initiative to call a meeting of all the Indians in Pretoria. This was the first public speech in the life of Gandhiji. His motto was to raise a voice for the establishment of civil rights and privileges among the Indians settled in South Africa against the oppressive and suppressive rule of the Pretoria Government. He also arranged to publish their agony in different newspapers to draw the attention of the world. He wrote an article in the 'Natal Advertiser' with hatred and anger on their ill-fated conditions and raised different questions as; 'Is this behaviour of the Christians?' 'Is this truthfulness?' 'Is this Justice?' 'Is this civilization?' 'I am waiting for reply'³³. Gandhiji formed the 'Natal Indian Congress' in South Africa on 22nd May 1894 in connection with the model and inspiration of the Indian National Congress and arranged to start self-defense movement of the Indians. With a great deal of success, he introduced a method of non-violence in the Indian struggle for basic human rights. The method, Satyagraha – "truth force" – was highly idealistic; without rejecting the rule of law as a principle, the Indians should break those laws that were unreasonable or suppressive. Each individual would have to accept punishment for having violated the law. However, he should, calmly yet with determination, reject the legitimacy of the law in question. This would, hopefully make the adversaries – first, the South African authorities, later the British in India – recognized the unlawfulness of their legislation. South Africa changed Gandhi dramatically, as he faced the discrimination commonly directed at blacks and Indians. One day in court at Durban, the magistrate asked him to remove his Durban. Gandhi refused and stormed out of the courtroom. Gandhi extended his original period of stay in South Africa to assist Indians in

opposing a bill to deny them the right to vote. Though unable to halt the bill's passage, his campaign was successful in drawing attention to the grievances of Indians in South Africa. He founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894, and through this organization, he molded the Indian community of South Africa into a homogeneous political force. In January 1897, when Gandhi returned from a brief trip to India, a white mob attacked and tried to lynch him. In an early indication of the personal values that would shape his later campaigns, he refused to press charges against any member of the mob, stating it was one of his principles not to seek redress for a personal wrong in a court of law. Gandhi spent three years in South Africa and ultimately he succeeded in organizing the Indian Settlers to raise their voices against different social injustices imposed upon them.

Ultimately he became a well-known figure. Everyone recognized his frockcoat and turban. His practice was going very well and he knew that the people there wanted him with them. So in 1896, he went back home to bring his wife and children to South Africa. Gandhi was becoming more and more involved in public activities; his way of life became simpler. It was 1901; six years after Gandhi had brought his family to Durban that he felt his future activity lay not in South Africa but in India. Upon his arrival to India, Gandhi went on a tour of the country. The annual meeting of the Indian National Congress was being held in Calcutta under the Presidentship of Dinshaw Wacho. Gandhi attended the session. It was the first contact with the Congress, which he was to lead so gloriously in the future. Gandhi settled down in Bombay and started practice as a lawyer. He did well, much better than he had expected. In December 1902, however, a cable reached him from South Africa requesting him to return. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, was arriving from London on a visit to Natal and the Natal Indian Congress wanted Gandhi to present their case before him. Gandhi reached Natal in time to lead the Indian deputation, but the Colonial Secretary gave the deputation a cold reception. Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, was the Radical-turned-ultra-Tory, whose son Neville became Prime Minister in the 1930s. Chamberlain Sir agreed that the treatment of Indians was barbaric but appeared unwilling to push through any legislation about this however. Gandhi now decided to stay in the Transvaal to fight the color bar. He realized that now he would not be able to leave the country, as he had hoped to do. Gandhiji earned name and fame as a barrister within three years in South Africa and

came back to India for six months in 1896. He highlighted the distressed conditions of the Indian settlers in South Africa at that time and returned South Africa with his children and wife in December 1896. However, a meeting was held in Durban to oppose the presence of Gandhiji once again to South Africa because the white people of Natal decided that since Gandhiji was the troublemaker, he and his family would not be permitted to disembark. Therefore, Gandhiji did not enter the city. He was allowed only after twenty-three days to enter the city after physical torture and mental harassment.

At the onset of the South African War, Gandhi argued that Indians must support the war effort in order to legitimize their claims to full citizenship, organizing a volunteer ambulance corps of 300 free Indians and 800 indentured laborers called the Indian Ambulance Corps, one of the few medical units to serve wounded black South Africans. Gandhi urged Indian population in South Africa through his columns in 'Indian Opinion' to join the war, his own words, "If the Government only realized what reserve force is being wasted, they would make use of it and give Indians the opportunity of a thorough training for actual warfare." But the Boer war was started in 1899. Gandhiji formed a relief camp to serve the British army. In spite of his sympathy towards the Boer the British army received their assistance. However, the relief camp was withdrawn after servicing the British army within few months in February 1900.

Gandhiji left Natal with his family in November 1901 for India. The Indian settlers in Natal welcomed him. He advised the organizer to form a 'Trustee' for the welfare of the Indians settled in South Africa. That is why, Gandhiji returned their valuable gifts given him in that auspicious occasion. He came back to India and arrived in Bombay on 19 December 1901 to take part in the meeting of the INC held in Calcutta. He stayed there more than one month to introduce himself with different national level leaders of the INC like, Gokhale, P.C.Roy, Kalicharan Banerjee and Justice Mitra. He also took part in different public meetings at that time. He traveled Benaras, Agra, Jaipur and Palanpur during his journey to Rajkot. Even he went to meet Mrs. Anne Basant at that time. He was praised with noteworthy for the relief campaigns done during the Boer war to the British army by the British newspapers and ultimately the Boers were compelled to surrender on 31 May 1902. Gandhiji was given a medal³⁴

for his great gesture. He opened an office in Bombay in June 1903 to practice law. However, he responded to the call of the Indian settlers in South Africa and ultimately went to Natal in December 1902. After arrival Pretoria in January 1903, Gandhiji moved for the cases of the Indian settlers there in the court. He began his practice as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Johannesburg. He argued for the benefit of the Indians there in the court. The Indians were strictly prohibited to enter Transvaal without legal permission of the authority at that juncture. Apart from these, Gandhiji devoted himself to the service of the plague-stricken people in South Africa and arranged to form a temporary hospital³⁵ to deal with this affair in March 1904. Even he played a vital role to boost up the common people to intimate the importance of the water-soil treatment.

He published a weekly newspaper, 'Indian Opinion' in April 1904. It was published in different languages, as Gujrati, Hindi, and Tamil etc. in the course of time the 'Unto the Last' of Ruskin greatly influenced the mind of Gandhiji, which was read by him during the journey of Durban. Besides, he established an 'Ashram' near the Phoenix city based on the ideology of 'equal society'. The book of 'The Kingdom of God is within you' of Tolstoy impressed Gandhiji very much in this regard. He played a vital role as a leader of the 'Indian Relief Force' along with another 24 volunteers during the Julu war. His devoted service and sacrificial mentality for the public welfare can be traced from a letter of him that was written to his elder brother Lakshmidas Gandhi. He intimated his willingness by this letter to his brother about the distribution of all his properties among the poor for their welfare³⁶. In August 1906, the Transvaal Government issued an ordinance requiring all Indian men, women, and children to register themselves, obtain a personal certificate bearing name, and thumb impressions. This card was to be carried by all individuals at all times and had to be shown on demand. Anyone failing to produce the certificate was liable to be fined, or imprisoned. The police even had orders to enter private houses and check certificates. Gandhiji strongly supported the 14 demands raised by the Indian settlers in South Africa against the 'Transvaal Ordinance' on 22 August 1906. Therefore, Gandhiji organized a meeting of 3000 Indian settlers at the theatre hall of Johannesburg to oppose the Transvaal Ordinance and encouraged them not to register their names. Gandhi saw there the need for passive resistance, or 'Satyagraha'. To the people, he explained his concept of Satyagraha. First, he said, they must be

prepared to observe non-violence. The authorities would take all measures to put down the agitation. They might use violence, arrest people, and send them to jail, but they would continue without resistance. A big bonfire was lit, and more than two thousand certificates were burned. Many Indians openly crossed the border into the Transvaal, where their presence was illegal. Gandhi and many of his compatriots were imprisoned several times in the course of the agitation. When Gandhi was released from jail, the Indians held a meeting and decided to send a deputation to England to acquaint the British Government with the real situation in South Africa. Gandhi and Seth Haji Habib were asked to go to London and present the grievances of the Indians. Accordingly, they went, but the mission was a failure. They returned with grim determination to fight to the end.

In 1906, the Transvaal Government promulgated a new Act compelling registration of the colony's Indian population. At a mass protest meeting held in Johannesburg on September 11 that year, Gandhi adopted his still evolving methodology of Satyagraha (devotion to the truth), or Non-violent protest, for the first time, calling on his fellow Indians to defy the new law and suffer the punishments for doing so, rather than resist through violent means. This plan was adopted, leading to a seven-year struggle in which thousands of Indians were jailed (including Gandhi), flogged, or even shot, for striking, refusing to register, burning their registration cards, or engaging in other forms of non-violent resistance. While the Government was successful in repressing the Indian protesters, the public outcry stemming from the harsh methods employed by the South African Government in the face of peaceful Indian protesters finally forced South African General Jan Christian Smuts to negotiate a compromise with Gandhi. Gandhi's ideas took shape and the concept of Satyagraha matured during this struggle. He also went to London as an Indian representative on 3 October 1906 and submitted a memorandum of 14 demands to Lord Elgin, the-then secretary of the Indian colony. As a result of it, the Indian settlers assembled in the field of Pretoria Masjid and took oath not to take their identity card from there. They responded to the call of Gandhiji and decided not to register their names. Only 500 Indian settlers registered their names out of 13000. Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji morally succeeded in achieving the support of the people in this regard. But the Government did not alter its decision at that very moment. Tactically Gandhiji launched the first 'Satyagraha' movement in his life in a public meeting of Pretoria Masjid on 31 July

1907. Gokhale's wire encouraged him now. The Commissioner of Police called Gandhiji to discuss the matter on 27 December 1907. But the discussion had gone without result. Therefore, the Indian settlers were asked either to register their names within 48 hours or to leave the Transvaal immediately. Gandhiji did not mind their order. He continued the Satyagraha along with the Indians settled there. As a result of it, Gandhiji was arrested and sent to the court and two months imprisonment was given to him by the court along with his 150 supporters in 1908. It was the first time imprisonment in his life. Under this situation, the Prime Minister of Transvaal met with him and promised to withdraw that Ordinance. So he was temporarily released. Gandhiji went back to Pretoria and interpreted the matter in the midnight before 1000 Indians settled there. But he was assaulted by Mir Alam and other three Pathans in course of time. Yet he pardoned them. It was an irony of fate that the Ordinance was not withdrawn as per the version of General Smart. Practically General Smart did not keep his word on this matter. That is why; Indian settlers assembled in the field of Pretoria Masjid to protest against the Government and raised their voice by burning their identity cards. Gandhiji and other Indian leaders were arrested on this excuse. But the Indians settled in London raised their voice against the government and ultimately Gandhiji was released on 13 December 1908. He firmly determined to continue the Satyagraha movement against all sorts of injustice imposed upon the Indian settlers in South Africa. That is why; he entered Transvaal along with other six companions without any objection. The name of Ratan Tata may be mentioned in this connection to highlight his financial contribution to this Satyagraha movement of Gandhiji. He donated Rs. 25000/ to strengthen the Gandian movement in South Africa. Besides, it can be noted that Aga Khan also provided financial assistance to the South African 'Relief Fund' of Gandhiji. He wrote a letter to Gokhale on 25 April 1910 in details on the Satyagraha movement under his leadership for the rights and privileges of Indian settlers in South Africa. Not only that but also he established a 'Tolstoy Farm'³⁷ in Kallen Black of Johannesburg, which was situated in the Transvaal Province. The covering areas in acres were 1100. His German-Jewish friend and follower, Kallenbach donated these lands to him for the same and it ultimately became a base ground for his plans in South Africa. The Indian National Congress and the Indian Muslim League as well as the Nizam of Hyderabad also gave a helping hand in organizing the Tolstoy Farm. Here Gandhi took a vow not to drink cow or buffalo milk since cruelty was used to increase their production. His austerity reached its

climax when he vowed to live on fruits and nuts alone with some olive oil³⁸. He emphasized on Satyagraha at that very moment to oppose the Government and its injustice imposed upon the Indian settlers in South Africa. As a result, Gandhiji declared to maintain non-cooperation towards the policy imposed upon the Indian settlers there by the Government in respect of different matters. He advised his followers to adopt the principles of Non-violence and Satyagraha into their hearts to oppose injustice mainly to establish civil rights and privileges for the Indian settlers in South Africa. Gandhiji highlighted very vividly in the 'Hind Swaraj' or 'Indian Home Rule' in details in 1909 on the tactical points of Satyagraha that focused the politico-economic thoughts and views of him at a large. Besides, he sent a letter to Tolstoy for giving his valuable opinion on the issue of Satyagraha at that juncture. Tolstoy responded on 6 April 1910 on that matter. However, Gandhiji received this letter after the death of Tolstoy that helped him much in this regard. But the government released all the Satyagrahis on 1 June 1911. In the mean time, Gokhale arrived at Cape Town to deal with this problem. He played a vital role to settle down the problems between the Satyagrahis and the South African Government. Gandhiji helped Gokhale at that very moment. Gokhale delivered a speech in a meeting organized by the Indian settlers in the Pretoria town hall of South Africa on 15 November 1912. Gandhi found the Government relentless in its actions against minorities. There seemed no solutions in sight. He had to take further measures. In October of 1913, Gandhi organized a march of over 6,000 Indian workers from the Natal mining area into the Transvaal, although crossing into the Transvaal without a permit was not allowed by law. Gandhi and many other Indians were imprisoned. The 'Satyagrahis' were beaten and flogged to force them to go back to work, but without success. The authorities could not make them return to work. Gandhi had aroused in them the spirit of quiet, dignified resistance.

However, the Honorable Supreme Court of the Cape gave a verdict on the marriage of the Hindus, Parsis and Muslims and declared that these marriages were illegal, as it was not done as per their law. Even the Government of there strongly supported the verdict. Under these unavoidable circumstances, Gandhiji once again launched the Satyagraha movement against the verdict of the court. The Indian settlers in South Africa at once responded to the call of Gandhiji to protect their rights and privileges and took part in the Satyagraha movement organized by Gandhiji. The followers of

Gandhiji moved with barefoot from Transvaal to violate the ordinances of the Government. As a result, they were arrested. In fact, it was declared on the part of the Government that nobody was allowed to enter there without their proper identification card. Therefore, the followers of Gandhiji in South Africa took part in the Satyagraha movement on foot. They carried only one woolen swal and own dress from themselves. They determined to protect their self-respect under any circumstances. Therefore, they prepared themselves for the sake of the movement. They moved on bare foot from Newcastle to Transvaal. The world intelligentsia strongly supported their movement that ultimately boosted up their movement at a large. As a result, Gandhiji was arrested on 11 November 1913 for nine months. That is why, Gandhiji firmly determined to propagate extensively the aims and objective of the Satyagraha movement on 1 January 1914. However, the Government formed a Commission of some anti-Indian persons to solve this problem. The followers of Gandhiji in South Africa boycotted this Commission, as there was not a single member taken from them. In spite of that the demands of the Indian settlers in South Africa were recognized and they ultimately succeeded in achieving their civil rights and privileges. Soon the movement of passive resistance, or Satyagraha, spread all through Natal and Transvaal. The Government did not know what to do, because none yielded to their cruel treatment. In December 1913, Gandhi was released, but he would not give up the struggle. Gandhi had been active in South Africa for twenty-one years and had contributed much to the welfare of the Indians of South Africa. Gandhi now felt that his mission in South Africa was over, and he wanted to return to India. However, Gandhiji came back India on 19 December 1914 along with his wife Kasturba.

4.8. Rise of Gandhi's Leadership in India

After long 12 years, Gandhiji ultimately came back India. A great reception awaited him in Bombay. Many national level leaders gave him welcome at that time. He went to Rajkot and then Porbandar to meet his relatives. His traveling experiences in different parts of India and his contact with the common masses helped him to understand the-then socio-political conditions of India. On realizing the gravity of its importance, he made a plan of his works in India. The news of his achievements in South Africa had already been spread to India, which helped him very much in this

connection to fulfill his cherished dream. In only a few years, during the First World War, he became a leading figure in the Indian National Congress. Through the interwar period, he initiated a series of non-violent campaigns against the British authorities. At the same time he made strong efforts to unite the Indian Hindus, Muslims and Christians, and struggled for the emancipation of the 'untouchables' in Hindu society. While many of his fellow Indian nationalists preferred the use of non-violent methods against the British primarily for tactical reasons, Gandhi's non-violence was a matter of principle. His firmness on that point made people respect him regardless of their attitude towards Indian nationalism or religion. Even the British judges who sentenced him to imprisonment recognized Gandhiji as an exceptional personality.

Gandhiji established an 'Ashram' in a small Cochrar village of Amedabad on 25 May 1915 to fulfill the needs of a Satyagraha centre in India. He named this new institution as 'Satyagraha Ashram'. However, this ashram was shifted later to the bank of the river Sabarmoti and it became a first Satyagraha centre in India. Gandhi's constructive work began with the foundation of this Ashram. He did 'not lay so many stores by agitation as by working for the moral, material and economic regeneration of his country-men'. All who lived there wore a simple uniform style of clothing. They took their food together in a common kitchen and strove to live as one family. He noticed a 'Charka'³⁹ first time in his Ashram to a Gujarati woman. Inspired by her active devotion in it, Gandhiji started to woven khadi garments with the help of Charka, which stirred the mind and life of him at a large. In fact, Charka became a part of the mission of his life and he tried his level best to do the best job by Charka for the common people. But the Orthodox Hindus became very angry with Gandhiji when he provided shelter to an untouchable family⁴⁰ in this Ashram. He even did not agree to quit them from his Ashram in spite of their opposition. Under this unavoidable situation, the Orthodox Hindus stopped their financial support to run the Ashram. Naturally, the economic condition of the Ashram worsened rapidly day by day. Failing to recover this condition, Gandhiji decided to close this Ashram. Under this turmoil condition, an unknown person extended his helping hand to recover the economic condition of this Ashram by donating of Rs. 13000/, which bounded Gandhiji to alter his decision. Gandhi's constructive work began with the foundation of this Ashram. Gokhale, the political guru and closest ally of Gandhiji died in

February 1915. However, Gandhiji did not take part in the Servants of India Society, which his guru had founded in 1905 with a motto of educating the backward classes and organizing political works due to political opposition. Gandhiji spent the year of 1915 and much of 1916 by traveling different places of India in order to get to know the socio-political condition of his country and to make himself known to his fellow citizens.

However, Gandhiji got opportunity to come in close contact with the common masses of India through the three regional movements of Champaran (in North Bihar), Kaira (in Gujarat) and Ahmedabad. In Champaran, Gandhiji dealt with the problems of peasants against property owners, in Kaira that of farmers against revenue-officials and in Ahmedabad that of mill-workers against mill-owners. The Satyagraha movement started under his leadership against the Government in every case. But the achievements of his South African Satyagraha movement had already been stirred the mind set up of the Indian people which helped him very much in this connection to fulfill his cherish dream. It is very much important to note here that the South-African Satyagraha movement built up his faith in the capacity of the Indian peoples to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moved them. He adopted the policy of Ahimsa and Satyagraha to combat the mighty influence of British imperialism in India. He implemented the blueprint of his Satyagraha and Ahimsa movements of South Africa in Indian politics. His role against injustice, exploitation, disparity and deprivation attracted the common people at a large scale. They were very much spellbound by the name of Gandhiji. They treated him as their saviour. Under this situation, Gandhian charisma rapidly increased among the toiling masses in India. However, Gandhiji completely exploited this situation for his political purpose. He noted clearly that his passion was confined for the service of the suppressed classes, as God would be tracing out more often in the lowliest. That is why; he would not render this service without entering into politics. His activities in South Africa transformed him from a shy and youthful pleader with no experience of public life into a mature idealist and leader. He realized the gravity of the Hindu Muslim co-operation and its unity and the curse of untouchability in the socio-political mobility in the Indian society.

4.8.1. Gandhi's participation in the Champaran Satyagraha Movement (1917)

Champaran, the land of king Janaka, situated besides Nepal and the Himalayas. The British planters dominated the arable land of it and imposed there a complete feudal system for their stake. Under this mind set up of the British planters, Champaran was totally brought under their controlled. They did not think at all for the betterment of toiling masses. Besides, the impact of the First World War greatly affected the day-to-day life of the peasants. Every thing was going beyond their capacity to purchase the essentials of life. The peasants of Champaran were forced to do indigo-cultivation of 3/20 parts of their lands and hand over the indigo harvest to the British planters as a part of the rent as per the provisions of the 'tinkathia' system. In fact, indigo plantation was no longer profitable as before due to the discovery of artificial dye that had already been capturing the market. However, the Sahib indigo planters forcefully imposed unequal contracts as well as dictated extra taxes upon the ill-fated peasants instead of stopping the indigo-cultivation. Naturally, they were very much angry at this system. It stirred the mind of the peasants to raise their voice against the extra burdens imposed upon them by the British indigo planters. The dormant unrest of the peasants became explosive in the course of time. Rajkumar Shukla, a local leader of Champaran, came forward to fight against these injustices. However, he ultimately went to Gandhiji for the same. In response to the invitation of Rajkumar Shukla, Gandhiji entered into Champaran to raise voice against these injustices. Gandhiji ultimately delivered a speech on 9 February 1917 in the 'Imperial Citizenship Association' on serfdom. He took part in the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Calcutta on 9 April 1917. At the same time, he met with the Commissioner on those issues and informed the head of the Indigo Planters Association and the Commissioner of Champaran that he took decision to investigate the grievances of the sharecroppers. However, the Commissioner called Gandhiji, bullied him, and ultimately advised him to leave Champaran immediately. But Gandhiji in his self centered style violated the instruction of the Commissioner and came close contact with the ill fated peasants of Champaran and met with the 'tenant' of different parties on 19 April 1917. With the passive resistance, Gandhi started a great agitation on those issues. He went to Bombay and consulted all the Indian leaders there. They fixed May 31, 1917, as the last date for the abolition of indentured

labour. He then traveled throughout the country to get support for this view. Meetings were held in all-important places. Everywhere there was a great response. As a result of the agitation, the Government announced that the system of indentured labour would be stopped before July 31, 1917. In fact, the presence of Gandhiji itself an encouraging force for the toiling masses. Naturally, the crowds became unmanageable under this situation. This was his first act of civil disobedience against the British Government at Champaran in India. Under this political environment, Champaran was ripe for agitation. Gandhiji made direct contact with ordinary people through the traveling in different parts of rural areas in Champaran. He talked about the injustice imposed upon them by the Planters in the language that they understood. The so-called leaders of the Congress had never practiced the novelty of his political strategy and technique ever before. This was the first time the peasants were brought down into political agitation under the novel policy of Gandhiji in Champaran. The leading papers of Bombay Presidency and Bengal published the factors of grievances of the peasants against the Government's policy. Gandhiji's magnetic personality favoured the peasants cause that compelled the Government to appoint an Enquiry Committee (June 1917) and Gandhiji was one of the member of this Committee. As a result of it, 'tinkathia' system was withdrawn, burden of taxes were reduced up to 20-26% and ultimately the Sahib indigo plantation were forced to leave that district. However, Gandhiji succeeded in raising the question of the Champaran peasants at the national level. They did not account the role of Gandhiji. To them, the presence of him was everything. They treated his appearance before them as the emergence of God itself. Naturally, Gandhiji earned name and fame as a versatile personality by the Champaran movement. He established his national position into the mind set up of the toiling masses in India. The ignorant lower classes as well as many educated fellows ultimately became his disciple in the socio-political arena of India. This campaign gave him 'an all-India public reputation.' Apart from this he first time took initiative to establish a school at the village of Betiar on 13 November 1917 and second time founded a school to a land of a temple donated by a saint on 20 November 1917. The motto of him behind these was to bring the villagers under the purview of education.

4.8.2. Gandhi's participation in the Kaira Satyagraha Movement (1917- 1918)

Kaira (Kheda) was a district in Gujarat in the Bombay Presidency. It was an agricultural area with smallholdings. The peasants of Kaira (Kheda) demanded immediate relief from the land-revenue and ill-fated conditions that caused out of the wartime conditions, natural calamity, heavy rains etc. They became completely frustrated and devastated after 1899 due to the repeated occurrences of natural calamities and heavy rains that damaged huge crops during the season of 1917-1918. Besides, the impact of the World War greatly affected day-to-day conditions of the peasants. Under these unavoidable conditions, Gandhiji came forward to save the life of the peasants. He played a vital role as a President of the Gujarat Association. However, his policy of prayer and petition ultimately became failure and it did not bind the Government to consider their demands. He asked the peasants to boycott taxation. Gandhiji along with Vallabhbhai Patel, Mahadev Desai, etc. went to the rural villages and inspired the Satyagrahis to continue their non-violent resistance. Under this situation, the Colonial Government announced that the land-revenue taxation was withdrawn only from the poor peasants. They were relieved from all sorts of burdens. Naturally, Gandhiji withdrew his Satyagraha movement. Judith Brown noted clearly that 'in Kaira (Kheda) it led neither to an independent enquiry nor to the suspension of revenue he had first demanded'. But Gandhiji had also created a fresh glamour to the public image for himself in the Kaira incident.

4.8.3. Gandhi's participation in the Amedabad Satyagraha Movement (1918)

The conditions of the Amedabad mill workers were greatly affected by the policy of the mill-owners, the impact of the World War and so on. Gandhiji supported the demands of the mill-workers for 50% wages. He did not like the withdrawal of extra benefits (bonus) given to the mill workers for the fear of plague in 1917. Therefore, he directed a Satyagraha campaign against the mill-owners of Amedabad, not Government officials (February-August, 1918). Gandhiji extended his helping hand towards the movement of the Amedabad mill workers. Their main demand was to increase 50% remuneration of the works. To fulfill their demands, Gandhiji played a

vital role in this connection. However, he failed to make a negotiation with the mill-owners. That is why, Gandhiji declared his intention of fasting until a settlement was made. As a result, he launched a hunger strike in this connection. It was the first time hunger strike based on the principle of Satyagraha in the life of Gandhiji in India to compel the mill-owners to settle down the industrial disputes by peaceful arbitration. Naturally, they came forward to make a settlement that 'saved face for both parties'. But the motto of Gandhiji behind it was to win over the opponent. As a result, the mill-owners agreed to increase 35% wages for the mill-workers and ultimately Gandhiji withdrew hunger strike in this perspective.

Gandhiji dealt with the peasants' problems of Champaran, Kaira (Kheda) and the workers of Ahmedabad. The first two movements were basically anti-government whereas the mill-workers movement were not anti-government but against the mill-owners of Ahmedabad. Both the first two cases, he adopted the strategy of Non-violent and Satyagraha. But he first time called 'hunger strike' on 15 March 1918 against the policy of the mill-owners of Ahmedabad. However, it was noted by a scholar that the ill-fated workers of Ahmedabad became frustrated for the dealings of Gandhiji with the mill-owners as he took part in their different occasions. Naturally, the workers had no other alternative without joining their duties. Even they did not like the relation of Gandhiji with the capitalist classes. Realizing the gravity of this situation, he launched hunger strike to motivate them. However, the Marxist scholars pointed out that Gandhiji did not believe in the theory of class struggle between the owners and the workers. To him, 'the relation is to be made between them by the silken thread of love'. However, the movements of Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad were more or less partially successful and magic of the name of Gandhiji stirred the mind of the nation. His strategy attracted the Indian masses, irrespective of their caste, class, creed, religion and sex. The emerging political leaders of India got inspiration from the activities of Gandhiji and they traced out fighting leadership qualities in him.

4.8.4. "Jallianwalla Bag Massacre" (1919) and Gandhi's Response

In the meantime, the political environment of India was clouded by the publication of the Rowlatt Committee's Report in January 1919 as because it was completely anti-

Indian. That is why; the political agitation against this report was spread more or less throughout India. But the vacuum in Congress leadership at that very moment due to different reasons provided Gandhiji an opportunity to emerge as a leader to fill up this gap. The charisma of the name of Gandhiji played a vital role in this connection. Besides, the old important leaders of the Congress had already cut themselves off completely from the Congress due to various reasons. Under this condition, Gandhiji came forward to tackle the political situation of India. He played a vital role for the transformation of the Congress into a new body, with a new ideology and a new strategy to achieve his goal. His political importance was recognized for the first time in the Congress session of December 1918. His protest against the Rowlatt Committee's Report took the form of a Satyagraha movement in April 1919. He first conceived the idea of an all-India strike as the beginning of the Satyagraha movement. The leaders at once took up the suggestion and gave much publicity to the forthcoming strike. The date was fixed for April 6, 1919. The people had received only short notice for the strike, but it turned out to be most successful. That was the first great awakening of India in her struggle towards independence from the British. In Bombay, the strike was a great success. Not a wheel turned in any factory. Not a shop was kept open. All over India, the strike was observed. Gandhi had asked the people repeatedly to be peaceful and not to be provoked to violence by the Government's actions. In spite of this, violence broke out in many places. There were disturbances in Ahmedabad and in Punjab, so he decided to go to these places to promote a non-violence system. In Punjab, the situation was very critical. It was true that there were disturbances on the part of the people, but the measures adopted by the Government to check the disturbances were too severe. The leaders were trying to keep the people peaceful, but the stern measures of repression taken by the authorities had few parallel in history. It was announced that a meeting was to be held in a garden called Jallianwala Bag, to make a protest against the Government's actions. General Dyer took no measures to prevent the meeting. He reached the place soon after the meeting began and he took with him armored cars, and troops. Without giving any warning he ordered, 'Fire until the ammunition is exhausted'. The garden was surrounded by walls and buildings and had only one exit. At the first shot, the exit was jammed and there was no hope of escape for the crowd. There were between six and ten thousand people there. The soldiers fired over sixteen hundred rounds into the unarmed mass of people. Once a garden, it was now a scene of merciless

massacre. Hundreds of men, women, and children were butchered. Leaving the wounded and dying on the ground, the troops marched away. The words 'Jallianwala Bag' became a synonym of massacre. But it would be noted here that the Provincial Government treated this as a 'rebellion' and suppressed it by 'such measures as no civilized Government in modern times had ever been known to take against its own subjects' As a result, Rabindranath Tagore relinquished the title of 'Kinghood' given him by the British Government, to give voice to the protest against this dark anguish of terror. Sir Sankaran Nair, a former Congress President resigned his Membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council in July 1919 as a protest against the continuance of martial law for an unnecessarily long period. Naturally, Gandhi's influence on the Indian people was steadily growing. The old leaders, many of them with liberal policies, were vanishing from Indian politics. By the close of 1920, Gandhi was the undisputed leader and head of the Indian National Congress. In fact, the Rowlatt Satyagraha movement of 1919 accelerated the process of Gandhian politics in all over India. To Rabindra Kumar, 'The Rowlatt Satyagraha rested upon a moral instead of an economic grievance'. He ultimately became a chief architect of Indian freedom movement from 1919-1947. Naturally, Gandhiji became the centre point of the national movement of India that was organized in different phases during this period.

4.8.5. Khilafat Movement (1918-1923) and Gandhiji

Gandhiji realized the importance of the Hindu Muslim unity in the-then socio-political conditions in colonial India. To him, 'Co-operation between the two (i.e. Hindus and Muslims) is an indispensable condition of the salvation of India.' He also noted clearly in the 'Hind Swaraj' that 'The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest.' But he mixed politics with religion for the first time in the context of the Khilafat issue of the Muslims in India. His main object was to utilize the Muslim Strength for the purpose of the freedom movement. That is why; he was trying to devote his life to establish permanent unity between Hindus and Mohammedans and Satyagraha. Gandhiji pointed out in the Young India on this perspective that 'I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow Indians. If I deem the Mohammedan to be my brother it is my

duty to help him in his hour of peril'⁴¹. Even he promised the Muslim leaders that the Hindus would support their Khilafat cause. Naturally, they stopped the cow killing to strengthen reciprocal relations with the Hindus. Therefore, Gandhiji proposed to call a strike by observing the 'Khilafat Day'. However, their initiative did not inspire all. The main demands of the followers of the Khilafat movement were as follows;

1. *To keep intact the geographical boundary of the Khalifa.*
2. *To establish His supremacy over Arab, Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia.*
3. *To prohibit foreign interfere into the holy place of Macca and Medina of the Musalmans.*

Gandhiji supported all these demands of the Muslims. The Central Khilafat Committee arranged to send a group representative to submit a memorandum with these demands to the baro-lords and they clearly stated that they would launch a non-cooperation movement against them on 1 August if he did not accept these demands. Naturally, they had to start this movement after utter despair. It was decided that the movement would be organized under different four phases; namely, the honour and title conferred upon them by the British Government be discarded, resignation from the post of military and other government service, boycott of taxes and resignation from the Council and boycott the election. However, Nehru, Chitranjan Das etc. opposed the last two points. Lajpat Rai supported Gandhiji. However, the utility of this movement was expired due to the abolition of the post of Khalifa and Kamal Pasa formed the government in Turkey and declared Turkey as a secular state in 1922. However, confusion on the issue of Satyagraha was observed between the two groups. But the importance of the Khilafat movement cannot be ignored as because this movement some how brought the two distinct communities very close on that issue that created a nationalist spirit in the independent movement. Judith Brown highlighted it very clearly that 'Tension between Gandhi's ideal of Satyagraha and the Khilafat leaders' adopted of it as a political technique remained a constant feature of the Khilafat movement as long as the Muslims needed Gandhiji as a guarantee of Hindu support'⁴². After the Rowlatt Satyagraha Gandhi's standing in Congress had risen considerably, but the leadership of Khilafat agitation gave him real power among Hindu and Muslim politicians, enabling him to exert leverage on both because he was the guarantor of the hopes and fears of both. But Judith Brown noted that the mechanism by which Gandhiji had gathered widespread Muslim support was also a

political boomerang. But it cannot be denied that the spirit of the Khilafat movement created an atmosphere for the quick emergence of Gandhiji as a national leader.

4.8.6. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922)

Gandhiji ultimately launched the Non-Cooperation movement against the British Government. The main objectives of this movement were intended to secure remedies for two wrongs:

Firstly, for the failure of the Indian and Imperial Governments in their duty towards Mussalmans of India on the Khilafat question;

Secondly, for getting justice against the Jallianwalla Bag Massacre for the guilty of the officers.

He was very much dissatisfied with the Hunter Commission's Report. General O Dyer got rid of from his 'Jallianwalla Bag murder case' by the Hunter Commission that disappointed Gandhiji at a large. Naturally, his hope regarding the British rule rested upon utter despair. That is why; Gandhiji became angry at their false statement and said that 'The present representatives of the Empire have become dishonest and unscrupulous. They have no real regard for the wishes of the people of India and they count Indian honour as of little consequence. I can no longer retain affection for a Government so evillymanned as it is now-a-days⁴³'. Therefore, his realization about the greatness of the British rule was gradually disappeared. He treated the British government after then as the 'Satanic Government'. Therefore, he pointed out that the traditional method of the Congress did not succeed to remove the injustice imposed upon the Indians by the Britishers. Realizing the gravity of the situation Gandhiji adopted and implemented a new policy, a new technique, a new strategy; i.e. Ahimsa and Satyagraha, to stir the very foundation of the British rule in India. He organized the Indian people irrespective of their different economical and social position to fight against the British Government under these two ideological viewpoints. He explained the situation in the Young India on 9 June 1920 and said that 'If the acts of the Punjab Government be an insufferable wrong ... it is clear that we must refuse to submit to this office violence. If we are worthy to call ourselves a nation, we must refuse to uphold the Government by withdrawing co-operation from it'⁴⁴. An absolute majority passed his proposal for the Non-Cooperation Movement in the Nagpur Annual

Session of the Congress in spite of the opposition of C.R.Das, Jinnah, and B.C.Pal etc. However, Gandhiji accepted their 'Swaraj' demand. In fact, he got opportunity to emerge as an undisputed leader of the Congress at that very juncture. The deteriorating position of Annie Basant, S.N.Banerjee etc. and the vacuum of the genuine leadership for the death of Gokhale, Mehate, Tilak etc. accelerated the process of emerging the Gandhian leadership in Indian politics. Therefore, it can be said that the hollowness of political leadership in the Indian Independence movement provided Gandhiji a chance to emerge himself as a national leader. Besides, the role of Gandhiji in South Africa for the civil rights movement, the charisma of the name of Gandhiji among the common masses in India and his participation in three different regional peasants and labours movements in India had already created a deep confidence into the minds of the Indian peoples that brought him into the limelight of national politics. In fact, an understanding was ultimately made between C.R.Das and him to start that movement against the British rule. The aim of this movement was to redress the Punjab incident, to solve the Khilafat problems and to establish 'Swaraj' within one year. However, none had defined the term Swaraj. Therefore, there was a great confusion regarding this term. To Gandhi, it would be achieved by the ideology of Ahimsa and Satyagraha and Non-Cooperation was the way to gain 'Swaraj'. That is why, Gandhiji noted some proposals to strengthen the Non-Cooperation movement; such as, surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies; refusal to attend official and non-official functions; gradual withdrawal of children from officially controlled schools and colleges; gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants; refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia; boycott of elections to the Legislative Councils by candidates and voters; boycott of foreign goods. National schools and colleges were to be established. Private arbitration courts were to be set up for the settlement of private disputes. His proposed constructive programmes were based on three principles; such as, promotion of Swedishi, particularly hand spinning and weaving; removal of untouchability among the Hindus; promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity. But many leaders did not support him in all cases. C.R.Das opposed the Council boycott policy of Gandhiji. Rabindranath, Asutosh, Lajpat etc. did not like his school, college-boycotting policy. Even Surendranath did not support the Non-Cooperation Movement. Only Nehru and Roma Rolla ultimately supported him. But the Non-

Cooperation had two dimensional importances, such as Boycott, Swadeshi and another was the Constructive Programmes'

Therefore, Congress gradually became a platform for the common people irrespective of their caste, class, creed, religion, sex, etc. and it completely transformed the class character under the leadership of Gandhiji. Its volunteers were extended more than one crore to strengthen the movement. The 'Tilak Swaraj Fund' was established to organize this movement at a large. In fact, the Non-Cooperation Movement was actually initiated by Gandhiji on 1 August 1920 on his own authority before the matter was placed a month later before the Calcutta Congress Session. He organized the Congress as the mouthpiece of the nation. Not only that but also he decided early in 1922 to launch a no-tax campaign at Bardoli in Gujarat and announced in a letter to the Viceroy that 'aggressive civil disobedience would be taken up only when the Government refuses to provide to the people of India'. However, the Chauri Chaura incident compelled him to call off the Non-Cooperation Movement in February 1922, he was arrested in March in 1922, and six years imprisonment was given to him. The Government adopted repressive measures to crush the Non-Cooperation Movement. However, it cannot be denied that the whole movement centred around one person and his removal from active leadership 'gave a death-blow to it, at least for time being'. His intension towards the social problems of untouchability was very good but he did not success to abolish it. His role to bring consciousness about the curse of untouchability was a matter praise worthy. He played a vital role to stir the very foundation of the British administration. In spite of that the British Government did not alter its decision. R.P.Dutt noted it from the Marxist point of view that 'The dominant leadership of the Congress associated with Gandhi called off the movement because they afraid of the awakening mass activity; and they were afraid of the mass activity because it was beginning to threaten those propertied class interests with which they themselves were still in fait closely linked. Not the question of 'violence' or 'non-violence', but the question of class interest in opposition to the mass movement, was the breaking point of the national struggle in 1922. This was the rock on which the movement broke. This was the real meaning of Non-Violence'⁴⁵. Many leaders blamed Gandhiji to call off the Non-Cooperation Movement from multi-dimensional angles. Even Nehru, Mahadev Desai, Subhas Ch. Bose did like the decision of Gandhiji in this perspective. However, Gandhiji explained the causes of it

that rested upon the theoretical (Moral) and practical values and its implications. Therefore, he did not support the violent role of the Chauri Chaura peasants. To him, ideology was above all. He told that ‘The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive policy may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that is religiously sound’⁴⁶. He also gave direction to his followers that ‘The patriotic spirit demands loyal and strict adherence to non-violence and truth. Those who do not believe in them should retire from the congress organization’⁴⁷. Gandhiji said about himself that ‘I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me’⁴⁸. He did not like violence. He had already postponed two times the Bardoli Satyagraha movement due to the unexpected occurrence of violence. Therefore, it cannot be pointed out that Gandhiji suddenly suspended the Non-Cooperation Movement. It was held completely under Chauri Chaura violence. It was very much difficult to imbibe the principle of Ahimsa and Satyagraha by his followers. They did not make out the gravity and reality of its importance. So more time was required to prepare them. However, Gandhiji launched this movement in hurry without thinking its pros and cons. The national importance of this movement cannot be ignored. Its multidimensional character boosted up different regional factors that hastened the motion and strength of the movement. The Non-Cooperation Movement was really the first national movement in all over India organized by Gandhiji. Lala Lajpat Rai took the leading role in Punjab for the class boycott of the students in January 1921. U.P. became the centre of the Non-Cooperation movement. The impact of it in all over India like Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Gujarat, etc. stirred the very foundation of the British rule. Judith Brown pointed out that ‘As non-cooperation penetrated the localities the clash of interests particularly of caste and community was sharpened rather than softened by Gandhi’s tactics’⁴⁹.

4.8.7. Gandhi’s Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement

In 1928, peasants in Bardoli, Gujarat were agitated by grievances and Gandhi advised them to resort to Satyagraha and the non-payment of taxes. A new determination, to force the Government to act, filled the minds of the people. Jawaharlal Nehru was elected President of the Congress at the insistence of Gandhi. India now demanded full independence. The whole country was excited. Everyone waited for the go-ahead

from Gandhi. After two months of suspense, the great leader announced a Salt Satyagraha. The salt tax was to be attacked and the salt laws were to be broken. On March 12, at 6:30 in the morning, thousands of people watched as Gandhi started from his ashram with seventy-eight volunteers on a march to Dandi, a village on the seacoast 241 miles away. For twenty-four days, the eyes of India and the world followed Gandhi as he marched towards the sea. The Government did not dare take the risk of arresting Gandhi. With each passing day, the campaign grew. Hundreds and thousands of people joined the procession. Men, women, and children lined the route, offering flowers and shouting slogans for the victory of the march. The march ended on April 5 at Dandi. Gandhi and his selected followers went to the seashore and broke the salt law by picking up salt left on the shore by the sea. Gandhi then gave a signal to all Indians to manufacture salt illegally. He wanted the people to break the salt law openly and to prepare themselves for non-violent resistance to police action. All over India people swarmed to the nearest seacoast to break the salt law. The Government waited for sometime before taking any action, and then the retaliation began. Two English officers, with pistols, accompanied by many Indian police officers armed with rifles, arrived at Gandhi's ashram in the middle of the night. They awakened Gandhi and arrested him. Gandhi's arrest had created a great sensation in India and abroad. Representatives were sent from all parts of the world to the British Prime Minister asking the Government to release Gandhi and make peace with India. The Government under pressure, at last released Gandhi. As soon as Gandhi was out of prison, he asked for an interview with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin. The interview was immediately given. Gandhi and Irwin met, but the two men seemed to have come from two different worlds. In 1931, Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed between the two. Gandhiji placed the demands of the Congress but rejected by the British Govt. Naturally, the Civil Disobedience movement was once again started by Gandhiji. According to Judith Brown, "The conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin pact probably marked the peak of Gandhi's political influence and prestige in India"⁵⁰. In 1932, the British Government proposed to introduce a separate electorate in the Indian Constitution not only for the Muslims but for the Untouchables as well. As a result, Gandhiji decided to fast unto death against this proposal of the British Government. On reaching an agreement, replacing the separate electorate, he broke his fast. On 11 February 1932, the first issue of Harijan was published. He decided to raise a fund for the welfare of the Harijans. Gandhiji settled in Sevagram in 1936 to

fulfill his cherished dream. He gave emphasis on 'Basic Education'. The British Government agreed to set all political prisoners free in return for the suspension of the civil disobedience movement. Furthermore, Gandhi was invited to attend the Round Table Conference in London as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. The conference was a disappointment to Gandhi and the nationalists, as it focused on the Indian princes and Indian minorities rather than the transfer of power. Furthermore, Lord Irwin's successor, Lord Willingdon, embarked on a new campaign of repression against the nationalists. Gandhi was again arrested, and the government attempted to destroy his influence by completely isolating him from his followers. This tactic was not successful. In 1932, through the campaigning of the Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar, the government granted untouchables separate electorates under the new constitution. In protest, Gandhi embarked on a six-day fast in September 1932, successfully forcing the government to adopt a more equitable arrangement via negotiations mediated by the Dalit cricketer turned political leader Palwankar Baloo. This was the start of a new campaign by Gandhi to improve the lives of the untouchables, whom he named Harijans, the children of God. In 1932, he established the 'All India Untouchability League' to reform the ill-fated conditions of the Untouchables. He profoundly believed in the Caste System. But he did not believe in untouchability. On May 8, 1933 Gandhi began a 21-day fast of self-purification to help the Harijan movement. In the summer of 1934, three unsuccessful attempts were made on his life.

4.8.8. Quit India Movement

In 1942, the British Government sent Cripps Mission to India with the new constitutional proposal. But this Mission could not satisfy Gandhiji and his Congress. In August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay, and was presided over by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Again, the demand to set up a provisional Government was made. The "Quit India" resolution was drawn up and passed by the meeting for presentation to the Government. Nehru moved the resolution and Sardar Patel seconded it. The resolution also announced the starting of a mass struggle on the widest possible scale. The Government did not wait for the mass movement to begin. Overnight Gandhi was arrested, and many other leaders in various parts of India. Gandhi was confined to the Aga Khan's palace in Poona. With the leaders in jail, India did not remain idle. The people took up "Do or die". There were mass

movements everywhere, great outbursts of violence throughout the country. People began to destroy government buildings and whatever else they considered symbols of British imperialism. All over India, there were strikes and disorder. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, attributed all this to Gandhi. Gandhi had incited violence, he claimed. In a long series of letters to Lord Linlithgow, Gandhi tried to persuade him to retract this charge against him. Failing in this, Gandhi decided to undertake a fast as "an appeal to the Highest Tribunal" (Geoffrey, 1980) against the unjust charges. Gandhi fasted for twenty-one days in February 1943. It was a great ordeal, but he survived. The demand for Indian independence had now grown into a worldwide question. Apart from India's own attitude, America and other countries pressed Britain to grant freedom to India. Two months later in May 1945, the Labor party came into power in Britain and Attlee became the Prime Minister. A few months later, the British Government announced that they expected to grant self-government to India as soon as her internal problems could be solved. This was a victory for India. It was a victory for non-violence. Britain, defeated by the peaceful revolution, could not hold onto India any longer. Britain agreed to a planned withdrawal from India, without bitterness and in friendship.

All through his life, Gandhi had worked for unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. But he had not had much success. There was a large section of nationalist Muslims in the Congress, but the heads of the Muslim league were drifting further and further away. Gandhi was not the man to give up hope, however, and he pursued his efforts to bring about a settlement. On the other hand, Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, was hostile to the idea of unity. He demanded a separate Muslim state before freedom was given to India. "We can settle the Indian problem in ten minutes if Mr. Gandhi agrees to the creation of Pakistan," said Jinnah. "Cut me in two," cried Gandhi, "but do not cut India in two" (Geoffrey, 1980). In February 1946, the British Government sent a Cabinet Mission to India. The task of the Cabinet Mission was to study the situation and suggest what should be done. After careful consideration, the Cabinet Mission issued a statement proposing the withdrawal of British authority from India. They wanted a united India. On June 3, 1947, Attlee, the British Prime Minister, announced the plan for partition. The Congress and the Muslim League accepted it. Thus on August 15, 1947, India's long struggle and

suffering for freedom was over. A new nation, although split in two, was born, i. e. India and Pakistan. Gandhiji did not like the partition of India

From the above discussions it can be pointed out that Gandhi rose to power as a national leader in the Indian politics. He returned to India in 1915 and gathered knowledge about the socio-political and economic environment of the country. Even he was involved in the peasant and labour movement in Amedabad, Gujarat and Bihar and ultimately he became president of the Indian National Congress in 1925. His first major clash with the British Government in India came in 1919 over the Rowlatt acts, and he then introduced the hartal, a strike during which the people devoted themselves to prayer and fasting. However, when his policies resulted in violence he abandoned the programmed of mass civil disobedience. For a period, Gandhiji withdrew from politics and travelled throughout India preaching the cardinal tenets of his doctrine, Hindu-Muslim unity, the abolition of untouchability, and the promotion of hand spinning. He adopted the peasant's homespun cotton dhoti and shawl, a gesture that won the people's hearts, and he became known as Mahatma (the great soul). During the struggle for independence, he was imprisoned many times and this, together with his use of the hunger strike, adversely affected his health. He vehemently opposed the concessions given to the Depressed Classes in the 'Communal Award' by the British Government. In 1934, he resigned his leadership of the Congress, completely involved in the Harijan movement for the sake of their humanity, and ultimately earned name and fame for their emancipation in the world. Although he had remained a powerful influence upon the common masses in India, yet he did not stop the trauma of partition in India. His ceaseless struggles against partition ultimately created an unmitigated evil, until he realized its inevitability. However, on Independence Day, 15 August 1947, he refused to celebrate and spent the day fasting and in prayer. He preserved in his work for unity and in 1948 in Delhi, he undertook a fast to the death for peace between the two warring communities. However, his pleadings for co-operation had aroused hostility amongst the militant section of the Hindus and Gandhiji was died on 30 January 1948 by the shot of Nathuram Godse.

4.9. The Socio-Educational and Political Background of Ambedkar

Ambedkar belonged to an Untouchable Mahar⁵¹ community. He was born in April 14, 1891 at Mhow, near Indore, in Madhya Pradesh. He had to struggle every moment of his life for existence and also against the so called Caste Institution and its impacts on the the-then socio-religious, cultural, political and economic environment in India. Therefore, it is very much interesting and surprising to note the historical facts and events that how did Ambedkar become the real pioneer of social justice to the Depressed Classes and the father of the Indian constitution. Ambedkar itself made history and changed the age-old traditional beliefs and socio-political conditions in India. Nobody could do ever before him. In fact, his ceaseless struggles and ardent efforts made Ambedkar the symbol of social justice in Indian politics. He started his socio-political career as a Dalit leader from zero. Therefore, it was not a very easy task at all to become a renowned Dalit leader in the Casteist Hindu society. The life of Ambedkar as an Untouchable was replete with various problems since his childhood that can be noted as follows:

4.9.1. Family Background

Ambedkar emerged from a Mahar family of Untouchable community. The name of his parents was Ramji Sakpal and Bhimabai. His grandfather was Maloji Sakpal who belonged to the Mahar community of Untouchables. The name of his ancestral village was Ambavade, a small town in the Ratnagiri district. But his mother Bhimabai came from an Untouchable Hindu family of Murabad in the Thana district of Bombay state. Her father and other six uncles were all Subhedar Majors in the Army. They belonged to the Kabir school of thought. In fact, the Mahars were the most robust, adaptable, intelligent, fighting, brave, virile and leading community among the other Untouchable communities in the so called Hindu society. According to some scholars, they were the original inhabitants of Maharashtra i.e., Mahar-Rashtra⁵². But the family of Ambedkar was the followers of the Kabir school of thought. They believed the ideas and thoughts of Kabir because the principle motto of it was to abolish the Caste rigidity and paved the way of worship to God irrespective of Caste, Class and creed. The following song was sung with their master as follows:

“Jat Pant Puchhena Koi,
Har Ko bhaje so harka hoi!”⁵³

Therefore, it can be said that Ambedkar was very much influenced under this circumstances. His father lived a very industrious and intensely religious life⁵⁴. Ramji Sakpal read and recited to his children the great national Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata the two unfailing sources of divine inspiration, the motive force, which had nurtured and moulded the lives of great men in India in every generation. He was not only interested in the spiritual development of his children but also cared for the worldly betterment of his sons. But Subedar Maloji, the father of Ambedkar realized the never ending importance of education. So he tried his level best as a teacher in an Army school to educate his sons. He became a headmaster in the military school and obtained the rank of Subhedar-Major in the second Grenadiers and designated as Subhedar Ramji. Apart from this, he was very much conscious about the social problems of his community. He fought for the unjust orders of the Govt. of India in 1892. The main target of it was to ban the recruitment of the Mahars in the Indian Army. So he asked Ranade to appeal the Govt. of India to withdraw the unjust orders. Therefore, the fighting attitude of Ramji Sakpal against injustice greatly influenced the life of Ambedkar.

4.9.2. Academic Environment

The struggle-full life of Ambedkar was itself an epoch-making instance to establish social justice in the Indian history. But it was not so easy at all for him to do that as an Untouchable. He had to face every moment Himalayan troubles in his academic life. His primary education was started at Dapoli at the age of five along with his elder brother. But his father Ramji Sakpal had already retired when Bhim was hardly two years old. So he left Dapoli and moved to Bombay and there he obtained a job in the military quarters at Satara. But Ambedkar lost his mother at the age of six years old and ultimately he was reared by his aunt Mirabai after the marriage of his two elder sisters' viz., Manjula and Tulsi. After completed primary education, he began high school education. But Ambedkar realized the hard reality about the stigma of Untouchability during his student life. They had shifted to Bombay for better

education where they lived in a small room in a Chawl called the Dabak Chawl at Lower Parel which was situated in the labour area with an environment of the underworld.

Subedar Ramji Sakpal made arrangement to admit his children into schools. But the authority of the school refused to admit the children of a Mahar. That is why; Subedar Ramji Sakpal left his native district of Ratnagiri and moved to Satara for the education of his children. He ultimately went to Bombay to settle down for the same. But he was then economically very weak to bear the expenditure of both of his sons. So he decided to afford educational support and facilities to Ambedkar, one of his sons. Realizing the importance of these unavoidable circumstances, Ambedkar became very much attentive in his studies. But it was also beyond the capacity of his father to continue the educational expenses of Bhim. Manjula and Tulsi, the two elder sisters of Ambedkar, gave money to continue his education, by pawing their ornaments⁵⁵, which were provided them by their father as marriage gifts. He redeemed them from his monthly pension of Rs. 50/. In fact, his main motto was to make Ambedkar a man of letters and light and Bhim was ultimately admitted into the Elphinstone High School. Bhim became serious and did hard working for the progress of his studies.

4.9.3. Conditions of Study-Cum-Living Room of Ambedkar

Realizing the hard reality of life, Bhim became serious of his studies at home. His father Ramji Sakpal did not make an arrangement of a tutor for him. But he always encouraged Bhim to be attentive to overcome the problems of his studies. But the conditions of his study-cum-living room were nothing but a picturesque of ceaseless struggles for existence of Ambedkar. There was no option for two men's sleeping at a time in that room. His father solved this problem by a rotation-wise sleeping arrangement between them. It was really an ever-first tragic event in the world history which was happened in the life of Ambedkar. His father regularly followed a method for the study of Bhim by sitting up all night until two in the morning and awakening Bhim for study and then go to bed for sleeping. This was the only way out done by his father to solve the sleeping problem between them which was also continued after his retirement.

In fact, the study-cum-sleeping room⁵⁶ of Ambedkar was full of domestic articles and utensils. The atmosphere of that room was smoky and unhygienic. It served the necessary purposes of their family, as like kitchen, a parlour, a lying-cum-study room, etc. All their required arrangements more or less were done within this one room. Apart from these, there was a store of firewood above head and also in the corner of that room. A fire place was in the other corner of that room. It was a irony of fate that a she-goat panted below his legs and near the head of Bhim lay a grindstone huddle into the wall. Bhim followed the instructions of his father and went to bed early and studied till early morning. He had to study regularly at night without a chimney of a flickering kerosene oil-lamp. He took bath in the morning if felt sleeping and then went to school in time. Under these unavoidable educational environments at home Ambedkar passed the Matriculation Examination in 1907 from Elphinstone High School. It was really a great achievement of Ambedkar as an Untouchable boy at that juncture. His success in the Matriculation Examination stirred the mind of his community. They made an arrangement of a meeting to honour Ambedkar. S.K.Bose, the-then well-known social reformer, presided the meeting. Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar, another well-known social reformer and a Marathi author was present there. He appreciated the success of Ambedkar and gave him a copy of his new book, life of Gautama Buddha and boosted up the mind of his father to take care and initiative for higher education.

4.9.4. Open-Shaded-Byculla Market Marriage Hall of Ambedka

Ambedkar had to marry after passing the Matriculation Examination as desired by his father. The Open-Shaded-Byculla Market of Bombay served as a marriage hall of Ambedkar. This place was not suitable for marriage ceremony at all. They had no other option due to their ill-fated socio-economic conditions at that very moment. Therefore, the Byculla Market was the only possible place for them to arrange for that occasion. But they could utilize this place at night only after the activities of the day's market. As a result of it, they did not get any chance to prepare this place as per the requirements of the marriage ceremony. Naturally, the bridegroom and their relatives lodged at night in one spacious corner of this market. But the other corner of this

market was managed for the bride and her relatives. The sitting places of both the parties were the stone-platforms of this market. The open shaded whole Byculla Market market was utilized as a 'marriage-hall'⁵⁷ for their different purposes. There were small gutters of dirty and water underneath their feet. Under these unavoidable difficulties and bad environment, Ambedkar had to marry.

4.9.5. Contributions of the Maharaja of Baroda

Ramji Sakpal always encouraged Ambedkar in education and made arrangement for him to get into admission in the Elphinestone College of Bombay after passing the Inter Arts Examination. So Ambedkar became serious in his studies in right earnest. But his father failed to provide necessary financial supports to Ambedkar at this very moment. Naturally the ardent desire of Ambedkar in education was going to be stopped under this acute problem. But Ramji Sakpal tried his level best to educate Ambedkar at any cost. His firm determination and the financial support and advice of Keluskar at this very juncture boosted up the mind of Ambedkar in education. So Ambedkar paid deep attention in studies to fulfill his cherished dreamt.

Keluskar (Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar) informed the Maharaja of Baroda about the ill-fated conditions of Ambedkar and reminded the commitment given by him for helping any worth Untouchable student in the prosecution of higher studies in the Town Hall Meeting of Bombay a few days before. As a result of it, Sayajirao Gaekwad agreed to fulfill his promise and granted a scholarship of Rs. 25/ per mensem to Ambedkar after satisfaction with his answers. Therefore, it can not be denied that without the active support and inspiration of Keluskar and the direct financial help of the Maharaja of Baroda, Ambedkar for higher studies could not success in his academic life. The Maharaja of Baroda appeared before him as a 'God Father'⁵⁸ in the life of Ambedkar. But the role of Keluskar can not be ignored in this perspective. He indirectly influenced him to attack the age-old tyranny and oppression of the Caste System. His role as a mediator in obtaining a scholarship for Ambedkar from the Maharaja of Baroda was highly noteworthy. Therefore, it can be said that Keluskar enlightened the path of Ambedkar and added ballast to his brains.

But Ambedkar was very much conscious about the insulting environment and pitiable sights of the down-troddens in the Hindu society. That is why; he made up his mind to prepare himself for the higher attainments. He got help from Prof. Muller of Elphinstone College in this context. So he started serious studies to passing the examination. As a result of it, he became a master of repository of knowledge with every possible missile by the reading of different books except the text books. The reading of different books was the source of the great joy of his life.

But his father Ramji Sakpal went to the Improvement Trust Chawl No. 1 in the meantime at Parel in Bombay. He got there two rooms on the second floor which was opposite to each other, one for household another for study-cum-bed room. But his father always watched Ambedkar and sat out the room when his son was busy in preparing to the forth coming examinations in the room. Ambedkar ultimately passed the B.A. Examination in 1912 and became a graduate. So he went to Gaekwar, the Maharaja of Baroda and thanked him with due honour. But the Maharaja of Baroda offered him a golden opportunity for his further studies in abroad. That is why, he asked Ambedkar whether he would agree or not to go overseas for further studies. Ambedkar agreed at once and intimated his willingness to him. As a result, necessary arrangements were made to send Ambedkar to the Columbia University of New York. But the Maharaja of Baroda also asked Ambedkar to join the profession of his forefathers during the months of waiting before sailing for America. In spite of his father's disapproval, Ambedkar ultimately joined to the post of a Lieutenant in the Baroda State Forces and acted there for about 15 days in January, 1913. He did not delay a moment after receiving the telegram of his father's illness and went to Bombay at once to look after his father. But the condition of his father became serious and ultimately passed away on 2nd February, 1913. Therefore, Ambedkar was very much shocked and puzzled by the death of his father. He got an opportunity at that very moment to move the University of Columbia for higher studies. He went there to join Columbia University and paid deep attention in his studies. As a result of it, he obtained the M.A. degree from the Columbia University for his thesis "Ancient Indian Commerce" in 1915.

Ambedkar always thought for the betterment of his communities along with the Depressed Sections of the so-called Hindu society. So he did hard working to fulfill

the cherished dream of his father. He delivered different speeches to raise the voice of the Dalits India against the inhuman mechanism of the Caste System. That is why; Ambedkar presented a paper on “Castes in India” before the Anthropology Seminar held at in May 1916. He obtained Ph.D. degree on the thesis of “National Dividend of India: A Historical and Analytical Study” which was later published under the title ‘The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India’ in June 1916. He also joined the London School of Economics and political Science and Greys Inn for the degree of M.Sc., D.Sc. and Bar at Law in October 1916. But he had to come back India on 21st August 1917 due to the expiry of the tenure of his scholarship without obtaining those degrees. Even the Maharaja of Baroda asked Ambedkar to return India to join the military service of his State. Naturally, Ambedkar joined as a Military Secretary to the State of the Maharaja of Baroda in September 1917. But he resigned very soon from that post due to two reasons, firstly for the misbehaviour of his sub-ordinates and secondly, the Maharaja failed to arrange a house for Ambedkar in Baroda. Ambedkar was not welcomed by his subordinates due to his lowborn strata in the Hindu society. So the Maharaja of Baroda failed to manage a place at that juncture inspite of his best efforts as Ambedkar belonged to the Mahar community of the Untouchables. Realizing the hatred of the Caste Hindus towards the Untouchables, Ambedkar made up his mind to establish himself against the age-old traditions of the Caste System.

That is why; Ambedkar sought for a job and ultimately an opportunity came to him to join as a Professor of Political Economy in the Sydenham College, Bombay in November 1918. But he went to London very soon to accomplish his incomplete studies in 5th July 1920 after resigning the post of Professorship. So he prepared himself very seriously to complete his research works. As a result of it, he obtained the M.SC. Degree from the University of London for the thesis of “Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India” in June 1921. He was called to the Bar in 1922. He was also awarded the degree of D.SC. by the University of London for the thesis of “The Problem of the Rupee” in March 1923. After equipping himself with the degrees of M.SC., D.SC. and Bar-at-Law, Ambedkar came back to India in 14th April 1923. After then he began to practice as a Barrister in India in June 1923.

4.9.6. The Curse of Untouchability and its impact in the Academic and Professional Life of Ambedkar

During the school days at Satara, Ambedkar had to face different types of inhuman behaviour from his classmates, friends, teachers, staff of the institution and the surroundings. He had no rights to take sit with his classmates as he belonged to the Mahar community of the Untouchables. So he had to carry a piece of gunny cloth regularly to sit on it in the corner of the class room. Even the school servants did not like Ambedkar due to his low born origin. So they always avoided him and did not touch him. Apart from these, he could not touch the school tap. So he could only quench his thirst if luckily the school peon was there at that very moment to open the tap otherwise not. Therefore, he gathered bitter experiences from the very childhood regarding the hard reality of the Untouchability. But he had nothing to do with this inhuman, superstitious and burning social problem at that very moment. As a result of it, Ambedkar made up his mind to fight to finish this problem.

4.9.7. Role of a Cartman towards Untouchable

Once Ambedkar planned to meet his father at Goregaon who worked there as a cashier. Therefore, he started journey in the summer along with his elder brother and a little nephew and arrived at Padali Railway Station. But his father did not come there to receive them due to some unavoidable circumstances. So they had to face problem to go upto Masur. Ambedkar requested the Station Master to manage a bullock cart for them to move Goregaon. At last, a caste Hindu cart man agreed to move Goregaon. But he ultimately made out that the well dressed boys were Untouchables who were sitting in his cart. That is why; the cartman⁵⁹ at once threw them on the road from his cart. He told that the Untouchable boys had destroyed the purity of his domestic animals and polluted the wooden cart. Therefore, they had compelled to pay double fare to the cart man. Therefore, they were forced to move on foot until midnight from the evening. So they became heavy thirsty in their footing journey but none came forward to give them drinking water on the way. But they were every time refused when they requested the people to give them drinking water. Therefore, the role of a cart man stirred up the mind of Ambedkar who decided to raise voice against this type of ill-treatment of a man towards a man in the name of God, Caste and Untouchability. The above noted role of the cart man left a bad

impression into the mind of Ambedkar. So Ambedkar was very much shocked by this inhuman behaviour of a man.

4.9.8. Attitude of Caste Hindus towards Thirsty Untouchables

The attitude of the Caste Hindus towards the thirsty Untouchables was very much barbaric and inhuman in nature. According to them, the Untouchables were impure and sinner. The shadow, touch and voice of them were identitycal as impure and untouchable. Therefore, they did not allow them to take pure drinking water from the public wells, ponds and other sources. Ambedkar gathered this type of bitter experiences during their journey to Goregaon. They realized the hard reality about the curse of untouchability at that very juncture. They became heavy thirsty after a prolonged journey till midnight from that very evening and could not eat their meals which were prepared for journey due to the want of drinking water. They asked the people to give them drinking water as they were thirsty and hungry. But none came forward to extent their helping hand to give them a drop of drinking water. Instead of giving them pure drinking water, they told them every time to take either filthy water or go away. As a result, they were forced to move with empty stomach and heavy thirst⁶⁰.

Apart from this, one day Ambedkar became mad with heavy thirst for water and was forced to take drinking water from a public water course. But the Caste Hindus suddenly noticed this scene and came forward at once to Ambedkar to know whether he was a Caste Hindu or not. Ambedkar boldly answered to him that he was an untouchable. So he was beaten at once and rebuked by them as because the use of common public water course was completely forbidden to the untouchables. In fact, Ambedkar became very much angry and surprised by the role of the so called Caste Hindus.

4.9.9. Barbar and Washer man's Attitude towards Ambedkar

Ambedkar was shocked by the role of them. One day he came to a barbar to cut his hair. But he refused to cut the hair of Ambedkar. The barbar said that if he cut the hair of Ambedkar the process of it would be defiled the purity of his razor and the touch of Untouchables would pollute his job and him. He said that "Even the buffalo-

shaving as a better and holier affair than tonsuring a human being who was his co-religionist and his country man”⁶¹. The washerman⁶² also refused to wash his dress due to avoid impurity. Therefore, the elder sisters of Ambedkar played a vital role to cut the hair of him and his brothers under this unavoidable social environment.

4.9.10. Teacher's attitude towards Ambedkar

Ambedkar always paid deep attention in the class and sincerely followed the advice and lectures of his teachers. He normally attended the school regularly and did not try to absent from the class. One day he went to school in the heavy rainy day without umbrella. Naturally, his dress was wet by raining. In spite of the heavy cold with rains, Ambedkar did not abstain from attending the school in that day. Pendse, a Brahmin class teacher looked at Ambedkar and asked his son to go home with Ambedkar to give Ambedkar necessary cloths to wear and to hang up his wet clothes to dry. So the son of the teacher became very happy over the success of getting an off day. But ‘his pleasure, however, soon rolled into tears as he was brought into the class and made to sit half-naked’.

Ambedkar was very much near and dear to a teacher whose surname was Ambedkar during the school days. He was the most obedient pupil to this teacher. In fact, this teacher was very much kind hearted to Ambedkar. He provided regularly a part of his meal during the recess to Ambedkar. But the meal was made of different items for different days as for example; boiled rice, bread, vegetables and etc. may be mention to understand the mentality of his teacher. Therefore the role of his teacher left a deep impression into the minds of Ambedkar. Besides, it can be noted very clearly that Ambedkar did not adopt the title of his father, i.e. ‘Sakpal’. He actually drew his surname ‘Ambavadekar’ from his native village ‘Ambavade’. Even the Maharashtrian surnames were naturally derived from the names of their ancestral villages. But his teacher changed the title of Ambedkar from ‘Ambavadekar’ to ‘Ambedkar’ in the school records according to his surname, Ambedkar’. Therefore it can be noted that this teacher boosted up the mind of Ambedkar in different ways whereas the other teachers did not touch his note books. Even they did not ask him any questions or instruct him to recite poems for the fear of being polluted. So he prepared himself with hard working and industrious labour for the betterment of his results.

Ambedkar could not drink water straight way from the tube well or other source of water during his school days as because he belonged to a Mahar community of Untouchables. So he had to face acute problems to drink water in the school until some one agreed to pour drinking water into his mouths. But the most of his class mates did not come forward to help him in this regard. Ambedkar could fulfill his heavy thirsty if any kind hearted person or classmates extended his helping hand to him. But he had to turn his mouth upwards for this. Therefore, Ambedkar lost his patience in studies. He tried to begin his studies once again under the guidance of his aunt with full attention to achieve his dreamt.

4.9.11. Black Board incident

The environment of the school in which Ambedkar studied was not free from Casteism and untouchability along with the-then prevailing prejudices and hatred. But the school was completely under the Government. Therefore, the environment of school itself became a symbolic reflection of insulting world. One day Ambedkar was asked in the class by a teacher to solve an example in the black board. But his friends and caste Hindu classmates made a heavy noise in the class and shouted loudly by saying that their Tiffin boxes which were full of food and put behind the black board would be polluted if Ambedkar would go to solve the example in the black board⁶³. Not only that but also, they hurled their Tiffin boxes so that Ambedkar would not reach there and touch the black board. Therefore, Ambedkar was asked by another teacher to discourse the previous instruction of his teacher under this unavoidable circumstances. In fact, this type of unhappy event happened during the school days of Ambedkar.

4.9.12. Ambedkar was prohibited to Study Sanskrit

Ambedkar was not allowed to take Sanskrit as a Second language during his high school days. So he had to take Persian language instead of it against the ardent desire of him. He belonged to the low born untouchable community of the so called Hindu society. In fact, the Sudras and the Untouchables had no rights to hear or read the Vedas as it was purely written in Sanskrit language. But Ambedkar ultimately began

to study Sanskrit partly by himself and sometimes with the help of some Pandits and consequently he established himself later on a man of letters in Sanskrit language.

4.9.13. Tiffin of Ambedkar left by Workman

Ambedkar used to take Tiffin some pieces of bread and vegetables as meals in the school to eat it in the Tiffin hour. One day Ambedkar noticed that the workman had left the meal of him in the school who worked in the fort area. Therefore, it had left a deep impression into his mind. But he did not react at all as he knew it very well about the ill-fated conditions of the labour classes of the mills. His constant touch with the labour life helped him to realize the ill-fated conditions of them which were full of hardships.

4.9.14. College Hotel keeper and Professional Staff did not give water to Ambedkar

Ambedkar had to face different types of problems during the college days. The case of the hotel keeper may be noted in this regard. He denied supplying water or tea to Ambedkar. He was an orthodox Brahmin. Therefore, he followed the caste rules of the-then society. That is why; he hated Ambedkar as he belonged to Mahar community. Therefore, it can be said that untouchability became the stigma of Hinduism. Ambedkar joined Sydenham College as a Professor of Political Economics and worked there for two years. He earned name and popularity among the students. But the social treatment remained unchanged. Some Gujarati Professors objected to his drinking water from the pot reserved for the professional staff. He was treated by his staff and illiterate peons as leper.⁶⁴ Even he had to suffer humiliation due to the stigma of his caste in the legal practice.

4.9.15. Experience in Baroda for Parsi incident

Ambedkar went to abroad for higher studies and stayed there several years. But he had to come back India very soon due to the completion of the tenure of his scholarship offered by the Maharaja of Baroda. So he went to Baroda to resume his duty. But he was not allotted a quarter or lodge on the part of the Government to stay there. That is why; he had to persuade a Parsi Inn keeper to give him boarding and

lodging facilities under the unavoidable situation and ultimately the Inn keeper agreed as there were no other boarders there at that time. But a tragic event was happened there after ten days when a group of Parsis came there with arms and lathis to threaten Ambedkar for defiling their hostel reserved for their community⁶⁵. As a result of it, Ambedkar had to leave this Inn by that very evening. Being confused after this incident Ambedkar asked to a Hindu and a Christian friend for shelter. But the Hindu friend answered him in a very straight way that 'if you come to my home my servants will go'⁶⁶. The Christian friend replied him that he had to consult with his wife. Realizing the importance of this environment Ambedkar ultimately came back promptly to Bombay.

4.9.16 Rise of Ambedkar's Political Leadership in India

Ambedkar became very much offended to the the-then socio-political and religious environment of the Hindu society under which he completed studies. After obtaining degree, he began practice as a lawyer in Bombay. He also joined as a professor for some times in the Governmental law college in Bombay and ultimately became a principal of that college. Naturally, he had to live one of the Bombay Development Department's Chawls at Parel for ten years. Therefore, he came to close connection to the problems of the Depressed Classes at this juncture and observed the ill-fated conditions of the workers of Bombay. He also noticed that the workers of Bombay were living there without sufficient facilitated amenities of life that shocked Ambedkar at a large. As the Bombay Development Department's Chawls at Parel were enjoying but the symbols of age-old exploitations of the workers of Bombay. Ambedkar got opportunity to acquire first hand knowledge of life among the workers of Bombay there. Even the workers of Bombay sought his advice and assistance. Many of them knew him personally. Naturally, a close association between Ambedkar and the workers of there was established which accelerated the confidence of many workers and Ambedkar got an opportunity to establish himself as a leader of the Depressed Classes.

Ambedkar introduced a paper namely, 'Mook Nayak', leader of the Dumb, on 31st January 1920 to raise the voice of the Depressed Classes against the ill-treatment, suppression, oppression, exploitations, untouchability and others which were imposed

upon them by the so called Caste Hindus in the name of God and it was entitled now as “Prabuddh Bharat” (Enlightened India). The role of ‘Bahiskrit Bharat’ (Excluded India), ‘Samata’ (Equality) and ‘Janata’ (People) during the colonial rule was very important in this regard. Realizing the importance of it, Ambedkar took initiative to strengthen their unity and consolidated their movement. He mainly demanded separate electorates and reserved seats in proportion to the untouchable’s population. His motto was to organize the untouchables under one banner. Therefore, he established the ‘Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha’⁶⁷ in Bombay on 20 July 1924. He presided at the Provincial Depressed Classes Conferences held at Nipani on 10 and 11 April 1925. On 4 January 1925, a hostel was inaugurated for the untouchable schoolchildren. Actually, the name of this organization kept on changing; it was also called ‘Equality League’ and ‘Depressed Classes Institute’ for some time. He started a paper known as “Bahishkrit Bharat” that voiced the grievances of the Depressed Classes. Gandhiji began a very successful Satyagraha movement in the Kolaba district where untouchables were denied access to a tank. He also founded the ‘Samata Sainik Dal’ (Social Equality Army) in 1926 with the aim of improving discipline and self-control amongst the students. Gandhiji stressed the need for organizing the Hindu society on the principle of human rights and equality for all. That is why; he was invited to Ahilya Ashram, Poona, where a big student’s conference was held to fulfill these objectives. The conference declared the Manusmriti, a gospel of physical and mental serfdom of the Sudras according to the decision of this organization⁶⁸. Ambedkar prepared the ground work in this way to launch a mass movement against the caste system, untouchability, religious dogmas and others which divided man from man and compelled them to remain in a dangerous position since the long past. As a Mahar untouchable, Ambedkar had to face the hard reality of life about the touch, voice and shadow of the untouchables. That is why; he raised the voice of the Depressed Classes against the inhuman activities of the caste Hindus towards those problems in different movements such as Temple Entry Movement, Chowdar Tank Movement and others. The main motto of these movements were to established the civil rights and privileges of the Untouchables so that they can live in the Hindu society with due respect, self-reliant, self consciousness with pride and dignity along with other communities of the Hindu society.

Realizing the age-old sentiments of the caste Hindus towards the monopoly rights and undue privileges of them in the context of society, polity, economy, religion, culture and traditional heritage, Ambedkar very sincerely organized the followers of him and instructed them to be united first before the beginning of any movements against them for their benefits. That is why; he made arrangements to prepare themselves in different ways for organizing mass demonstration with the help of the members of the Depressed Classes. As a result of it; Ambedkar launched the two historically marked and outstanding movements, viz.; Chowdar Tank Satyagraha movement in Mahad and Kalaram Temple Satyagraha movement in Nasik. The object of the first movement was to establish their rights to take water from a certain tank and the target of the second movement was to enter the most sacred temple of the Hindus in Nasik. But the caste Hindus did not agree. So they opposed these movements and took repressive measures against the Untouchables. They made barricade. But the Untouchables went there to take water from that tank. Naturally, the situation became worse. In fact, the caste Hindus used their force against the followers of the movement. As a result, the followers of Ambedkar were beaten and injured by them. Apart from this, the main object of them was to detain the followers of taking water from that tank. Realizing the importance of this situation Ambedkar took help of the police administration at that very juncture to overcome the overwhelming situation for the benefits of the Untouchables and they ultimately gained their point. Therefore, the success of the Chowdar Tank Satyagraha movement of Mahad in the district of Kolaba boosted up the mind and energy of the Untouchables to establish their civil rights and privileges in their individual as well as national life. So they were inspired by Ambedkar to lead the Kalaram Temple Satyagraha movement to establish their rights in that sacred temple as Hindus. But this movement was carried on more than five years. Naturally, they created obstructions to detain the pilgrims at the great annual festival (fair) to such an extent that the festival could not be held and they took bath at a ghat that until then was closed to them. In fact, they were arrested including a large number of women and they ultimately failed to obtain the entry rights in the holier temples of the Hindus. So the Kalaram Temple Satyagraha movement was called off. But the failure of this movement ultimately became the pillars of success in their future movements. Therefore, it can not be denied that Ambedkar declared the first war of independence of the down-trodden with a view to obtain the rights of drinking water from the 'Chowdar Tank'⁶⁹ on 19-20 March, 1927. He also founded

the Depressed Classes Education Society with a view to enlighten them. Apart from these, the main motto of the Kalaram Temple Satyagraha movement of Ambedkar was to establish the civil rights for entering the temple.

Ambedkar rose to power as a Dalit leader among the Depressed Sections of the Hindu society after ceaseless struggles and began to work for the benevolence of them. He played a vital role as an Untouchable leader in the Indian politics to establish social justice among them. He was nominated to the Bombay Legislature Council in 1927. He argued and submitted logistic proposals for the over all development of the labours, peasants and others during this time. He ultimately became the elected representative of the Scheduled Castes from Bombay to the Bombay legislative Assembly. Ambedkar strongly demanded the amendment of the Hereditary Offices Act, 1874 on 19 March 1828 because the so-called Hindus forcibly compelled the Mahars to work day and night in their service by this Act. But they gave a very small piece of land called Uatan Land or some coins or two annas etc. to the ill-fated poor Mahars. That is why; Ambedkar introduced the Bill with a motto to break the shackles of serfdom. However, the Muslim members opposed this Bill and ultimately Ambedkar failed to ban this age-old slavery system. He submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission relating to the safeguards and protection of the depressed classes on 29 May 1928. However, the 'Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha' was opposed to the principle of nomination for the representation of the depressed classes. But Ambedkar demanded protection through the following guarantees:

“(1) That the education of the depressed classes shall be recognized as the first change on the revenue of the province and that an equitable and just promotion of the total grant for education should be earmarked for the benefit of the depressed classes.

(2) That the right of the depressed classes to unrestricted recruitment in the army, navy and the police shall be recognized without any limitations as to cost.

(3) That for a period of 30 years the right of the depressed classes for priority in the matter of recruitments to all posts, gazetted as well as non-gazetted, in all civil services shall be recognized.

(4) That the right of the depressed classes to the appointment of a special inspector of police from amongst themselves for every District shall be recognized.

(5) That the right of the depressed classes to effective representation on the local Bodies shall be recognized by the Provincial Governments.

(6) That the right of the depressed classes to appeal to the Government of India, in case of violation of these rights by the Provincial Governments shall be recognized and the Government of India shall be given the powers to compel the Provincial Governments to conform to the law in the matter.”⁷⁰

Ambedkar delivered a speech as a president in the All-India Depressed Classes Congress held at Nagpur on 8 August, 1930 that “A Common Government is often the best instrument one can devise to mould a diverse people into a nation. . . Historically, as well as logically it seems to me not open to any one to urge that the diversity of conditions and people puts a bar in the way of India’s self-government. Indeed, if the ideal is that India should be a united nation, I venture to say, self-government would be the most potent instrument for the realization of that ideal”⁷¹. Ambedkar stressed on the necessity of the depressed classes’ entry in public services of the country. He strongly opposed the intension of the Simon Commission that had systematically under-evaluated the needs and claims of the depressed classes. He sailed for London as a leader of the Depressed Classes to participate in the First Round Table Conference. His efforts in the Round Table Conference were fruitful as the downtrodden leader to get political rights through the ‘Communal Award’. Ambedkar’s participation in the Round Table Conference played an important role in bringing him into the limelight as a leader of the untouchables of India. Even he critically analyzed the shortcomings of the British attitude towards the depressed classes. He launched a ceaseless struggle to establish the rights of equal citizenship with the other peoples of India. He demanded immediate abolition of untouchability and all other forms of discrimination and legal disability and disparity. Even Gandhiji supported the demand of Dominion status along with other nationalities. He demanded separate electorate for the untouchables but Gandhiji vehemently opposed it. He fought for legislation against social persecution. His proposal was to establish the right to adequate representation in legislature by election and not by nomination.

He signed a 'Minorities Pact'⁷² after mutual understanding and agreement through negotiation. But the most noteworthy event in his political career was the conflicted rivalry with Gandhiji. Ambedkar demanded certain political safeguards for the Depressed Classes whereas Gandhiji vehemently opposed that demands and fought against that provisions which were incorporated in the 'Communal Award'. Ambedkar criticized Gandhiji and its Congress, as they did not care for the untouchables. He also said that even they did not show a change of heart as far as the untouchables and the depressed classes were concerned. However, Ambedkar worked for the depressed classes in the Second Round Table Conference. Therefore, they were fully satisfied with his work. Meanwhile in India, Mr. Rajah disliked the 'Minority Pact'. Under this unavoidable situation, Ambedkar wrote a letter to M.G.A. Gvai in which he said, "I was shocked to find out that Mr. Rajah has changed his opinion and is now advocating joint electorates. I hope your Association will not follow him in this policy, which is suicidal in every way, but if it does then you must take the consequences of a permanent breach between us and a war among ourselves, which I am trying to avoid at any cost. So don't persist in it."⁷³ Therefore, Ambedkar decided to hold an All-India Depressed Classes Congress very soon to record the real opinion of the depressed classes on this issue. But Gandhiji vehemently opposed the separate electorate of the untouchables and advocated joint electorate system. Gandhiji did not like the separation of the untouchables from the mainstream of the Hindu society. He launched a 'historic fast' until death against those provisions of the 'Communal Awards' and its one of the main provisions of separate electorates. Under the brutal pressure and the activities of the Indian national Congress Ambedkar was very much worried on this point. He ultimately came forward to save the life of Gandhiji for the sake of humanity. As a result, the historic 'Poona Pact' was signed between Gandhiji and Ambedkar. This pact really deprived the toiling masses at a large. Some scholars pointed out that the 'Pact of Poona of 1932' was nothing but a political game to deprive the toiling India in the name of the united Hindus. It practically issued a death warrant to the Depressed Classes in socio-religious and politico-disguise in India in the name of their emancipation. Ambedkar wrote a letter to Gandhi that he wanted to meet him especially for the discussion about the panel system of Poona Pact. However, Gandhiji ultimately published his views on the benefits of the Panel system in the Poona Pact in Harijan. He said, "So far as I can see and so long as the system of reservation prevails, the panel system is the best adopted

for securing the selection only of those candidates who in the Harijan opinion are best fitted to serve this special interest, whereas I can see nothing but seeds of strife and bitterness in the alternative proposal”⁷⁴ But both Gandhiji and Ambedkar opposed the proposal of each other for the abolition of untouchability. They were fundamentally different in their respective approach to eradicate the problem of untouchability from the Hindu society. However, none can deny their prime contributions in removing the taboos and restraints to the depressed classes. Both of them dedicated their lives to the restoration of equality to the Avarna untouchable section of the Hindu society. But Gandhiji did not like the abolition of the caste system whereas Ambedkar fought for the permanent eradication of it. The Depressed Classes observed 19 March 1939 as their ‘Independence Day’. Ambedkar pointed out very clearly that “I do not agree with Mr. Gandhi and the Congress when they say that India is a nation. I do not agree either with the foreign Relation Committee of the Muslim League when they say that Hindus and Muslims could not be welded together into a nation”⁷⁵.

Apart from these, Ambedkar established the ‘Independent Labour Party’ (ILP) on August 1936 to raise the united voice of the labour to hasten the welfare of them. He organized and inspired the Depressed Sections very sincerely in the Province of Bombay and Central Provinces at the first elections under the new Act. However, the ILP of Ambedkar secured 11 of the 15 seats reserved for the “Scheduled Castes”. In fact; the caste Hindu candidates contested by their party ticket and secured only two seats not reserved for the Depressed Classes whereas the successful Depressed Class candidates were simply non-Congressmen and the followers of Ambedkar in the Central Provinces.

After being a national leader, Ambedkar went to Khandesh district as a member of a committee to investigate certain grievances of the Untouchables and he was welcomed at Chalisgaon by the local Mahars in 1929. But none was agreed to drive him due to his caste except an inexpert Mahar who had no knowledge to drive a Tonga at all. As a result, Ambedkar was seriously injured during his journey to Maharwada, the Mahar Quarters.

Besides; Ambedkar went to Daulatabad Fort along with his fellow workers in the Nizam’s Dominions while on a sight seeing tour. They took water from a tank to wash after arrival there. But a bad incident was happened at that time when they were

getting permission to go round, an old Mohammedan ran up and shouting loudly, "The Dheds (Untouchables) have polluted the tank". As a result, the situation became worse and exasperated by them. Ambedkar asked them very politely a question. "Is that what your religion teaches? Would you prevent an Untouchable from taking water from this tank if he became a Mohammedan?"⁷⁶ Naturally they kept themselves silence. But the travelers were allowed with an armed soldier to go round the Fort without polluting water any where else. Realizing the content of this fact, Ambedkar pointed out that "While Caste and Untouchability were of Hindu creation, Indian's Mohammedans, Parsis and Christians were not wholly free from Hindu inhibitions on the subject."⁷⁷ The movement of Ambedkar was based on the principle of freedom, equality and fraternity. He noted valuable companions in a world that denied none of its treasures to the outcaste among man - the Commonwealth of letters.

However, Ambedkar was appointed as a Labour Member to the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India in July 1942. He struggled for the benefits of the Depressed Classes. He made the Depressed Classes stand on the political evaluation of India clear. He demanded an equal place with Hindus and Muslims in the future constitution.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, Ambedkar submitted a memorandum before the Cabinet Mission on behalf of the Scheduled Castes Federation. Naturally, the Depressed Classes began their movement under the leadership of Ambedkar for their rights and privileges. They demanded a clear-cut clarification of their rights and representation in independent India. As a result, numerous Satyagraha movements were started in different parts of India. Poona, Kanpur, Lucknow and other many places became the centre of these movements. These movements started simultaneously. That is why; Ambedkar sailed for London in September 1946 to plead for Constitutional safeguards for the untouchables after withdrawal of the British rule from India. Ambedkar became an elected member in the Constitutional Assembly from Bengal in November 1946. He played a vital role to keep it up the patience and sacrificed personal and party interests' interest for peace, unity and tranquility in the country. However, he was very much disappointed by the role and activities of Gandhiji and the Congress that did not accelerated the emancipation

process of the untouchables and the age-old victims of the caste institution. That is why; Ambedkar re-opened the controversial topic of joint versus separate electorates once again on 16 July 1947. He was invited by Jawaharlal Nehru to join as First Law Minister of Independent India. Ambedkar thought that he could serve the interests of the Scheduled Castes better from within Government. That is why; he accepted the offer and began to work for the greater interest of the country. He became a Chairman of the Drafting Committee that was made by the Constituent Assembly on 29 August 1947. He introduced a Draft Constitution on 4 November 1948 in the Constituent Assembly. Therefore, the Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949. Dr. Rajendra Prasad pointed out that Ambedkar worked hard to prepare a draft Constitution for India inspite of his indifferent health condition. He devoted himself in preparing this Herculean task. He had not only justified selection but added luster to the work which he had done. His notable work was the preparation of the Hindu Code Bill⁷⁸ that was submitted to the Parliament in October 1948 and was introduced by him on 5 February 1951. He strongly defended this Bill in the Parliament on 20 September 1951. But he failed to pass this Bill due the lack of supporters of its members. Therefore, he devoted himself to the enlistment of the Depressed Classes. Apart from these, he delivered a speech on Marxism vs Buddhism in the World Buddhist Conference in Kathmandu in 1949 and ultimately he embraced Buddhism at Nagpur on 14 October 1956. However, the age of ceaseless struggle and tireless efforts in establishing the concept of 'Social Justice' among the people of India was ended with the death of Ambedkar in 1956.

4.10. Conclusion

The emergence Gandhiji as a national leader was an important fact in the Indian political arena. The socio-religious, educational, cultural and sound economic family background of Gandhiji accelerated the career building process of him in the Indian society. He was practically reared up since the beginning with adequate facilities that helped him very much to fulfill his cherish dream. He was a moral man of India. Everything was examined by him on the principles of truth, non-violence etc. He profoundly believed in the Caste system that created by the so-called intellectuals of the Later Vedic period to deny the human rights and privileges of the lower strata of the Hindu society. None but Gandhiji always tried to advocate the class interest of the

wealthy class. He never came forward spontaneously to save the civic rights of the downtrodden section in the Hindu society in his early life. His Harijan movement was practically the out come of the Poona Pact of 1932. It was nothing but a political requirement of his time, otherwise, Gandhiji and his Congress did not protect their class interests. That is why; it can be pointed out that Gandhiji was a champion of the haves and Ambedkar was the leader of the toiling masses in India. But Ambedkar emerged as a leader of the Dalit India from zero socio-political status and position of his family atmosphere. His position was poor of the poorest. However, his strong mental confidence and tireless efforts helped him much to built up his academic as well as political career at a large. Every moment of his life was full of woes and sorrows since his childhood. None but the King of Boroda came forward to help Ambedkar to complete his studies in abroad. The versatile personality of Ambedkar brought him in the lime light of Indian politics. He was solely not a politician in the true sense of the term. But the the-then socio-political factors bound him to raise voice against the socio-religious and political tyranny that doomed the daily life of the Depressed Classes and Untouchables in every sphere of their individual as well national life. He was a great emancipator of the toiling masses and women in India in the true sense of the terms. His poor family background, helplessness conditions in every walk of life made his iron backbone to build up him as a great champion of social justice in India. He was tortured and harassed by the so-called upper caste peoples in every moment of life. Therefore, it can be said that it was not so easy for Ambedkar to build up him as a leader of the downtrodden sections in India. The abolition of caste and untouchability, social justice, welfare measures of the labours, women emancipation etc. were the prime motto of his socio-political movement in India. But he did not compromise with anything except the life saving Pact of Poona with Gandhiji. He responded only to save the life of Gandhiji by signing this treaty at the call of great humanity. The issue of caste in colonial India created a turmoil condition in the Indian freedom movement. It gave birth to numerous psycho-political obstacles in establishing a unanimous mass movement in India against the British Imperialist Government. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar fought for establishing the concept of social justice among the peoples of India. But their approaches were quite different to each other especially in respect of caste and untouchability. Gandhian caste-thesis was very discouraging. But Ambedkar's anti-caste thesis was completely based on humanitarian approach. In comparison of both these thesis it can be said that

Gandhiji could not overcome the obstacles of his age in the sphere of caste system and untouchability whereas Ambedkar straightway struggled for the abolition of these two institutions. Gandhiji stressed on the concept of Truth, Satyagraha, Non-violence and others that depends upon moral force. Ambedkar believed in the concept of social democracy, political democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity, protection of human rights and its privileges, emancipation of women, slaves, so-called Sudras made by the Aryans and others. Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji did not believe in the liberty, equality and social liberty of the haves not, Indian Sudras and women of different Varnas. His most of the idealistic approaches were not based on materialistic point of view. Therefore, it could not work for the immediate benefit of the common people. His thoughts were based on moral forces that depend upon man to man and it could not implement as a matter of compulsory deed for each persons. His philosophical ideas and spiritual thoughts could not bring radical change into the mind set up of his followers. Naturally, the strategy of the national movement under the leadership of Gandhiji could not success at a large. But Ambedkar solely fought to establish the rights and privileges of the downtrodden sections of India. He raised the socio-religious and cultural obstacles before the British Government that related to the day to day life of the toiling masses in India in the context of the caste and untouchability and forced the British Government as well the Indian National Congress to consider the ill-fated conditions of them in the light of human rights protection movement. He strongly proved that caste system is it-self self-explanatory mechanical devices to exploit the toiling masses of India in the name of divine origin and God – the creator of the universe. Therefore, it can be said that both Gandhiji and Ambedkar – the two shining stars of India worked to fulfill the needs and demands of their class interests. Both of them dedicated their lifetime for the better of the Indian society as a whole. Gandhiji was treated as untouchable in South Africa. But he launched a direct purification movement for the betterment of the Indian untouchables in the later part of his life. Some scholars pointed out that Gandhiji did not come forward to uplift the untouchables if there was not a political compulsion. Even he discouraged them to launch direct Satyagraha movement against the caste Hindus in case of Chowdar Tank Satyagraha movement in Mahad and Kalaram Temple Satyagraha movement in Nasik.

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