Chapter Six

Conclusions

The East India Company conquered Bengal as a result of victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Control over Bengal helped them to earn revenue on a larger scale. The Company used it to strengthen their army, which in turn helped them to subdue the adjoining states and expand their territory. Still this expansion was restricted to the coastal areas only. During Hastings’ period it was realized that the Company’s officers had knowledge of India which barely enabled them to fulfill their requirements related to their trade. They were not acquainted with their language and culture. With the new responsibility to administer their territories they felt a need to have knowledge of those things.

Hastings proposed a plan to the directors of the Company to undertake the study of the language and cultural practices of the people. This led them to study the ancient texts. The texts they studied were all Hindu scriptures, as people whom they consulted were elite Hindus-Brahmins. During earlier regime the same class co-operated with the rulers by learning Persian, the language of the rulers. Now they started learning English language and became indispensable part of the administrative machinery.

Hastings constituted a panel of legal scholars who were Sanskrit pundits, to study Hindu legal system. First they translated them from Persian into English. People like Sir William Jones learnt Sanskrit within a decade.

Alien power can succeed in establishing dominion over the conquered people provided that some of the colonized sections join hands with them. Brahmins and landlords were eager to assists the administration. The Company readily accepted their health.

The Asiatic Society of Bengal was establish in 1784 it was dedicated to the studies of ancient religious and cosmological texts. This project was undertaken by British scholars and the Sanskrit pandits jointly. In the process of piecing together the
history they realized that the languages belong to the same family. They also found that there were similarities between Hindu and Greco-Roman Gods.

Filippi Sassetti was an Italian merchant who suggested similarities between Sanskrit and some European languages in the 16th century. In 19th century the Vedic corpus was made available to European scholars. They suggested that the roots of human history might go back to the beginning recorded in Sanskrit literature. Sanskrit was classified under Indo-European family of languages. Among the title used for this family ‘Aryans’ was the name which became popular in the 19th century. This term was picked from the Rgveda. It was an epithet used for denoting status. The idea that these languages came from the same roots was applied to the people also. Thus the elite sections of Indian society started associating themselves with the ruling British.

Raja Rammohan Roy is regarded as the inaugurator of the new age in India. While the Government was providing education on the Ancient Indian lines, he was appealing the Government to give English education and teach sciences in place of grammar and vernaculars. His efforts in order to abolish Sati system bore fruits and the Government banned sati by law. As he was a scholar of Sanskrit he translated scriptures into English. He formed an organization name as Prarthana Samaj.

In 1875 Swami Dayanand Saraswati formed an organization named as Arya Samaj. It was the beginning of radical Hindu nationalism. Dayanand believed in Monism against the prevalent system of worshiping many gods in Hinduism. He advocated the supremacy of the Vedas and insisted upon discarding all the other scriptures like Raghuvansha and Bhagvat. According to him god was formless and non-material entity. So he criticized worship of stones. He was of the opinion that Chaturvanya was essential in order to regulate the society but the four divisions of the society were not based on birth but on the worth and it was not rigid but flexible, one could change the Varna according to his merit unlike the previous system. Dayananda’s vision of monolithic, militant Hinduism inspire Hindu nationalist.

Swami Vivekanand was another advocate of Hindu nationalism who became popular after his speech in Chicago he believe that we should rest our nationalism on two basis, the first one is philosophic base and the other one is material basis formed by the masses in India. He believed in Sanatan Dharma and the ideal of monism. He
did not discard idol worship like Dayananda. He believe in Varnashram Dharma and his varna was based on birth and it was not flexible like Dayananda’s varna. He was deeply concerned about the loss of manliness in Indians and also criticised the worship like Chaitanya. He dislikes unequal status for women in Indian society but at the same time advocated child marriage. His belief in chastity was firm. Vivekananda supports caste system he believes that India had a glorious past, a golden period in the history i.e. Vedic period.

Unlike the preceding two Sri Aurobindo Ghose was educated in England and was well versed in many western languages. For some time he participated in secret revolutionary organization. On his return he worked in Baroda state and then went to Bengal where he was arrested on suspicion of having a role in an assassination and was imprisoned. There he had paranormal experiences he was also a staunch supporter of Hindu nationalism. He strongly felt the god’s presence in idea of nationalism. He also supported the idea of celebrating religious festivals for spreading nationalism. Chaturvanya was an ideal and essential thing for him.

On this background of these movements Tilak emerged in Maharashtra. He radically asserted the demand of Swaraj and changed the course of the Congress. He started celebration of Ganesh Chaturthi and Shiv Jayanti publically and utilized them for preaching nationalism. Though politically radical, he was a conservative in social matters and so opposed attempts for social reforms. He led a movement against women’s education, age of consent and supported the moneylenders and the landlords who exploited the peasants. He left a deep impact on the leaders of the freedom movement, both like Gandhi and Hindu nationalist like Golwalkar.

As there were movements to achieve freedom, along with them there were movements from the exploited sections of the society to liberation from the stranglehold of the caste system. Jotirao Phule was the champion of the oppressed masses who stood in revolt against Brahmanical hegemony. Phule revolted against the untouchability and opened the tank in his house for the untouchables, against restrictions on widow remarriage and opened school for girls. Education for him was a solution to the problems of the oppressed people, so insisted upon making primary education free and compulsory for all. He raised his voice in favour of the peasants. The main thrust of his ideology was on deception and exploitation of the lower caste
common masses by the priests. His interpretation of history mythology and scriptures was totally different from the analysis by his contemporaries. This way the national movement for freedom and the movements by the suppressed masses in the Indian society had started simultaneously and their course were parallel.

During the later British Rule many Acts like the Jury Act of 1826 were passed. People were becoming aware of racial discrimination and injustice by imposing such acts. Elite sections of Hindu society in Bengal had started acquiring English education and they started publishing English newspapers. The press, apart from raising voice against unjust laws, drew attention of the people to social problems. By focusing on issues of racial tyranny they also attracted their attention to the issues of public concern this way they became an integral part of the nationalist movement.

Education forms the core of any democratic nation. India was marching on the same path so it was essential to take a stock of education during colonial period. It becomes more necessary in societies like India because in other society people did not care to educate the masses, in India there was religious sanction to the custom of restricting education to the elite sections of the society. The lower caste people were virtually banned from taking education. With the arrival of British these restrictions were somewhat relaxed but they had not completely lost their influence. Though the British framed policy to impart education irrespective of caste and gender, the teachers were mostly from the elite sections of the society. Phule wrote in his testimony to the Hunter Commission and even in one of his writings that how those teachers instead of encouraging education discouraged it. They obstructed the way of education and prevented the masses from getting it. That is why we observe that education was an affair of upper caste people and it did not reach the masses. As the result of lack of education they were deprived of employment in the government offices.

‘Imagined communities’ by Benedict Anderson was published in 1983 studies on nationalism have been influenced since then. Anderson states that Historians look at the issue in two different ways. Those who look at it in an objective manner believe that nationalism is a modern phenomenon while who look at it in a subjective way feel that it is ancient.
The ideology of Nationalism is not defined and expounded in the way other ideologies have been defined. It is because it does not have behind it an exponent like Marx or Hobbs.

Andersons definition of Nationalism is grounded in Anthropology. He states that it is an imagined community because it is limited, in the sense the most powerful nations also have boundaries. Religions show readiness to assimilate the others but nations do not. The concept emerged during enlightenment and revolutions. It demolished the authority established by religious authorities. Emergence of the concept of freedom is simultaneous to it.

The renaissance gave birth to three concepts. The first is that the hollowness of the divine language leading to truth were destroyed. The second was the challenge to the divinity of the king and emergency of concept of people’s power. The third was emergence of new things like novel as a genre in literature became acquainted and one more thing was newspapers.

Print capitalism changed the appearance and the state of the world. Three forces accelerated the Vernacularizing force of the print capitalism. All the three directly contributed in the process of creating the consciousness of nationalism. They were recovery and circulation of ancient literature, speed of communication due to development of printing and overthrow of Latin language. Print language created areas of exchange of communication below Latin and above the spoken Varnaculars which resulted in attaching masses to it. It sowed the seed of nationally imagined community. The print capitalism gave fixity to language and finally evolved language of power.

There are several scholars who studied Nationalism and have also classified it. They include Carlsson Hays, Hans Kolm, Louis Snidr, Michael Hechter.

‘Hind Swaraj’ was Gandhi’s text which contained his idea of nationalism in seed. He wrote it after having seen the unrest among the youth and their belief in armed struggle as a means of attaining independence. The book was first written in Gujrati and later on translated into English by the author himself. It was written in the form of a conversation between an editor and his reader. The reader asks questions to seek clarifications on various issues which had currency during that period.
Gandhi opens the discussion with the subjects of the predecessors in the national movement like Sir A.O. Hume and Wedderburn who were Englishmen but had sympathy for Indians. That is why Hume laid foundation of Indian National Congress. The youth had a doubt about the genuineness of their sympathy. As these people belonged to the first generation of critics of the British rule, their ways were not radical. They believed in convincing and deliberations. The young people ridiculed it as ‘mendicancy methods’ and believed that the colonial power would not yield unless a serious threat to their lives was created. The youth not only differed with their forerunners, but they despised for being meek and lacking in manliness. Gandhi explains that whatever stage of freedom struggle we have reached, we did so due to the efforts of the predecessors. He uses analogy of a ladder and says that they are the steps we have climbed and if we break the steps of the ladder it would harm our cause.

The whole confusion according to him was a result of misinterpretation of the concept of ‘Swaraj’, For the youth to do away with everything English was the aim, where as Gandhi did not believe in hating in hating every thing related to rulers. He brings it to the notice of all that people wanted to remove the Englishmen, the rulers, but they emulate their culture, their civilization. This was not the real Swaraj according to Gandhi. He was of the opinion that people who adopt English way of like are ignorant about the real condition of England and if they understand it they would not accept them as an ideal.

Gandhi’s views on the condition of England were remarkable. He describes the condition prevailing in England at that time. The parliamentary democracy in England was a thing which Gandhi did not like, as a system of governance. He finds many flaws in it. He criticizes the element involved in it which expects change after every specified period. He believes that the representative sent in the parliament were not serious about their duty. They either engage themselves in meaningless talking or dozing while others talk. The voters are also equally guilty according to him because they did not give a proper thought before decling them. He attacks the newspapers also because they propagate diametrically opposite compared to others views on the issues. This creates confusion, according to him, among the voters and that is why they elect wrong people. He condemns the ruling party and its ministers because they care more for their party that the country and the people who elected them. Gandhi
suggests that instead of spending huge amount on having such institutions the governance should be handed over to ‘few good men’ and the money and resources should be placed in their hands.

English culture is synonymous to the modern civilization according to Gandhi. It evolved institution like Languages, doctors and railways. The former two thrive on lies and immorality and the latter one has spoiled the life itself. He strongly condemns industrialization in England. According to him it had reduced human beings to slaves. The only difference was earlier people forcibly captured and enslaved people, now attraction of money make people accept slavery willingly. Earlier women used to stay at home and manage it. As a result of industrialization they have also started to work in the factories, this has made their condition more pathetic.

While discussing condition of India Gandhi states that Railways, Lawyers and doctors have added to the miseries of India. He was of the opinion that Lawyers earn their livelihood on the quarrels of other people. It was absolutely immoral for him. He also believed that the lawyers and the legal system helped and strengthen the English empire in India. On this issue he turns back to the ancient Indian judicial system in which people settled their disputes among themselves and they did not require a third party to settle their dispute. He admires the same and adds that justice was within everybody’s each. He had a hostile attitude towards doctors also, the reasons stated by him is that they encourage a habit of indulgence and intemperance. According to him diseases were cured it with medicine people became more indulgent and behaved carelessly. In order to experiment the medicines thousands of animals were killed and the medicines contained animal fats and alcohol which were forbidden to Muslims and Hindus respectively. Those were the additional reasons for his hostility towards the doctors. Railways, according to him, helped in spreading deadly diseases like Benbonic Plague. He also argues that they had made the holy places unholy as rogues and thieves had started to visit those places. He calls the places where railways reach as polluted.

Gandhi asserts that dislodgement of the English people does not mean freedom. He states that if the causes are removed the effects will also disappear and asserts that Indian civilization was superior to that of the English people. When the reader asks as to why was India defeated if they have so many vice, Gandhi answers
that they did not conquer us, rather India gave itself to them and the reason was avarice of some Indians. He also explains that all the Indians were not as slaved, only those who adopted English culture and enslaved and their number is very small only the border is polluted the rest of the ocean is pure. Holding to its own civilization was the way to India’s freedom according to him.

While stating so he warns that one should not resort to the savage force and follow the principles of passive resistance. For him it was an all sided sword which did not draw blood and blesses both the user and the person against whom it was used. To become a passive register one needed to prepare his body. That was a prerequisite of passive resistance. One needed to give up all luxuries and above all one had to observe chastity. He insisted on chastity because he believed that by losing chastity one loses stamina and lack of stamina makes one emasculated.

Regarding education Gandhi states that it is only knowledge of alphabets and it would prove harmful to others because the educated persons would use their skills to exploit others. He also had a queer view that it does not add an inch to ones happiness and would rather make him feel discontented about his condition or his house. Though Gandhi believed so and reiterated that he did not feel a need to change the views expressed in the book, his views on education underwent an unrecognizable change. He devised a scheme of education called as basic education. Though there are points to dispute on, making education self-supporting was the most contentious part of the scheme.

As Gandhi was not a studious scholar to propound his ideas in a systematic and elaborate manner, the idea of his nationalism could be understood from his statements and journalistic writings. Gandhi was a devout Sanatani Hindu so he believed in Varna system. He also upheld caste system from which the untouchability emerged. Gandhi advocated eradication of this evil in Hinduism but he did not make it mandatory for congress membership. He many times insisted on handing over the responsibility of governance to a few good people. His idea of trusteeship is also a reflection of his insistence on ‘few good people’ which is difficult in a caste ridden and fragmented society. There is a wide gap in what Gandhi said and what he did. His followers must have observed it closely so all the ideal things he spoke of were overlooked by his followers and they stuck to the same antiquated social system and
perpetuated it. This proved detrimental to his idea of nationalism which was reduced to Brahmin centric parochial idea of nationalism.

While Gandhi entered into public life Tilak era in the National movement was coming to the end. Before that Jotirao Phule had worked for social reforms and Chiplunkar, Mandlik and Tilak strived hard to resists these attempts. As we have seen they declared that those who deviated from freedom struggle and indulged in social reforms were traitors to the nation. So Phule, who spoke for the submerged masses of the society, was a traitor to the nation according to them.

Though they leveled a serious charge, the spirit of the social reformers was not dampened due to that. The aspirations of freedom were aroused among the downtrodden masses themselves and from them emerged the champions of social equality and liberty. Narayan Meghaji Lokhande organized workers in the mills in Bombay. Gopalbaba Valangkar and Shirram Janba Kamble wrote petitions to the Governments to take cognizance of this situation and appealed to adopt measures to improve their situation. So much of activity was going on among depressed classes and the non-Brahmin sections of the society but it did not reflect in the programmes or actions of the organizations which led freedom struggle.

Among the Hindu nationalists Savarkar was the first to politicize caste leaving behind the spirituality in which Vivekanand, Aurobindo and many more had wrapped in. Savarkar broadens his sphere of Hinduism by including all the sects of Hinduism and even those who did not believe in the Vedas and even in God. For him, a person who descends from the ancestry of the Vedic inhabitants of this land was a Hindu. Though he admires Aryan on the one hand on the other hand states that sex is a stronger driving force than the messages of prophets and saints, so there is no pure blood found anywhere in the world.

Not only Hindu nationalists but even Gandhi believed in cow worship and started cow protection societies to look after the cows. Savarkar holds a different view from all of them and states that the cow is only useful beast. Though rest of them believed in perpetuation of the caste system, Savarkar wrote against it and admired attempts to breakdown the caste system. Though he did so, he did not speak of a society based on principles of equality liberty and fraternity. This indicates that he
was more interested in organizing Hindus and makes it a strong community to show to the world that they are a mighty race….

According to Golwalkar Hinduism was nationalism. As a Sarsanghchalak of R.S.S. he aspired for building exclusively the Hindu Nation. He was proud of Hindus racial origin in Aryan race and their glorious past. In actuality Hindu period come many years later Vedic period but he does not seem to consider that. According to his Hindus are prominent majority in India so the nation should be built upon exclusively Hindu culture and traditions. Minorities should merge themselves into the mainstream Hindus past and join with them in common aspirations. They would be considered as citizens of Hindu Nation if they forget their own identity.

Golwalkar advocated Varna System with Manusmruti. It was an attempt to rejuvenate the ancient period that agenda was detrimental to the integrity of India. Basically he was opposed to the idea of diversity. Impressed by the fascist ideology of Germany he asserted on homogeneous Hindu Nation. Anti-democratic tendencies are naturally perceived when he insists on superiority of collectivity over individuality. He did not agree with the concept of individual freedom and Sangh Parivar was also under the impact of authoritarianism of elders Swayamsevaks, Hindu culture and traditions. He asserted that Varna system and caste system were beneficial for the society. Integrity of the Indian society was maintained due to the caste system was not fact-based conclusion. He blamed Buddhism for shattering the caste system and for the defeat by the hands of foreign invaders. He established Varna system as devised for management of society by distributing trades and professions but it was not a division of labour but labourers. It was based on birth so lacked the flexibility and mobility. Justification of this kind of dictatorial and oppressive system was hypocritical. Praising Manu as the universal law giver was synonymous with sanctioning the subordinate and oppressed condition of women and Shudras in the society. It was the system constructed by Hindu Brahmin males to retain their dominance Golwalkar opposed constitution in favour of Manusmruti, he even opposed tricolour flag. He justified casteism and racism. He resisted the multi-cultural, multi-religious structure of India. He opposed individual freedom secularism, democracy egalitarianism. Denying their Indo-Iranian, genealogy, he consistently remained antagonist to the Muslims even detached himself from freedom struggle because defeating British imperialism was not coinciding with his dream of Hindu
Nation. His theory of Hinduism as nationalism was nothing but expression of fanaticism and hypocrisy. He was a zealous champion of Hindu extremism and religious nationalism. It is certain that his nationalism was adequately provocative for spreading divisive and discriminating tendencies resulting in disparities in the society. It neither demands equal status for women nor fundamental rights for Dalits. Golwalkar’s nationalism always cherished parochial and intolerant attitude for protecting their own vested interests.

M.N. Roy viewed traditional nationalism as a parochial idea and an antiquated cult. Rejecting the traditional concept of nationalism he considered it as all embracing and more inclusive concept within the framework of internationalism. According to him phenomenon of nationalism has now lost its utility. The idea of nationalism should transcend the national boundaries towards internationalism. India can achieve its freedom and safely in the context of world welfare. In India’s case nationalism is only limited upon gaining freedom but he insists that political struggle should be followed by the struggle for social liberation. Reactionary and conservative basis of nationalism has driven it towards degeneration.

M.N. Roy was a staunch defender of democracy and individual freedom, the ideas that held him back from surrendering to communism. He was man of independent thinking with sharp intellect. He criticized the Indian leadership for their conservative, traditional and authoritative approach. He never admitted the interference of religion in politics. His views were contradictory to the propaganda of Swadeshi and over all Indian freedom movement. His analysis that use of religious connotations and associations will ruin the communal harmony and widened the gap between Hindus and Muslims. He insisted on the protection and security of minorities. His concept of nationalism was focused on the welfare of common masses of India including workers and peasant. He very rightly analyzed the political situation in India, warned the common Indian people about the alliance of high class capitalist bourgeoisie with imperialism. He wanted people to take every precaution about replacing one exploitative rule of imperialists by another rule of capitalist bourgeoisie of the same quality. According to him this freedom was meaningless and of no value. According to him freedom is breaking the fetters of poverty, conservation and fascism. He laid emphasis on the need of organizing all the workers and the peasant because they are the real vanguards of the revolution. He stressed on the welfare of peasants and modernization of agriculture. It was a deviation from
orthodox Marxism. His interpretations of Indian political and economic thought of India were based on Marxist ideology. He thought about economic reconstruction on India with the intention of welfare of the deprived classes including workers and peasants. He was blamed for supporting British government in the war against Germany. The fact was he was not supporting the British, but fighting against the fascism. He realized the welfare of India in the welfare of the world. He wanted to reconcile freedom with security in the international field.

He also advocated financial freedom and respectable status for women in the society. He exposed the contradictions in the attitude of Indian leaders towards women and attacked the religious traditions discriminating women. So his concept of nationalism was focused on the welfare of exploited and deprived class of India.

While thinking of economic reconstruction on India he thought of the Indian society in terms of classes. He denounced the caste system. He was aware of Brahmanical dominance but did not think caste as economic entity. He did not understand the vital role caste plays in economic field of India due to hereditary distribution of professions. He was internationalist like Tagore but completely rejected the idea of cultural nationalism. By being an atheist and non-believer in Indian culture and traditions never could get assimilated in Indian leadership.

With the constitutional reforms of 1909 and 1919 the minorities in India started demanding safeguards and special representation. This was a reaction to the attitude of the Congress and the nationalist leaders who mainly hailed from Bengal and Bombay province.

Ambedkar’s book ‘What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables’ comes as a result of struggle between the Congress, nationalist leaders and the depressed class. Education had not reached up to the depressed classes and as a result the bureaucracy was captured by the upper caste people. As they had not forgotten their caste, they used their authority to raise hurdles in the way of progress of the Depressed Classes. Taking into account the callous attitude cherished by the upper castes it was necessary for the Depressed Classes to device some method of safeguarding their interests. The conflict took a serious turn when the Act of 1919 was to be reviewed. The Simon Commission was boycotted by the Congress and other nationalist leaders as they had not been given representation on the Commission. In order to redress this grievance meeting of all the representatives was called in
London. It is known as The Round Table Conference which further strained the relations between the Depressed Classes and the Nationalist leaders.

Tagore advocated ‘Vishwa bhandhutva’, Universal brotherhood of the people by rejecting the parochial concept of nationalism. No doubt he was patriotic at the heart but he never encouraged Indian leaders to arouse national sentiment in people. He rejected the attitude of subordination or violence toward British rule and wanted to deal with Britishers on equal terms. He differentiated between the West as a nation and spirit of West and exposed the fact that how the patriotism, greed for expansionism and materialism strangled the spirit of the west that holds sense of justice, respect for knowledge and reason and love for arts. He says patriotism is a risky factor; it is an organized expression of self interests of people that usually culminates into aggressive nationalism. There should be bond of love and co-operation among nations instead of hatred and jealousy to develop as a world family. Tagore had that vision and foresight to look into the future. He did not rely on temporary solutions but earnestly believed in eternal humanistic values. As a poet he had an insight for cherishing aesthetic outlook in the life a naïve enthusiasm to understand new cultures and civilizations and also adoption of the essential values from those cultures. He was not biased but his personality was rooted in the spiritual values of India. He revered the Indian spiritualism but criticized the social differences, graded structure of social system of India. His understanding of caste as a mistake due to misjudgment of human nature was not proper. He failed to interpret it as a system evolved for the preservation of selfish interests of priest class and Brahmanical hegemony. His privileged status in the society as a Brahmin and aristocrat facilitated him to advise for holding moral strength enduring sufferings and failures but not for fighting to obtain fundamental rights as human beings. His perception of spiritualism and cultural inheritance of India was not scientific and rational but was a mystified glorification of the past. He denied the future devoid of humanitarian values but accepted the past with it. Also he stresses the need for eradication of social differences and humiliating discriminations on the basis of minor food and dressing habits. He warns us about accepting the unreal abstraction of an idea which can benumb our moral consciousness. Unreal abstraction of an idea of nation is also dangerous. Nationalism must have spiritual and humanitarian basis. He was in favour of modernization but aware of its challenges and problems. That is why he opposed
Gandhi’s emphasis on ‘Charkha’, he insists on the modernization to have human face. He does not advocate the material progress without the foundations of spiritualism.

Many times, reading the text we perceive his ambivalent attitude on some issues. Castes and races are separate realities; mixing those issues creates a kind of confusion in people. He detests the changing nature of relationship between man and woman resulting into conflicting one. On the other hand he condemns the suppression and exploitation of women in the society. He advocates for the emancipation of women but never talks about confrontations. His naïve romanticism and utopian ideas never allows him to take firm stand on some of the issues. We have to admit that he preaches only one religion that is of love, cherishes the values those are essentially humanitarian and wishes for the welfare of the whole world.

Ambedkar was invited to represent the Depressed Classes. He put forth the demand for separate constituencies for the Depressed Classes which was quite justifiable. If Congress justifies its boycott on the Simon Commission as they were not given representation, the demand of separate constituencies by Ambedkar was more than justifiable because he did not see any prospects of betterment in their conditions.

In order to bring out the attitude of the society he refers to the speeches delivered by the Congress Presidents in their annual conferences which exhibited either ignorance of the importance of social reforms or were hostile to them. Some of the liberal people insisted upon holding social conferences to grapple with social problems. But social reactionary members of the Congress declared that they would burn the pandal if the Social Conference was held in the Congress pandal. They even opposed the idea of separate social conference.

Gandhi seems to have picked the same attitude. As the situation had changed due to constitutional reforms were in the offing. The attitude of the Congress suddenly changed and they started showing concern for the Untouchables. But this concern was limited to removal of untouchability. Ambedkar, an erudite scholar on caste was not convinced that the removal of untouchability would make any change. Because they had emphasized the necessity of the Varna system emphatically, they had also admired the caste system and stated that Indian civilization exists due the caste system. In this case only eradication of the Untouchability would not have helped in
changing their fate. Caste decided status of persons, birth was the basis for that this ascriptive system would have continued, distribution of occupation is an obvious manifestation of caste which would not be affected due to removal of Untouchability. So Ambedkar asserted a need to do away with the caste system and not only untouchability. His aim was not merely to uplift the Downtroddens but to create a casteless society which he described in his last speech in the constituent assembly. He said that ascriptive status and democracy do not go together; he believed that it was inconsistent with democracy.

Ambedkar was at the most believed to be a leader of the Untouchables. This view was erroneous and betrayed the ignorance of the speakers. He fought for the upliftment of the other oppressed also. While Tilak favoured the Khots who exploited peasants and sided with the money landers, Ambedkar started the movement for abolition of Khoti system and rescuing the peasants from the clutches of Khots as well as the moneylenders. This was the agrarian revolt which continued for decades. It was the longest drawn struggle between the peasants and the landlords. Ambedkar stated that for him the yardstick to measure the progress of a society is the women’s progress in that society. He fought the battle to rescue women from the patriarchal bondage. Not only the Hindu Code Bill but his movements stand a witness to this fact.

His efforts were aimed at creating an egalitarian society based on the trinity of equality liberty and fraternity. The society which is free of all the biases and prejudices and which has developed a habit of rational thinking that unchains people from the bondage of all sorts of superstitions. This was the cause of Ambedkar’s concept of nationalism.