CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER - I

A STUDY OF GANDHIJI THROUGH CONTROVERSIES

Introduction:

Gandhi is supposed to be the tallest of the leaders of 20th century. His was a multifaceted personality encompassing socio religious, educational, economic and political thought. He was a person who kept the highest standards in both private and public life. He was a great political strategist who tried to spiritualize politics. Gandhi was a mass leader to the core, whom even his passionate critics cannot afford to forget. A great believer in the twin principals of truth and non-violence, who tried for a change, which was hitherto unexperimented anywhere in the world affairs. Gandhi normally judged the theories by their practical implications, as such he necessarily believed in action. It is usually a man in action alone who faces criticisms and comments. As such, Gandhi’s six decades of public life in three continents that was spearheading various movements invited criticism. “Gandhi encouraged his critics to come out in opposition so that he could attempt to carry conviction to them or, alternatively, change his own stand.”1 He faced the storm right from the start of his career as a Satyagrahi against racism in South Africa and even more than half a century later, he continued to face the storm and the worst being his assassination itself.

Gandhi is also considered as the tallest of the mass communicators, both at private and public affairs. It is precisely because of his success as a communicator, he could command a nationwide following. Very few individuals in known history have been able to command obedience from people, so numerous and diverse in backgrounds over such a long period of time as Gandhi did.2 How could Gandhi command in his vast circle, so many great men, of course along with common people, so different in their views from one another, at
times holding conflicting views or dispositions? It is not only a question, which is being wondered at in India but in the Western world also.

With a constant rise in violent terrorist activities in India and world at large and also with the worsening of communal situation; there is a global nonviolent awakening. And this is due mainly to the Gandhian heritage and his legacy of nonviolence. Of late, there are very few countries in the world, where some or the other activity or movement in the memory of Gandhi is not being organized. Despite rooting himself strongly in Indian culture and ethos, Gandhi went on to say "I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people’s houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave".3 To a certain extent prior to and to a greater extent after our entry into 21st century, we have started to think and act in terms of globalization of all sorts. We seem to realize this century as a matter of computers, information technology, advertisements, consumer goods, terrorism, wars and what not. It is true that the latter half of last century and the beginning of this century includes all this. But is it all that we require? Are we not supposed to take our own tradition a little more seriously? It is our relation to the indigenous tradition, which will decide whether we shall become a people with dignity, self-confidence and self-respect. If we delink ourselves from our tradition, we shall be beggars, borrowers and interlopers as we have seen and continue to be.4 Gandhi is a person who serves as an effective link between tradition and modernity. One way of linking ourselves to our tradition and also relating to modernity is through the study of some thinkers of nineteenth and twentieth century. The present study, therefore, seeks to make a modest attempt in that direction.

Along with Gandhi, there were quite a few thinkers and activists in nineteenth and twentieth century who could critically consider both Indian and Western thought and took to socio-political action according to their defined goals. This tradition of thought was stared with Raja
Ram Mohan Roy, Swamy Dayanand Saraswati, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Tilak, Phule, Ranade, Gandhi, Nehru, P.C. Joshi, M.N. Roy, Ambedkar, Ram Manohar Lohia and a host of others. Of course most of them are remembered and honoured by their followers during their birth and death anniversaries. Very often many quote their ideas and their thought has been conveniently made use for meeting ones own purpose. All this is done may be with a desire to boost up one's regional, national, casteist, religious and many other efforts. In doing so we either accept or reject some thought and practice to suit our convenience or to boost up to the ego of our ideological commitment. In the process this amounts to making use of them and never do we sincerely try to understand them. In order to understand them in their inter-relationship with each other, one is not expected to begin an analysis of them, with an intention to either attack or justify them. The obsession with either defense or attack is believed to be a result of one's identification of an ideal as final and binding. This dogmatic tendency is likely to result in the loss of ones' capacity to investigate and understand. For example to many communists, Russia (eras while USSR) is the manifestation of progress and serves as their unquestioned ideal. Similarly, the capitalist minded ones idealize the progress in American Society. "Thus the use of critical faculties to see, to examine, and to understand degenerates into idealizing a thing when seen in relation to something one likes, or abusing it when seen in relation to something one dislikes". This study of ours intends to study Gandhi through controversies and we are interested to understand how Gandhi emerges out of such controversies. Therefore we are expected to guard ourselves against the dangers of either total justification or an attack of Gandhi and other controversialists. What has been sought here is to understand the controversies. Many staunch Gandhians adopted this approach as well. Referring to Gandhi-Tagore controversy Kakasaheb Kalekar wrote, '.... all those who could not understand the meaning of the controversy between two of
them felt bewildered and sided with either of them according to their predilections. But we, who understood both of them and claimed to be followers of both were deeply pained at the controversy, but at the same time welcome it as an element of great education for our people and our minds weighed the utterances of both and tried to find out where the exact truth lay.' The substance of his argument is, controversies are seemingly painful but never the less educative in the pursuit of truth.

Gandhi had many controversies with very many in the course of his public life. This is considered by some scholars in terms of controversy between tradition and modernity. This position in itself is once again debatable. Because, we should not take it to mean that Gandhi was necessarily traditional and all other controversialists were modern. Whatever that may be, for the time being and for the purpose of our study Gandhi and others have been treated as controversialists which many of them in fact were. Having treated all of them as controversialists, it is worth while to see how some dedicated Gandhians like Kakasaheb Kalekar reacted to this kind of treatment. Kalekar, who was associated with Tagore's Shantiniketan as a teacher, was an eyewitness to Gandhi-Tagore controversy. He said that it was always Tagore who initiated the controversy. 'There was no occasion' adds Kalekar, 'when Gandhi voiced his opposition to anything which Tagore said or did.' Further he contends that, 'Gandhi never claimed to be a controversialist. He contended himself with giving expression to his inmost feelings.' Gandhi may not have taken the lead but however he never failed to give a vent to his innermost thoughts during the controversies. In that sense he can be considered as a controversialist. The same could be said about some of his adversaries as well. It is not that they really intended to create controversies. But the controversies between them came to the fore during the course of their interaction rather automatically. It is precisely because, all the leaders considered in our study necessarily believed that the well-being or the progress of the country lay in different directions. As such the differences, which led to the controversies, are natural in any democratic structure to
which we have committed ourselves. If the differences block the channels of communication between individuals or groups no democratic system worth the name can survive. Gandhi's formula that difference of opinion is no bar to the union of hearts may help (Sic) us in avoiding permanent ruptures in the nation when its different sections are seeking fulfillment of their divergent interests.\(^\text{10}\) It is in the light of this understanding that Gandhi's experiments with human relationship have a far reaching significance for us today than ever before. It is exactly this aspect, which motivated the scheme of this inquiry.

All the thinkers and leaders considered in our study are patriots par excellence in their own ways. But however all of them cannot be the leaders of one thought and practice at the same time because most of them differed from one another in terms of fundamentals. They are treated as controversialists because they necessarily believed in debate and dialogue. The differences in their thoughts and practices are not all over. They have their followers either in terms of thought or practice or both. That is how the controversies continue to attract the public attention even today in many contexts.

Our study deals with controversies in order to understand some of the theoretical and philosophical positions of Gandhi with some of his contemporaries. At times it appeared that some views of Gandhi were controversial and it is also possible that perhaps his views were too controversial in some instances. As it has already been noted earlier, controversies formed part of his life and for the good of the country and society at large, he did not escape from them but he involved himself in them rather meaningful. To reiterate, it is not because he himself enjoyed the controversies or intended to create them; but so many aspects of his life, in terms of his lifestyle itself, his attire, some of his pronouncements, many of his non-verbal communicative symbols such as charka, Gandhi cap, three monkeys, etc. and some of his verbal communicative expressions like,
Daridranarayana, Ramarajya, Trusteeship, Harijan, Change of heart, celibacy and Varnashrama Dharma etc. attracted comments and many a times contemptuous criticisms both in India and abroad by all those who crossed his path. However Gandhi was never against those who did not follow his path, instead he was very patient with them. He regularly kept up himself in continuous dialogue with them either through his correspondence or whatever medium he felt ideal. The very germination of an idea to study Gandhi through controversies is due partly to the fact that he was never afraid of them, rather he raveled in them, whether he liked it or not. As he repeated time and again, he never wanted a blind following and did not like the idea of those who called themselves as Gandhians. As such he expected everybody to be his fellow traveler, pilgrim, fellow worker and seeker after truth. It is in this good Gandhian spirit and also in the best Indian tradition, our study intends, that it is only through the clash of ideas that truth emerges. In the absence of any such guiding principle, Gandhian thought, which has been critically examined so far, has either ended up in most cases with total admiration or condemnation. And the academic pursuit, which is by and large indifferent to Gandhi, has suffered to a considerable degree on this account. It should not however mean that no studies have been carried out in this area. But quite often than not, the studies so far, have not treated the problems as controversies. Whatever has already been done in this area is often a treatment of a particular controversy or part of a controversy in isolation. The efforts in many cases have not been able to see the inter-connection of various controversies. Apart from this difficulty, we also felt that a proper mobilisation and orientation is also wanting in the study of controversies.

One may always wonder, how can the entire range of controversies in Gandhi’s personal and public life be covered in this thesis given the sheer constraint of space. Therefore along with a focused study of some controversies, we intend to present a birds’ eye view of other controversies, just only to acquaint ourselves and those
who are interested in the related discipline, to pursue further inquiries. While pursing our inquiry on controversies, there arose a problem of some other greater intensity i.e. how does one deal with certain Gandhi's contradictions, which have led to controversial debates? "Gandhi's views on occasion may appear contradictory if taken out of context. The problem is one of understanding Gandhi comprehensively and in depth in terms of his thought and activity in their several contexts...."11 Therefore while dealing with controversies one will have to look forward for a proper coherence, comprehensiveness and logic. If these elements are lost sight of while analyzing Gandhi, it may lead to all kinds of distortions. Gandhi can be grossly misunderstood and misrepresented if one tends to treat him as an unchanging person. And failure to notice change in Gandhi's ideas from time to time according to changing contexts, may always tempt an observer to identify contradictions. And this identification may be in terms of juxtaposing an idea of earlier period as against an action of later period or vice versa. The reason why we are pointing out this possibility is precisely because, during the survey of related literature the researcher could notice some instances where in the above perspective is lost sight of. In the backdrop of this understanding the controversial issues, which have been identified and discussed here, are in their biographical and historical contexts. But however it is not a strictly chronological study because the controversies considered in this work also call for an ideological and a broader thematic approach.

It is not that the leaders considered in this study have controversies with Gandhi alone. But most of them differed on very many issues among themselves as well. For instance, the Communists and Socialists mutually suspected each others' positions, liberal and extremist leaders never sat across a discussion table, Communists and communalists never saw face to face, Communists and untouchable leaders challenged each others' style of functioning. This list is endless and it is this complex situation, which makes the task of considering Gandhi's controversies all the more challenging. All those organizations
and parties, which held caste, class and religious issues at the center of their manifesto, were founded during the struggle for Indian freedom, which was led by the Indian National Congress. Leaders of all these organizations and outfits have to deal with Gandhi since he was the unquestioned leader of Indian freedom struggle and Congress organisation for more than three decades. As a leader of freedom struggle Gandhi was continuously in dialogue with all these forces and their ideologues.

As a Satyagrahi, Gandhi considered truth as a paramount principle. He often explained it as his current understanding of truth or the relative truth as he termed it. A Satyagrahi worth the name should be ready for martyrdom for upholding his perception of truth. As a Satyagrahi Gandhi believed in peaceful resolution of conflicts and controversies. As such he believed in consensus and compromise through peaceful persuasion. But he was equally clear that his eagerness for compromise did not include compromise on fundamentals. Though Gandhi never held a doctrinaire approach on the fundamentals like some of his adversaries, still he was ready for a dialogue. Because in many senses, Gandhi knew that pluralism of thought and action is the hallmark of Indian religion, polity and society at large. As such conflicting interests are bound to operate between individuals and groups. To resolve a crisis or conflicting situation one will have to believe in compromise. But when Gandhi was in debate with his adversaries he left no room for doubt in the matter of compromise on fundamentals. "All compromise is give and take but there can be no give and take on fundamentals. Any compromise of fundamentals is surrender. For it is all give and no take".

Gandhi clarified his commitment to fundamentals further, when he said, "I have made up my mind to surrender every non-essential.... Full surrender of non-essentials is a condition precedent to accession of internal strength to defend the essential by dying".

Like wise Communists also have a well-defined doctrinaire ideology, so also others, who had their fundamental and sometimes fundamentalist
beliefs, and they were seriously committed to their beliefs. While dealing with controversies Gandhi renounced many non-essentials, "not so much for pleasing an adversary as for increasing one's own combat potential, when one is joining battle to defend the essential even by dying" or self sacrifice. So this position by implication forces us to understand the essential Gandhi as against the peripheral Gandhi.

Especially in a study of controversies, the likelihood or the possibility of inclining towards a line of thought is rather high. This temptation to take side prevents an objective analysis and one tends to start approaching the subject with more or less fixed categories. It is important to know what other scholars and activists think about the controversies, however sensitive, sometimes even sensational subject like study of controversies cannot always be carried out through the others' point of view only. As it is, there have been so many labels on Gandhi like for instance '... traditionalist, anarchist, Luddite, homoreligious, moralist and so on. In truth, none of these labels applies to him. In addition to doing an injustice to Gandhi, they symbolize our own inadequacy and therefore our intellectual need to reduce a complex reality to its simple components and to equate one or other components with the totality as a means of comprehension. If one is carried away by the temptation to either side with Gandhi or his critics, we may ultimately end up in affixing one more label to Gandhi and his adversaries. Gandhi was a leader, who demonstrated the strength of simple ordinary men and women and their historical role in freedom struggle. In the analysis and interpretation of a multifaceted personality like Gandhi, Dr. Raghavendra Rao, draws our attention to another possible danger. '... He (Gandhi) can be harnessed by progressive forces in their cause; just as at present the reactionary groups and forces are striving hard to blunt the revolutionary edge of Gandhian teaching. There is more than one Gandhiji, the romantic traditionalist, the revolutionary nationalist, the superb leader of the masses, the champion of genuine people's democracy against sham
liberal, parliamentary democracy and yes, why not even a Marxist revolutionary. What we choose to make of Gandhiji's heritage is our problem not Gandhiji's but before making our choice, we need to know what Gandhiji did actually say'. While trying to study an unexplored or partly explored subject like controversies, one is quite likely to be carried away by a certain ideological point of view. Though it is difficult to maintain a totally value free posture in social science research, it is however not impossible.

There have been good numbers of critical accounts and also a few original writings on Gandhi. His thought has been critically examined and evaluated from many angles such as Hindu, Muslim, fundamentalist, Marxist, Ambedkarites, Lohiate, etc. Some of them are totally simplistic; whereas some other studies have tried serious interpretations of Gandhian thought and action from their perspectives. In most of the cases, it is this partial and one-sided approach, which leads to a misreading of Gandhi's ideas and actions as well as the history of the given period. To follow these approaches is to know at least partly what these approaches mean. A general impression is sought to be given since independence, that there is gradual erosion in our traditional values and moral standards. Of late we are given an impression that the younger generations are either not interested in Gandhi or totally indifferent to Gandhi. It is not that only the Gandhian ideology faces this problem. This is believed to be a general tendency among new generations, not only in India but else where also; who are born after independence, great revolutions etc. The controversies with reference to Gandhi, which are carried through news papers, popular magazines and other mass media do not mean much to the younger generation since, "... more than 90 percent of our young men and women are Gandhi illiterates." Since they are not exposed to Gandhian thought in any way; it is too much to expect them to follow the controversies in their historical contexts. Quite often they come across politicians who claim themselves professing Gandhism, but in actual practice, both in their private and public life, they considerably
fall short of Gandhian ideals and values. This has already sent wrong signals about Gandhism to our new generation. That is why Gandhi has suffered a great deal by those politicians who kept on encashing Gandhi's name. Though there is a vast ocean of literature on Gandhi, much of it has hardly appealed the present generation. What has been said of politicians has also been partly held true in case of academics. “When people find a gulf between the prophecy and practice, between the principles and behaviors of many so called Gandhian scholars, they fail to inspire the new generation”.\textsuperscript{20} And this is generally attributed to the considerable lack of creative and constructive writing on the life and message of Gandhi. Reconstruction and reinterpretation of Gandhi in the changing situations is all the more important and it is a matter of emergency in many fronts today. A genuine reconsideration of Gandhi and other controversialists, it is assumed in this study, is possible only through a proper understanding of the controversies in all their possible dimensions.

Another problem facing Gandhi is that certain Gobbles\textsuperscript{21} lessons are let loose against him in post Gandhian era and some of them are repeated time and again. Following are some such lessons against Gandhian ideology: (i) Of late there has been a consistent on-slaught against Gandhi from the so-called Ambedkarite political elite who brush aside Gandhi as an anti-Dalit and anti-backward. (ii) Communists have time and again tried to brand Gandhi as an agent of British imperialism and a sympathizer/ advocate of bourgeoisie capitalist class in India. (iii) The latest addition to the ideological on-slaught against Gandhian thought comes from the Hindu fundamental and communal forces who debunk Gandhi as anti-Hindu and it is these forces who physically eliminated Gandhi. The controversies have assumed new dimensions ever since such outpouring started against Gandhian thought and action. We generally forget the difference between criticism and condemnation.\textsuperscript{22} The problem is either a blind admiration or a ruthless condemnation does not help generate a healthy dialogue. It is only through a debate and dialogue one can help establish an
interaction and communication between conflicting interests. A patient engagement in the controversies and criticisms surrounding Gandhian ideology can certainly pave way for such an interaction. Despite seeming differences, how far could the controversialists be able to influence each other on specific issues? In what way each one of them stood to either gain or loose out of these controversies? Whether they doubted each other’s credentials honestly? How far the means preferred by the controversialists are effective in reaching out to the defined ends? Whether there was any element of fear or apprehension among the controversialists about the relevance or effectiveness of their avowed ideological positions? The consideration of all these and many other questions certainly lead us to a better and meaningful understanding of our past and present and may quite likely, lead us for a better future as well. Thus the choice of some of the highly controversial problems can well be defended, taking into consideration the fact that they still continue to haunt the public memory and await solutions.

**Objectives of the Study :**

Of course the foregoing account has partly presented as to what should be the goal of this study to some extent. But however, it is felt necessary, given the scope of this research work, to point out some specific objectives of this inquiry. Out failure to set specific objectives in the study of controversies, is quite likely to sidetrack us from the centralizing of our discussion. Therefore the researcher proposes to enumerate some of the objectives of this thesis as under:

1) To evaluate Gandhian approach to the problem of caste and removal of untouchability through his controversies with Ambedkar.

2) To reach out to some insights of Gandhi’s ideas on nationalism through his controversies vis-à-vis Ambedkar.
3) To evaluate Gandhi's concept of democracy as expounded in the philosophy of Sarvodaya as against his controversies with Communists.

4) To examine the ideological differences between Gandhi and Marxist / Communist parties and to see whether any rapprochement between the two is possible.

5) To establish some insights of Gandhi's thought on secularism through his controversies mainly with Hindu and partly with Muslim communal forces.

6) To understand Gandhi's response to religious pluralism as against communal response through the controversies.

7) To consider the relevance of Gandhian approach to the problem of communalism in contemporary India.

8) To evaluate Gandhi's concept of God, Truth and religion with special reference to his controversy with Gora.

9) To acquaint ourselves with Gandhi's understanding of the relationship between religion, morality and the relation of these aspects with politics and also other related issues.

Hypothesis of the study:

In this part, the hypothesis advanced in our thesis is specified. A series of hypothesis have governed the analysis of the problem taken up for this research work. These hypotheses have been subjected to test in the course of subsequent analysis and discussion. It is hoped in the initial stages, that an objective study of Gandhi through controversies is possible only through the development of a number of hypothesis. Such an exercise is likely to provide a proper theoretical focus to our discussion. For that matter any research activity and the analysis of the problem always presupposes certain assumptions and theoretical propositions. The present study has also proceeded with some guest work and also with few theoretical propositions. Throughout this study, these have closing related to the understanding of the problem and
have guided the analysis of the issues. There have already been some truths established in the course of history by the forces that guide the laws of social change. Some of these previously established truths might prove to be partially right or totally wrong. However the past experiences have taught us some lessons and therefore we have been able to make some guess works and assert them in the initial stages of our study. The following hypothesis has been framed since speculations are the guiding forces of any research endeavour.

1) In most of the controversies, the adversaries of Gandhi seem to have viewed and analyzed Gandhi from the point of view of their defined priorities, thereby missing the priorities of Gandhi considerably.

2) Controversialists vis-à-vis Gandhi seem to have over-estimated the mass base of their respective organizations. It is an erroneous assessment of their leadership and the strength of their parties, which motivated them to subject certain ideas and actions of Gandhi to a serve criticism.

3) As a result of the controversies, Gandhi, Gandhian politicians/ non-party activists/ scholars have at least subjected themselves to some self-introspection and criticism. But those who opposed Gandhi fall short of any such self-introspection and self-criticism.

4) Certain Gandhian philosophical positions sound vulnerable as compared to rationalist and radical school of thought. But however these rationalist and radical groups have not been able to understand, educate, organize and move the masses on many issues.

5) There had been leaders who were ambitious enough to challenge the leadership of Gandhi, but they considerably fell short of the exception of the masses. This failure can be attributed to the lack of indigenous concepts and ideas in their thinking.
6) Certain theoretical and ideological positions of controversialists vis-à-vis Gandhi on caste, class and religious issues, rendered them more vulnerable for criticism on their nationality concerns during freedom struggle.

7) Often controversies have been originated by Gandhi's adversaries due to a tendency on their part to treat him as an unchanging person. Followers of Gandhi have also contributed to this problem, who treat every word of Gandhi as sacrosanct. In either case both the critics and admirers lost a sense of consideration of time and space in their treatment of Gandhi's ideas.

8) The major controversies revolve around caste, class and communal issues. From the viewpoint of Gandhian perspective these are not exclusive categories. Given his theoretical positions, Gandhi had always treated these and many other issues from a holistic point of view. But the protagonists who got into conflict with Gandhi on these issues have overwhelmingly compartmentalized the problems according to their chosen priorities and treated the categories of their preference as exclusive.

The hypotheses listed here have determined the parameters of discussion in this research work. It is hoped that the subsequent analysis correlates itself to these assumption and at the end of it all our discussion shall either confirm the assumption or it is also likely that it may reject some of the hypothesis projected at the beginning of this study.

**Methodology** :

In this part of the thesis we shall specify the methodology adopted for research. In the normal sense of the term 'methodology' refers to methods and techniques employed in the study undertaken by the researcher. It may be mentioned here that, from the list of parties to the controversies considered in this study; very few, if not none, have
been regarded as scholars of academic discipline in the accepted sense of the term. Most of them are not system builders in the modern sense, except perhaps some Communist leaders. Most of them including Gandhi, Ambedkar, protagonists of communal school, etc. do not have to their credit anything known as a systematic academic approach to the problems intended for discussion in this study. As such very few serious works based on primary source materials can be located in the field. This was a major handicap in our study. There have been many stray discussions on some controversial issues, but very few, if not none, as mentioned earlier, fulfill the criteria of academic discipline. This situation was a handicap in the sense that the researcher could not have much to fall back upon. There was not anything like a well-defined framework of analysis for us to draw upon. It was also an advantage in the sense that we could devise our own methods and approach, which ultimately provided us an opportunity to carry out some good exercise. However the fact that the nature of this study is ex post facto, it demanded the technique of historical method. But at the same time the researcher hastens to add that the consequences of these historical events have their subsequent after effects as well. As such the method is neither completely historical nor normative in the accepted sense of the term, but the nature of this inquiry demands a combination of these methods. Since much of what has been discussed in this study is based on the primary documents, as such it is primary methods as well. The unique feature of Gandhi and other controversialists is that, after a close examination of their massive writings; we will find a complex combination of philosophical and theoretical exposition on the one hand and on the other, we can locate a strong innate urge to put their ideas into practice. The writings of many controversialists considered here, in general and Gandhi in particular, indicate that they were not merely concerned with providing theoretical or philosophical justifications for their ideas but most of them were interested in concrete actions at a certain historical situation, which was demanded of them. In that sense both the private
and public life of these controversialists was shaped on the basis of concrete actions demanded of them. And this intern shaped their theoretical and philosophical propositions. In consonance with these facts, it is rather a combination of historical and theoretical-philosophical approach, which is adapted during the course of this study. It has to be borne in mind that, as pointed out, neither Gandhi nor other controversialists were theorists or philosophers interested in building systematic treatise. In fact most of them were men of actions to whom socio-political ideas or theories served the objective of providing some base or justification for their actions.

Most of the controversies, which are under consideration in the present study, arose during and around freedom struggle and the discussion necessarily revolves around that phase of our history (Modern History). The canvas of controversies encompasses social (Sociological), economic (Political Economy), religious (Philosophy of Religion) and many other fields. The very nature of the problem under inquiry demands an inter-disciplinary approach. That is why the methodology evolved and employed in this inquiry is rather a functional approach, which is tailored to suit the objectives of our study. As pointed out, the secondary source material, which has been reformed in our study, consists of writings of historians, sociologists, political scientists, economists as well as philosophers. Therefore by implication it is a descriptive analytical approach as well. Apart from the writings of social scientists, the accounts of professional politicians are also referred, which have in many ways added a great deal to the objective study of controversies.

Sources:

Gandhi's writing on almost every topic are available in various compilations and anthologies. Some of these have been considered in the present study. Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi have been consulted for his correspondence with his contemporaries wherever required. As it has already been pointed out, the controversies
considered in this study very much constitute areas of conflict even now. No study can rule out the existence of conflict, and in fact whether we like it or not conflict forms part of our existence. In ancient Greece it was Heraclitus and Havelock Ellis in our time considered conflict as the supreme principal of Cosmos. People in active politics experience them all the more and necessarily they will have to deal with them. That is why the writings and speeches of those politicians who were involved in the controversies in one or the other way have also been considered. Apart from this the original writing of many ideologues have been consulted for, while framing the perspectives of contending parties and individuals in the controversies. There is no dearth of material on ideological and theoretical discussion in academic publications on the controversies. Such material is consulted for analysis in this thesis. But however compilations on Gandhian ideas have been used wherever the files of Young India or the Harijan are not available. Along with the compilations by other individuals, series of collected works of Mahatma Gandhi volumes have been consulted for formulation of Gandhi's positions on specific topics and issues contained therein.

Though the critics of Gandhi were very persistent in their attack of his line of thinking and action, as it has already been observed in the beginning, he rarely engaged himself in public controversies with his adversaries. However, wherever he was involved in controversies, it was mainly through his personal correspondence and journalistic writings. Perhaps the only exception of his sustained controversial debate over some basic issues was with Tagore. Otherwise he did not go out of his way to refute criticisms against himself. However he had a style of his own, through which he could make strategic moves to manage his rivals and potential adversaries. Wherever a direct response to a specific query was needed he constructed a pattern of questions and answers to clarify his positions on issues. For instance 'Hind Swaraj' or Indian Home Rule is one such epoch making work by Gandhi, which is considered as an exercise in that direction. To make it an easy reading,
Gandhi constructed it in the dialogical fashion. Many times readers tend to think that the discussion between reader and editor in that book is imaginary. But as Gandhi himself admitted, the dialogue actually took place between himself and the readers of ‘Indian Opinion.’

Wherever necessary his ideas in ‘Hind Swaraj’ are taken into account since Gandhi did not consider it necessary to change the content of the book or the essence of it even after thirty years of its inception. Apart from this work, which is considered to be the only intended writing, we will come across many accounts by Gandhi wherein he has given answers to certain queries raised with him. On quite many occasions interviewers like Louis Fischer, Romain Rolland etc invited him to comment on some of his positions on certain issues. In the absence of any such thing, Gandhi himself created situations wherein he commented on specific events or a problem faced in certain contexts. Wherever it is felt necessary, the views and interpretation of Gandhian and other scholars have also been incorporated.

Having introduced the topic of research and presented the issues in brief, objectives of the study, hypothesis advanced, methodology adopted and the sources consulted in this study, one may point out some limitations and scope of this study. The inquiry at hand has mostly taken for consideration some debates, which have taken place between Gandhi and Ambedkar around Varnashrama caste system and removal of untouchability. The second problem considered in this study is, the controversies around Sarvodaya and Marxism/ Communism, which brought Indian Communists face to face with Gandhi and Gandhians on many issues. This research has taken up for discussion the controversies between Gandhi and communal forces with an intention to get some insights of Gandhi’s positions on secularism. All these are highly controversial problems even today, for the simple reason that these ideologies are manifest in the ongoing socio-religious, politico-economic movements. All these ideological standpoints, which are guiding their respective groups are no more unilateral or singular categories. There is a clear-cut manifestation of pluralistic trends in all
these ideological positions. During the initial stages of our study this posed a real challenge and it was not that easy to evolve a well-defined method of understanding these problems, as a result the researcher faced certain difficulties in the formulation of issues between contending parties. After a careful consideration of what is central to or what is considered as most essential to the theoretical positions of contending parties, we could gradually workout on approach. It is only after the identification of issues among the controversialists, the possibility of a rather fruitful inquiry emerged. Even while considering these minor controversies, one could not get into the whole depth of it precisely because the researcher had to accept the views of different parties to the controversy as true. One cannot go out of ones way to search for different meanings or add meanings to those controversies because the parties to these controversies themselves did not permit much scope for such exercise. For instance, after his controversies with Tagore, Gandhi said, "I have found no real conflict between us. I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself but ended with glorious discovery that there was none".24 Despite a seeming difference, since the controversialists themselves considered their respective roles as complementary to each other we can at best try to locate through the analysis of these controversies, how far they differed in their theoretical, philosophical views on certain contentious issues and in the process, how far could they influence one another. Apart from this there have been controversies in Gandhi's personal life as well. The list of problems pointed out here is evidently not exhaustive, in the sense that it will not inquire into all the controversies surrounding Gandhi. One may always like to exhaust all the controversies covering the entire range of six decades of Gandhi's public life but however there is necessarily a limitation to this or any research work for that matter, in terms of limitation of space. The overall plan is to study the insights of Gandhi on some of the issues as pointed out in objectives of this inquiry. It is not that we are going to consider all these issues in their entirety, but the idea is to consider
them as they emerged out of his controversies with some of his contemporaries.

Since there is no such thing as conclusiveness and finality in social science research, this study shall try only to provide a glance of controversies in the light of contemporary scene. One can always reconsider these controversies in the light of changing situation and the relevance of the debate also can be updated. Thus the present study can be of immense use to those researches that are interested in the study of similar or related subjects.

As the source material on Gandhi, Ambedkar, Communist theory and practice, Hindu-Muslim communal ideology and other controversies on related issues are very vast and widespread; the researcher does not claim to have been able to exhaust all of it. Since the main focus is on controversies, the researcher has to be very selective in the choice of sources. Therefore, primary and secondary sources have been given equal priority. Apart from the printed texts of Gandhi and other controversialists which provide the primary source of data, the analysis also includes observations and insights from other secondary sources such as biographies, edited books, journal articles, newspaper accounts, party documents and recorded conversations, interviews by different authors in their books and articles. Apart from these sources a variety of journals in English and local vernacular (mainly Kannada) have also been consulted. Our study does not attempt to cover the entire career of the men involved in the controversies, nor does it seek to analyze and exhaust all the controversies. As has been noted earlier, the study of controversies is beset with the difficulty of involvement of numerous other leaders. As far as possible the direct involvement of Gandhi in the controversies are considered in the present study while discussing various issues, of course taking into accounts the context in which the debate took place. Basing on the objectives set before this study, we have selected some
controversies for investigation. The details of the content of each chapter is given in brief in the following pages:

**Outlay of the Thesis:**

It is proposed to carry out a research work on Gandhiji through the controversies. Depending on the nature of controversies considered in this study, the thesis is divided into five main chapters out of which the second, third and fourth chapters are further divided into eight sub-chapters each. As it is already mentioned, in fact it is the nature of the very problem under consideration, which decided the outlay of the thesis. Various controversies are classified subject-wise and also in terms of thought groupings. This is done to facilitate a clear presentation of the complexion of controversies and their net outcome, which constitutes the scope of the thesis.

**Chapter II**

The second chapter deals with the controversies around Varna, caste system, untouchability and other related issues. Of course it is a matter of common knowledge that apart from Gandhi, it was B.R. Ambedkar who was preoccupied with these issues in modern Indian context. An impression is sought to be created by many so far that both Gandhi and Ambedkar were adversaries of one another. But in the light of its findings, the present study, it can be said that they are at best parallels, rather than adversaries in their search after social justice. Therefore this chapter, among other aspects deals mainly with the controversies between Gandhi and Ambedkar at different contexts like the Second Round Table Conference and its offshoot Poona Pact. As an after effect of this controversy, both Gandhi and Ambedkar underwent many changes, this is the most crucial aspect of our finding which many analysts have not been able to notice. Apart from their direct encounters there have been many controversies in their written expressions also. Lot of heat was generated before and after independence by both of them about the position to be accorded to the villages and the Panchayati Raj system. A controversy over the status to
be accorded to Aboriginal Tribes also figured out very prominently. The net outcome of the study of controversies in this chapter has supported the assumption that an understanding of both Gandhi and Ambedkar is equally important in the proper perception of Indian social structure.

Chapter III

The third chapter seeks to understand the controversies around the theory and practice (Praxis) of Sarvodaya and Communist movements. Indian Marxists almost always considered the Gandhian theory of means and ends as controversial proposition, but whereas Gandhi was most uncompromising on this doctrine. Gandhi would be always ready to compromise on non-essentials but he would never do so on essentials. An attempt is made to understand the controversies regarding the Gandhian and Marxist/communists perceptions of the problems of the working class. The Gandhian perception of class war and his theory of trusteeship came under a severe attack by Communists. This is basically an ideological controversy compared to the two other controversies on the role of Communists in World War II and Quit India Movement. Gandhi was the central figure in the political affairs of his times. His opinion on individuals and groups was considered as most crucial; naturally therefore everybody tried to impress the formation of his opinion. Socialists and Hindu Mahasabhaites influenced Gandhi against the Communists’ activities, so much so that he was forced into a controversial debate with prominent leaders like P.C. Joshi and others. Despite the controversies with the staunchest Communist leader of the day, Gandhi did not pass any value judgment over their activities nor did he reject them, but all that he did was to alert them on some of their vulnerable positions. Many prominent Communists charged Gandhi, as a representative of the Indian bourgeoisie, but Gandhi was very patient and remained steadfast on his priorities. Even after Gandhi, other Sarvodayaites and Communist leaders and their propagandists continued the debate, but in the final analysis Gandhi is attacked more for the way in which
Gandhism was appropriated and institutionalized by the Congress regimes.

Chapter IV

This chapter aspires to examine the controversies around Secularism and Communalism. Many conceptual problems are involved in proper understanding of the controversies around these twin abstractions. The relationship between religion and politics is another complicated issue. So also has been the case with concepts like culture, nationalism and patriotism, which have all along been subjects of varying interpretations and manipulations. But Gandhi almost always accepted the universally acclaimed definitions. But however it has to be noted that he tried to conceptualize and interpret some of these ideas to suit the pluralistic society like ours. After a careful evaluation of the heat generated around the aforesaid concepts by communal forces, the study arrived at a crucial conclusion, i.e. the two-nation theory of Mr. Jinnah is a reaction to the one nation theory of Savarkar or vice versa.

It was felt imperative to reconsider a couple of most controversial issues in pre- and post-colonial history. The first one is that, Gandhi was criticized as an appeaser of religious minorities and the other one is that of his responsibility for the Partition of the country. Both these controversies are far from being resolved and still continue to be really stormy. Gandhian response in both these controversies suffers because of Goebelian lies or truth perpetrated against him by his ideological adversaries. The twin concepts of secularism and communalism are most hotly debated in modern times. Apart from the existing controversies around these concepts many more new ones are sought to be added. The question as to who is to be considered as secular or otherwise has assumed many new dimensions in the wake of the recent controversial statements of Mr. Advani on Jinnah at Pakistan. Whether one agreed with Mr. Advani or not his statements have paved way for the re-examination of existing controversies around secularism.
and communalism. Throughout this study it has been noticed that, publicists and propagandists of various ideological schools are as instrumental in the generation of controversies as much as the actual actors in them. In the wake of the material generated by many such publicists, a re-examination and re-evaluation of Gandhi's writings and speeches assumes all the more importance today than ever before.

Chapter V

What ultimately emerged out of the study of controversies is all the more important than anything else. Therefore the last chapter on conclusions seeks to summarize the study highlighting the main findings and the final impressions derived from the analysis of foregoing chapters. The fundamental or essential stream of Gandhian thought, as it emerged out of the controversies, has been interpreted. Some of the Gandhian positions are critically analyzed, because it is not that Gandhi was always right and all other controversialists necessarily wrong.

After having drawn the conclusions, an exhaustive bibliography is worked out and made available to the keen observers of controversies. All the primary and secondary sources consulted during this research work are classified and alphabetically ordered in the final bibliography.
Notes and References:

1. B.R. Nanda, *Gandhi and His Critics*, Delhi, 1985 P.viii
3. *Young India*, 1-6-1921, PP 170-71
4. M.P. Rege, M.V. Namjoshi (Eds), *New Quest*, Pune, April 1987, P-83 K.J. Shah’s article, We must take our selves seriously.
5. Ibid. P-81
15. Ravindra Verma, Opp. Cit., P.18
17. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Goebels is reported to have been the Information and Broadcasting Minister in Hitler's Nazi Ministry.


23. Among other readers are Dr. Prajivan Mehta (CWMG. Vol-71, P-238) Shyamji Krishnavarma (CWMG Vol-6, P-28, 30, 73, 83-84) and V.D. Savarkar (CWMG Vol-32, P-102)