PREFACE

Social transformation is a multifaceted process involving changes in all areas of human activity. There are multiple viewpoints regarding process of social transformation and it is this multiplicity that helps in a functional understanding of social transformation or change. The principal aspects of social transformation are, changes in all types of human relationships in which man enters into, such as social, political and economic. Politically, transformation involves equality, liberty, social justice and the rationalization of authority. At the economic level it includes the growth in the total economic activity and the output of the society with full employment, material prosperity, economic non-exploitation of man by man and a proper system of distribution which provides everyone the basic necessities of life. Socially, it includes a society free from all the social evils e.g. racial discrimination, caste system and untouchability. Thus, social transformation stands for that all people become increasingly aware of themselves as people and of their interests and claims in relation to other people.

The present study also intends to study the various changes for the betterment of the society that have taken place during the period of two great men of Indian history - Mahatma Gandhi and Bhim Rao Ambedkar. How the same context or the similar circumstances of Indian National Movement under which they facilitated social transformation could lead to different approaches adopted by them. What were the other factors that influenced their methods as well as their philosophies, as there are multiple factors and forces which operate at a given time and give rise to change in the society.

The study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the topic, Ambedkar and Gandhi’s biographical sketch describing their personal experience as well as other influences upon them that led to the development of their ideas, significance and objectives of the undertaken study, the review of the literature and the methodology used for
conducting the study. The second chapter deals with Gandhi and Ambedkar’s perspective on caste and untouchability. In this context the focus has been to study their perspective on the origin of the caste system, circumstances that led them to speak against the caste system and their efforts to uplift the depressed classes. The third chapter deals with Gandhi and Ambedkar’s perceptions about the role and position of women in society in the context of colonialism and ensuring independence and how far their efforts for the upliftment of women have been successful in the context of the contemporary Indian scenario. The fourth chapter deals with Gandhi and Ambedkar’s perception on polity. As polity is about power and people, and about how power should be used to make it legitimate and in the interest of the whole society, both Gandhi and Ambedkar have different perceptions about that. It is in this context that this chapter deals with the respective perceptions of these two thinkers regarding reconciliation between individual liberty, equality and social harmony. The fifth chapter deals with Gandhi and Ambedkar’s perspective on economic reforms. How Gandhi desired the economic transformation of society through truthful and non-violent means such as Swadeshi, self-sufficient village communities and trusteeship and Ambedkar stood for the progress economic transformation of society through land reforms, industrialization and state socialism.