3.1.0 It is in their attitude towards 'religion' that we find the working of their contrasting temperaments. Gandhi is highly religious, in his search for the meaning of life, and its discovery in the religious traditions of the world. He is a confirmed theist. His works bear testimony to the evolution of a pious soul. Nehru is non-religious and has a certain distaste for vague speculations about religion. However, Nehru, as a secularist has not ruled out religion, which to a certain extent, has penetrated his world outlook. Chaudhuri is anti-religious, for his iconoclastic views have coloured his writings to a great extent. He attacks all varieties of belief that take shelter under the umbrella of Hinduism.

3.1.1 By religion, Gandhi does not mean a formal religion or a customary religion as he believes that all religions are different paths leading to the same goal. For him religion and morality are the same. They are interchangeable terms. For him the basic principles of this morality are truth and non-violence. Though he believes that all religions are true, he does not consider them as
infallible. He has faith only in a formless and attributeless God. From the beginning of his career, Nehru has shown some indifference towards religion. According to him, religion, is other worldly. It creates in men, ill-will for the world. He has a certain distaste for vague speculations on religion. However, he understands the value of religion and has expressed his faith in Vedanta. Any idea of a personal God sounds very odd to him. Chaudhuri is anti-religious and is exasperated with India for everything in India is ultimately connected with religion - the Indian sociology, politics, economics are all affected by religion. Within the religion itself, the contradictions are likely to reach absurd extremes. To his iconoclastic eyes, Vedas merely appear as symbols. Like a true iconoclast he attacks all the Hindu rituals and criticizes Hindus who worship Gods, created in the image of the earthly kings.

3.2.0 Their attitudes towards religion have to be analysed in relation to the religious history of India. During its long history of thousands of years reaching back to the very dawn of civilisation, India has received numerous currents of thought and ideas from outside and has displayed a truly remarkable capacity to assimilate and adopt them so as to give them a peculiarly Indian stamp and make them part of her own heritage. India has always been
receptive to ideas and the Rig Veda dictum, "Let noble thoughts come to us from every side" (cited in Chidbhavananda 1977: 68) illustrates well his attitude of creative acceptance. This assimilation of thought and ideas from outside for centuries has led to the harmony of religions, which is another great concept that India has developed through the age. India has also had its share of religious strife, but essentially the Indian cultural heritage has always recognized and accepted various paths to the divine, as the Rig Veda put it, "Truth is one, the wise call it by many names" (cited in Chidbhavananda 1977: 70). Apart from Hinduism, which has always been the predominant religion of India, there are a number of other religions. Tolerating another religion is at best a negative approach, but accepting all religions positively and gladly is a peculiar Indian contribution. India's message of the harmony of religion - the fact that the Divine is so opulent and all embracing that any effort to move towards it is to be welcomed regardless of the style or idiom - is thus extremely relevant in the modern age.

3.2.1.1 Every human personality, in the Indian view, contains involved within it, seeds of spiritual growth and regeneration. However diverse the circumstances, however hostile the environment, there is within the human psyche,
the unquenchable spark of divinity that must, sooner or later, be fanned into a blazing fire of spiritual realization. This concept endows every individual with a dignity that immediately places him, in essence, above and beyond social customs and tradition.

3.2.1.2 Religion in India is a highly complex subject and that explains why different scholars have either showered wholesome approval or have criticised it in no uncertain terms. The impact of religion in India is so vast that no writer can escape commenting on it. In such a study, involving contributions from a number of scholars with diverse intellectual backgrounds differing viewpoints or assessments are unavoidable. Even atheists have commented on religion from their own point of view. Since all the writers have analysed and interpreted different aspects of religion with academic objectivity and freedom, a generation of new ideas and new insights has emerged from it. And only in this context we should have the views of Gandhi, Nehru and Chauhuri on religion.

3.3.0 Gandhi, in his interpretation of religion, accepts it; Nehru, in his modest rejection of religion, accepts only its spirit; and Chaudhuri in his subversive attitude to it, negates it.
3.3.1.0 Gandhi equates religion with morality or Dharma, that governs the universe. He is fully convinced that all religion have some imperfection in them since they are the creations of mortal men. Though a devote Hindu, he does not seem to cling to Hinduism, but his religion is one that manifests itself in all the actions of man in society. Truth and non-violence are the basic principles of his religion. He talks of ethical religion and gives morality, the primary status.

3.3.1.1 Gandhi is a confirmed theist. He equates religion with morality. Believing in fundamental moral values common to all the great religions of the world, he says that he has nothing new to give to the world, meaning he has no desire to create a new sect. He believes that all religions are different paths leading to the same goal. Though he believes that all religion or religions are true, he does not consider them as infallible. They are the creation of men and therefore they have something of their imperfection.

3.3.1.2 Gandhi's religion is the religion which underlies all religions, and which brings men face to face with the Maker. It is not the Hindu religion which Gandhi certainly praises above all other religions, but the religion which
transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. Therefore, it is clear that Gandhi uses the term 'Religion' in its broadest sense, meaning thereby 'self-realization or knowledge of self'. To him religion means Dharma or the sincere performance of duty and righteousness.

3.3.1.3 Gandhi considers that the basic principles of this Dharma are truth and non-violence, which can further be elaborated into eleven principles. They are: Ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (chastity), aparigraha (non-possession), sharirashastra (physical labour), aswada (control of palate), sarvatra-bhaya-varjana (fearlessness), sarvadharma (equality of religions), samanatva (swadeshi), sparshabhavana (discarding of untouchability).

3.3.1.4 The dominating theme, however of his writings is the inculcation of the primarily moral norms of truth and non-violence. He always speaks of religion in terms of ethical idealism and regards spiritual perfection as the only consumation of moral endeavours. Religion signifies to him belief in the ordered moral goverence of the world and the spirit of faith in and dependence upon the absolute truth. Hence, it demands a complete consecration of a
man's being and personality to truth, which is God. Gandhi always talks of "Ethical Religion" thus:

For me, morals, ethics and religion are unconvertible terms. A moral life without reference to religion is like a house built upon sand and religion divorced from morality is like 'Sounding brass', good only for making a noise and breaking heads" (ER II: 35).

As soon as the moral basis is lost, one ceases to be religious. Gandhi continues, "All religions are founded on the same moral laws. My ethical religion is made up of laws which bind men all over the world" (ER II: 40). According to him, "True religion and true morality are bound up with each other and the essence of religion is morality" (ER II: 42). Thus the Gandhian concept of religion is somewhat similar to Mathew Arnold's view of religion as morality suffused with emotion. Manmohan Choudhuri observes: "Gandhi in his search for the meaning of life, discovered it in the religious traditions of the world and became a confirmed theist" (Choudhuri 1989: 40). Gandhi does not think that religion is to be practiced in a cave or a mountain top. It must manifest itself in all the actions of man in societies.
He says,

I do not conceive religion as one of the many activities of mankind. The same activity may be governed by the spirit either of religion or irreligion. There is no such thing for me therefore as leaving politics for religion. For me every, the tiniest, activity is governed by what I consider to be my religion (Gandhi 1938: 25).

Therefore to Gandhi religion means Dharma or the sincere performance of duty and stands for Truth and righteousness.

3.3.2.0 Nehru is not interested in religion. His deep involvement in the freedom struggle does not allow him to think seriously about religion. He is a rationalist and a humanist, who is more concerned with the human problems than the metaphysical speculations. His letters to Gandhi reveal his attitude to religion. Gandhi considers him to be a religious man if 'religion' means the service to humanity. Though endowed with a scientific temperament, Nehru does not consider science to be omnipotent. Therefore, he does not rule out religion, which has produced 'fine types' of men and women. He is only opposed to official religion, which
prevents the mental growth of the people. He also believes that religion and morality are the same.

3.3.2.1 Nehru has shown little interest in religion. The family environment in which he was brought up, his early association with theosophists, his educational training at Harrow, Cambridge and London, - all contributed towards the formulation of his views on religion. His distaste for religion is expressed as follows:

I do not usually burden my mind with such philosophical or metaphysical problems, which escape solution. I have not been attracted toward metaphysics; in fact I have had a certain distaste for vague speculation (Nehru 1982: 15).

Nehru was too much taken up by his activities and his struggle, to think about 'religion' seriously. As a rationalist, he views all human problems with an open mind examining and analysing them in a systematic and objective manner and choosing a remedy which appears to be the best. For such a man, religion with all its egoistic and dogmatic beliefs, does not have much scope. Revealing his discomfort at such prevailing forms of religion, Nehru says:

Religion, as I saw it practiced and accepted even by thinking minds, whether it was Hinduism or
Islam or Buddhism or Christianity, did not attract me. It seemed to be closely associated with superstitious practices and dogmatic beliefs and behind it lay a method of approach to life's problems which was certainly not that of science. There was an element of magic about it, an empirical credulousness, a reliance on the supernatural.

(Nehru 1982: 12).

A religion which encourages superstition and blind dogmas is not a true religion according to Nehru.

3.3.2.2 Nehru has made some interesting remarks about his attitude to religion in a letter to Gandhi:

Religion is not familiar ground of me, and as I have grown older I have definitely drifted away from it. I suppose I have something else in its place, something other than just intellect and reason, which gives indefinable and indefinite urge, which may have just a tinge of religion in it and yet is wholly different from it, I have grown to rely entirely on the workings of the mind. Perhaps they are weak supports to rely
Nehru is a humanist in the true sense of the word. He is much concerned about the human life on earth rather than life after death. Therefore he says "I am afraid the next world does not interest me. My mind is full of what I should do in this world and if I see my way clearly here, I am content. If my duty here is clear to me, I do not trouble myself about any other world" (Nehru 1982: 38). In this respect, Gandhi considers him to be a religious man even when Nehru joked to him in a letter that it is easy for him (Nehru) to sermonise about religious tolerance, because he himself has no religion worth talking about (SW V: 459). But, surprisingly Gandhi writes: "His idea of religion was service of humanity and he was truly devoted to his duty of working for the betterment of humanity. In Sanskrit there is one word both for religion and duty - dharma. He was truly a dharmik man in that sense" (cited in Wafa 1973: 67). It is the humanistic spirit in Nehru which makes Gandhi to consider him a truly religious man.

3.3.2.3 Nehru, however, cannot totally deny the philosophical questions about the origin and meaning of the existence of the universe and man in it. As a man of
scientific temperament he thinks that they are beyond scientific knowledge and are the realms of metaphysics. He clearly states:

> Whether there is such a thing as a soul, or whether there is a survival after death or not, I do not know; and important as these questions are they do not trouble me in the least. . . But I do not believe in any of these or other theories and assumptions as a matter of religious faith. They are just intellectual speculations in an unknown region about which we know next to nothing (Nehru 1982: 15-16).

Though he is an agnostic, he does not rule out religion which has shaped his world outlook. Therefore A. Litman is not right when he says that Nehru has "censured religion not only from the socio-political point of view, but also from the point of view of ideology and philosophy" (Litman 1973: 126) Nehru's criticism of religion is not fully consistent and comprehensive. He is against the 'the common religious thinking which is indifferent to the world around us. Prof. C.D. Narasimhaiah says, "Nehru's grievance was that religion as practised today has hindered change and progress" (Narasimhaiah 1978: 168). Nehru recognizes the legitimacy
of Marx's words that "religion is the opium of the masses" (Nehru 1982: 503). Religion is often used to keep people in the dark, reducing their vision and making them cruel and intolerant of others. It has often becomes the handmaiden of politics and imperialism. That is why Nehru tries his best to keep politics from religion.

3.3.2.4 However, his criticism of the official religion does not prevent him from engaging in religious speculations and even making concessions to them in his philosophy. He says:

It was obvious that religion had supplied some deeply felt inner need of human nature. It had given a set of values to human life, and though some of these values had no application today, or were even harmful, others were still the foundation of morality and ethics (Nehru 1982: 14).

In the same way, he believes that in certain spheres of our consciousness, the intellectual forms of religion are natural: "It was obvious that there was a vast unknown region around us, and science, with its magnificent achievements, knew little enough about it, though it was
making tentative approaches in that direction" (Nehru 1982: 14). According to him the higher values of life-ethics, ideals, faith - are all closely linked with religious feelings, if not with official religion. He accepts the Gandhian ideology that religion and morality are the same. He says,

Religion not in the conventional but in the broadest sense helps me to have a glimpse of the Divine essence. This glimpse is impossible without full development of the moral sense. Hence religion and morality are, for me, synonymous terms. ("Culture and Civilization", SWT: 318).

Replying to a question if he had not begun God seeking in the evening of his life, Nehru said:

The old Hindu idea that there is a divine essence in the world and every individual possesses something of it and can develop it, appeals to me in terms of a force. I do not happen to be a religious man, but I do believe in something - call it religion or anything you like, which raises man above his normal level and gives the human
personality a new dimension of spiritual equality and moral depth. (Karanjia 1966: 33)

Though Nehru's attitude to life is essentially scientific, "the temper of science is one of disinterestedness, ceaseless activity, search for truth and above all humility in the presence of the unknown and the mysterious" (Bhagwan 1983: 52). He is very much convinced that religion has brought comfort to innumerable men and women and it has also produced some remarkable men throughout history.

3.3.3.0 Chaudhuri considers that the religious rulers and political leaders are in a way one and the same. They are hypocrites and exploit the ignorance of people to serve their ends. In the name of religion, brutal murders are being carried out by the so-called religious men. Indian religions justify the suffering of the people by deadening their spirits. He questions the wide gap between the ancient Hindu spirituality and the modern Hindu superficiality.

3.3.3.1 Chaudhuri equates the religious rulers with the political leaders. He says:

The secular rulers shouldered the responsibility for protecting the life and property of their
subjects whereas the religious rulers had the advantage of keeping along all the practical gains from power to themselves, giving nothing more than psychological confidence to the men whose minds they dominated.

(Chaudhuri 1979: 304)

Therefore, he considers both the religious and political leaders as hypocrites and in fact the religious leaders exercise their power even beyond the reach of political power. So it is perfectly natural that the holy men in India are invariably addressed as 'Maharaj' or 'Great King'. These religious leaders dominate the Indian scene because everything in India is related to religion.

3.3.3.2 Chaudhuri makes a bitter and jocular remark that in India a man will not hesitate to murder another man if one tells him that it is part of his religion. The Indians are so deep-rooted in religion that "to make things secular in this country is to make them weak, vulgar, and eroded" (Chaudhuri 1974: 208). The mystical indifference to filth and squalor is another religious value which has damaged the Hindu sense of beauty and hygiene. Chauduri illustrates the extremity of the purity-mania with an example of a woman of his acquaintance who "used to wash the bed-clothes - not sheets or pillow-cases, but quilts and mattresses - every
morning even in winter" (Chaudhuri 1974: 213). Thus in the name of religion beastal crimes and unhygienic practices are carried throughout India.

3.3.3.3 Chaudhuri hits at the philosophization of suffering in Indian religion. But the main targets of his attack are Hindus who employ this philosophy for the rationalization of their mistakes, and weaknesses which account for their lack of progress in all the fields of their life. The justification of the suffering both of body and of mind is the cause of the cultivation of other allied religious virtues.

3.3.3.4 India is no doubt known as the land of innumerable gods and godmen. That the India of ancient days was a country of the highest kind of religious consciousness to be expressed in her logic, philosophy and metaphysics is beyond controversy. Chaudhuri does not deny that at all. He only wants to point out the conspicuous gap between the ancient Hindu spirituality and the modern Hindu superficiality. Basavaraj Naikar says:

Mr. Chaudhuri's complaint is not so much against the Hindu religion and philosophy (in ideals) as against the Hindus who do not unfortunately live
up to there ideals in the real sense of the term (Naikar 1985: 58).

3.4.0 Gandhi's contacts with the other religions only confirms him in his own faith, Hinduism. Though he calls himself an Hindu, he does not accept every word of Hindu scriptures. He does not accept any interpretation of scripture, which is repugnant to reason or moral sense. According to Nehru, the word 'Hindu' has nothing to do with religion. He accepts the tolerance in Hinduism that has provided room for many religions. Though non-religious, he understands the greatness of the Vedas and the Upanisads and he also accepts the influence of the two great epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata on Indian people. As a secularist, he cannot accept the concept of monolithic state dominated by a single religion and culture. The word 'Hindu' does not have a religious connotation for Chaudhuri. As he is anti-religious, his views regarding Hinduism seem to be biased. He advocates caste system and attacks all varieties of belief and superstition in Hinduism. He has no regard for Vedas and his iconoclastic eyes picture only the 'ugliness' in Hinduism.

3.4.1.0 Though Gandhi came in contact with various religious groups in South Africa, he feels secure in
Hinduism. But his Hinduism is not an orthodox one, but a religion of humanity and justice. He rejects all the social evils which have crept into Hinduism. He is a 'Karmayogi', who shaped his life according to the teachings of Gita. To him, Hinduism fulfils all his spiritual requirements and that is why he wants to be a devote Hindu. He also gives the reasons for being an Hindu.

3.4.1.1 In South Africa, Gandhi had to work among people of many nations, races and colours. He also came in contact there with Christian missionaries who were anxious to convert him to Christianity. But Gandhi did not waver in his faith. However, he has little to do with the forms or ceremonials and the institutions that Hinduism has created within itself. He rejects everything that is against reason or against humanity. Vishnook Bhagwan observes: "He did not exclusively look to Hinduism for moral guidance" (Bhagwan 1983: 110). He does not believe in caste system, nor does he subscribe to the cruel system of untouchability. He also does not observe Hindu ceremonials or holidays. He rarely visits temples except sometimes through courtesy. Even then he will not enter a temple which is not open to the untouchables, whom he calls 'Harijans'. He thinks image worship and going to the temples are good to those who need such props to their faith. J.W. Spellman observes "that
Hindus particularly were identified as believers in a primitive religion which was riddled with idolatry and superstition. Today this is still a major image and stereotype of Hinduism" (Spellman 85-86: 14). Gandhi, in fact, dislikes this type of primitive Hinduism and moulds his life in accordance with the basic teachings of the Gita.

3.4.1.2 In a way, Gandhi is a Karmayogi and in accordance with the teachings of Gita, he holds that good works must be performed in the spirit of sacrifice to the God of humanity, especially, in serving daridranarayan, God of the poor and the downtrodden. Like other great reformers in Hinduism, he wrote a commentary on the Gita. He says that whenever in difficulty he has recourse to the Gita and it is the solace of his life.

3.4.1.3 Gandhi knows that elitist Hinduism tends to be abstract and mystical, while popular Hinduism tends to be ritualistic and obscurantist. He is tempted neither by the intellectual pleasures of theology nor by the blissful joys of mysticism. He challenges age-old notions and prejudices with impunity. He has a healthy aversion to occult phenomena and never encourages superstition in any form. His Hinduism is reduced to a few fundamental beliefs, which he himself details in an essay on 'Hinduism', which was published in Young India. He believes in the supreme
perceives the beauty as having been solidified into one woman. He thinks that the female of his kind has emerged from a thousand centuries "in the topmost rung, having become one Ruth" (ME:116). "Yielding" is the keyword of Eugene Witla in The "Genius" for measuring the beauty. For, his "ideal of womanhood" is identical with her "physical beauty" (TG:52). Here, too, the male artist's exertion for power in sexual relations is self-evident. In the words of Richard Lehan,

In The "Genius" Dreiser clearly showed that the desire for money and sex had their common source in the desire for power, in an age that needed to transcend others, to conquer the very secrets and mysteries of life, including those locked in a woman's heart (Lehan 1969:119).

Similarly in Winesburg, Ohio, as lust awakens the creative power in George Willard, his "mind ran off into words and holding the woman lightly, he whispered the words ... 'lust and night and women'" (WO:225). To the Presbyterian pastor, Curtis Hartman, God manifests himself in the body of a woman. Amory Blaine in This Side of Paradise pictures himself as the "Conqueror" in his relationship with the woman whom he conceives as "nothing except what he had read into her" (TSP:101,104). The male artist in Mosquitoes attempts even to lock her up in a book. Gordon's feminine ideal is "a virgin with no legs leave me, no arms to hold
Hindu Mahasabha leader tried to prove that untouchability was an integral part of Hinduism, Gandhi retorted:

Happily for me, my Hinduism does not bind me to every verse because it is written in Sanskrit. In spite of your literal knowledge of the Shastras, yours is a distorted kind of Hinduism. I claim in all humility to have lived Hinduism all my life.


B.R. Nanda rightly says "It will be safe to say that Gandhi was one of the greatest innovators in the history of Hinduism. He reshaped and redefined time-honoured concepts" (Nanda 1958: 1).

3.4.2.0 The scientific spirit of Nehru questions the very authenticity of the word 'Hindu', which, according to Nehru, does not seem to denote 'the follower of a particular religion'. He appreciates the religious tolerance in Hinduism, which has provided room for various other religions and philosophies. But he condemns the communalism of the upper caste Hindus who dominate the minorities. Though non-religious, Nehru understands the greatness of the Upanishads and Vedanta. He also has a great reverence for Ramayana, Mahabharatha and Bhagavat Gita.
3.4.2.1 Nehru believes the word 'Hindu' does not occur in our ancient literature. He points out that in a Tantrik work of the eighth century the word 'Hindu' is used to denote a people and not the follower of a particular religion. The word is of old Persian origin and Nehru thinks it is derived from 'Sindhu'. The words 'Indus' and 'India' are derived from Sindhu (Nehru 1982: 74). Therefore, the word 'Hindu' is used in connection with a particular religion quite late. Nehru says:

Hinduism, as a faith, is a vague, amorphous, many-sided, all things to all men. It is hardly possible to define it, or indeed to say definitely whether it is a religion or not, in the usual sense of the word. In its present form, and even in the past, it embraces many beliefs and practices, from the highest to the lowest, often opposed to or contradicting each other.

(Nehru. 1982:75).

Nehru does not agree with Gandhi's definition of Hinduism as 'the religion of truth and non-violence'. Eminent scholars say that "non-violence" is no essential part of the Hindu creed" (Nehru 1982: 75). Therefore, Nehru says that this definition is not satisfactory. The ancient faith and
philosophy were chiefly a way of life and an outlook on the world. Thus the words, 'Hindu' or 'Hinduism' do not stand for Indian culture as they are widely believed. According to him, the correct word for 'Indian' is 'Hindu', from 'Hind', a shortened form of Hindustan (Nehru 1982: 175). As such the word 'Hindu' has nothing to do with religion, and a Muslim or a Christian Indian is as much a 'Hindu' as a person who follows Hinduism as a religion.

3.4.2.2 Hinduism has provided room for many religions as it does not impose any threat when new beliefs and ideas evolve. It is because of this outstanding characteristic of tolerance in Hinduism that India, according to Nehru, becomes the home for so many diverse philosophies. This tolerance is based on the essential belief that man is destined for union with God or the divine.

3.4.2.3 Nehru is a broad-minded secularist "Secularism", according to him, "was not only a political doctrine but a social one of revolutionary character, embracing all religions and communities in India" (Bhagwan 1983: 227). Quite naturally, Nehru is critical of a wide variety of rituals which detract from the basic essence of Hindu philosophy. He condemns the caste system. But some critics of Nehru contend that though he strongly condemns the
communalism of the upper caste Hindus, he does not condemn the communalism of the Muslims and other minorities. The total effect of all these is the strengthening of communalism of the minorities and the under-privileged sections of the people (Karunakaran 1979: 34). V.T. Patil thinks that this is probably because Nehru thinks that the caste Hindus, taking undue advantage of their over-dominant majority, may impose their religious views on the under-privileged minorities (V.T. Patil 1987: 263).

3.4.2.4 However, non-religious, Nehru has read and imbibed the great philosophy in the *Upanishads* and *Vedanta*. He is drawn by the sincerity and passion of those ancient revelations. They are the earliest records of Indian thought and culture. Nehru thinks that they have powerfully influenced humanity. They should not be looked upon as revealed scriptures. But their real significance lies in the unfolding of the human mind in the earliest stages of thought. Praising them, Nehru writes:

> And what a wonderful mind it was! The Vedas (from the root *vid*, to know) were simply meant to be a collection of the existing knowledge of the day; they are a jumble of many things: hymns, prayers, ritual for sacrifice, magic, magnificent nature
poetry. There is no idolatory in them; no temples for the gods. The vitality and affirmations of life pervading them are extraordinary.

(Nehru 1982: 79).

Similarly the Upanishads are "instinct with a spirit of inquiry, of mental adventure, of a passion for finding out the truth about things" (Nehru 1982: 89). Nehru likes them because there is an element of scientific method in their approach. Satish Kumar observes: "Nehru believed in a synthesis between old and new, between science and religion" (Kumar 1987: 56). Although Nehru does not understand the metaphysical aspects of the Upanishads, he is impressed by the vigour of the thought, the questioning and the rationalistic background. The most outstanding characteristic of the Upanishads is the dependence on truth. He, however, never fails to point out how in the course of time the Upanishads lost much of its value:

... The conception of monism became transformed into one of monotheism for religious purpose, and even lower forms of belief and worship were not only tolerated but encouraged, as suited to a particular stage of development.

(Nehru 1982: 94).
The Upanishads are the example of how even the noblest thoughts of men can be corrupted by the selfish minded posterity.

3.4.2.5 Nehru accepts the greatness of the two great epics of ancient India - the Ramayana and Mahabharata. He considers Mahabharata as "a colossal work, an encyclopaedia of tradition and legend, and political and social institutions of ancient India" (Nehru 1982: 106). It marks the beginning of the spirit of assimilation of foreign elements and the absorption of indigenous traits. Nehru is equally attracted by the Bhagvad Gita which, according to him, is an attempt to reconcile the three ways for human advancement viz., the path of the intellect, the path of action and the path of faith. It marvellously deals with the spiritual background of human existence. Of its innumerable commentaries, the interpretations of Tilak, Aurobindo and Gandhi stand out above the rest. Nehru observes "Gandhi bases his firm belief in non-violence on it, others justify violence and warfare for a righteous cause" (Nehru 1982: 109). Nehru, thus, has presented his views on Hinduism without any prejudices and his scientific temperament governs his writings to a large extent.

3.4.3.0 Chaudhuri also thinks that the word 'Hindu' has nothing to do with 'religion'. If at all Chaudhuri has
anything to appreciate in Hinduism, it is the caste system of the primitive Hinduism. In his most controversial book, Hinduism Chaudhuri presents a distorted and misleading account of Hinduism. According to him, the Hindus are hypocrites, who in the disguise of seeking 'other world', are very much self-centred and strive for materialistic prosperity. They are not the true followers of Vedas, Upanishads and the Bhagawat Gita. Unlike Gandhi and Nehru, Chaudhuri considers Vedas as mere symbols and the Indians cannot even read them without western translation.

3.4.3.1 Chaudhuri, like Nehru, says that the word 'Hindu' does not have a religious connotation. He simply prefers to equate the term 'Hindu' with the 'Indian'.

He explains:

It needs very little Greek to discover that the words 'Hindu' and 'Indian' are etymologically the same, being derivatives of the Persian and Greek forms of an identical definition. The Persian word was aspirated, whereas the Greek was softly breathed, and that probably began the partings of ways. The definition originally meant an inhabitant of the region of the river Indus (in
Sanskrit - Sindhu), but was extended to the people of the whole continent. Thus, in its primary meaning, the word 'Hindu' stands for the same thing as Indian (Chaudhuri 1979: 27-28).

Chaudhuri is surprised to find how even well-educated can think that we are Hindus because we have a religion called Hinduism, and the word is comparable to 'Christian' or 'Muslim'.

Actually, we Hindus are not Hindus because we have a religion called or understood as Hinduism; our religion has been given the very impressive label of 'Hinduism' because it is the jumble of the creeds and rituals of a people known as Hindus after their country. On this analogy, the Greek religion might be called Hellenism, and even Graecism (Chaudhuri 1979: 29).

Here it would be quite appropriate to quote Nehru's interpretation of the word 'Hindu' while discussing the religious connotation of it: "A Buddhist or Jain in India is a hundred percent product of Indian thought and culture, yet neither is a Hindu by faith. It is therefore, entirely misleading to refer to Indian culture as Hindu culture"
(Nehru 1982: 74). Dr. Radhakrishnan also has pointed out that "the term 'Hindu' has originally a territorial and not a crucial significance. It implied residence in a well-defined geographical area". (Radhakrishnan 1948: 13)

3.4.3.2 Unlike Gandhi and Nehru, Chaudhuri advocates the caste system. He says:

Taking the system as a whole, I would describe it as a social organization which contributes to order, stability, and regulation of competition, and I would choose the digression with a piece of advice to the foreign informer of Hindu society, and their Hindu imitators; please keep your tongues and pens off the caste system. Please do not pulverize a society which has no other force of cohesion, into amorphous dust.

(Chaudhuri 1979: 46).

Eventhough Chaudhuri's highly individualistic theories regarding the caste system may provoke us, his clear-cut logic compels our admiration. C. Paul Verghese says:

Chaudhuri's ideas are controversial. . . they are characterized by self-opinionatedness. His ideas
strongly reflect his personality, and, therefore, a study of his works is also an assessment of the man, an inveterate anglophile, whose personality has been shaped by his own awareness of the conflict between 'the race and the reality' (Verghese 1973: 10).

Chaudhuri's wide scholarship, penetrating observation, and consummate mastery over language makes his comments very interesting.

3.4.3.3 But, his approach to Hinduism is false, distorted and misleading. In this connection, Satish Kumar observes, "Chaudhuri's assimilation with European culture and thought is so complete that he feels no scruples in presenting a bitter, scathing, myopic, irrational, unconvincing and biased criticism of Hinduism" (Kumar 1983: 14).

3.4.3.4 According to Chaudhuri, the entire religious life of the Hindus has a worldly orientation. The Hindus worship gods and goddesses for gaining riches and success in worldly affair. In fact, help from religion is sought for all purposes, moral or immoral. Chaudhuri criticizes the Vedanta's effort to define the universal soul as 'Neti', 'Neti' (not that, not that) as negation of all that is
accessible to the senses. The salvation suggested by Hindu philosophical systems does not convince him in the least.

3.4.3.5 Chaudhuri satirises the Indian society by showing the contrast between the cherished ideals of Hinduism and the actual day-to-day practice of the Hindus. In a country, where the ideals of Hinduism are expounded so prominently in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagvad Gita, the people are naturally expected to live up to them. But on the contrary, as Chaudhuri points out, the Hindus are the stark materialists and can be more materialistic than the so called materialistic society of the west itself. Tara Sinha argues:

... it is true as time advanced great many evils crept into the Indian religions so that Hinduism no longer remained a fountain head of different schools of philosophy it had given birth to, but instead, became a jumble of dogmas and creeds sheltering fake sadhus and fraud fakirs. This, however, does not mean that there was a total loss of love and respect for philosophy and philosophers (Sinha 1981: 112).

Robert deSouza also feels that Chaudhuri's criticism of the peoples of India may be welcome to certain extent but it
will not serve a healthy purpose. "He (Chaudhuri) satirically criticises the peoples of India but does not suggest adequate means to remedy the situation" (DeSouza 1973: 194). Thus Chaudhuri has become the most controversial writer of India.

3.4.3.6 Chaudhuri considers Vedas as mere symbols. The Hindus accept the authority of the Vedas whether they understand them or not, whether they believe in God or not. Even most of the Indian scholars and historians who deal with the vedic age cannot read vedic Sanskrit and are wholly dependent on Western translation.

3.4.3.7 Chaudhuri points out that Coencobilism and vagrancy are common in all the religious sects of Hinduism. He also points out that criticism forms an integral element in Hinduism. Therefore, he thinks that "Hinduism has been the victim of both moral and intellectual dishonesty" (Chaudhuri 1979: 14). Chaudhuri is a non-conformist, who ridicules everything that he sees around him. Chaudhuri's views on Hinduism is cynical and subjective, distorted and dogmatic. He is "neither an utopist nor a satirist. He is only bitter" (Karnani 1968: 4). We may not agree with his idiosyncratic theories on race and religion but his originality and rationality compel our admiration.
3.5.0 Gandhi is tolerant of all religions because the moral principle are the same in all the great religions of the world. Gandhi describes himself as a 'sanatani' Hindu, meaning one who believes in the perennial nature of religion. He also coins the term 'Sarva dharma samabhava' which means 'equal regard for all religions'. Nehru hates orthodox religions which are closely associated with superstitious practices and dogmatic beliefs. However, he praises Buddha, who preached Buddhism, without any religious sanction or any reference to God or another world. Nehru does not belittle the noble impulses of the founders of religious faith and gives a convincing assessment of the historical role of religion. Though anti-religious, Chaudhuri is impressed by the solemnity of the church services in England. The collective worship of the Christians inspires him, while the worship in the Hindu temples is only meant for worldly prosperity and happiness. Chaudhuri's condemnation of Hinduism betrays his anglicism.

3.5.1.0 Gandhi believes in the moral principle of all religions. Therefore, he is tolerant of all religions. His belief in Hinduism has not blinded his vision to accept everything in it as divinely inspired. Though there were people from different religious groups in his Ashram, he never tried to convert them. He even encouraged them to
follow their own religion. In fact, his daily prayers contained reading from all great religious books of the world.

3.5.1.1 As pointed out earlier, Gandhi is a firm believer in the theory that all religions are different roads leading to the same goal. Therefore, he says:

Religions are different paths converging upon the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals. So long as there are different religions, every one of them may need some distinctive symbol. But when the symbol is made into a fetish and an instrument of proving the superiority of one's religion over other, it is fit only to be discarded (Gandhi 1938: 14).

He is thus tolerant of all religions and accepted their fundamental teaching. The moral principles are the same in all the great religions of the world. Gandhi says:

I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are
all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the stand point of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another (Gandhi 1938: 16).

Thus Gandhi, although a devout Hindu, stands for religious homogeneity of mankind and fosters the spirit of religious tolerance.

3.5.1.2 Though Gandhi believes that all religions are true, he does not consider them as infallible since they are man-made. He points out that "After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that i) all religions are true; ii) all religions have error in them" (Gandhi 1938: 21). He further states . . "I believe the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense" (Gandhi 1938: 50).
Nehru is right when he says, "He (Gandhi) was a unique personality and it was impossible to judge him by the usual standards or even to apply the ordinary canons of logic to him (Nehru 1948: 62-78). In his speeches and articles, Gandhi proclaims the truth of the universality of all religions and actually practises and proves this truth in his life.

3.5.1.3 As Gandhi believes in the basic teachings of all the great religions of the world, he does not believe in proselytizing activity. In his Ashram there were Muslims and Christians and Pandits, but he never tried to convert them to Hinduism. One day Mirabehn, one of the disciples of Gandhi, expressed a desire to become a Hindu. Gandhi's reply was that she should live in her faith. By becoming a Hindu, she would not, in any way, improve her moral conduct or values. It is not necessary for a person to change his religion but to act according to the basic principles of his or her own religion. It is only necessary for a Muslim to be a good Muslim and a Christian to be a good Christian. He warned the Christian missionaries that their humanitarian work should not be done with a motive of converting the followers of other faiths to Christianity. He says" "I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit
of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating (Gandhi 1938: 55). Thus, Gandhi is dead against all sorts of religious conversion.

3.5.1.4 Gandhi feels that the religious traditions are storehouses of distilled wisdom based on the experience of thousands of years and it will be unwise to reject them out of hand. Therefore, Gandhi draws freely on all the traditions for his own enrichment and advises everyone to do so. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan "Gandhi will ever be remembered as, the great prophet of moral and spiritual revolution without which this distracted world will not find peace" (Radhakrishnan 1939: 14). Gandhi claims himself to be a good Christian, a good Muslim, a good Parsi, in fact to be a good follower of all the great religions of the world. His daily prayers include readings from the Bible, the Quran, the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs and Zorastrian and Japanese prayers.

3.5.2 Nehru rejects the orthodox religions, which encourages superstitions. He says "there was an element of magic about it, an uncritical credulousness, a reliance on the supernatural" (Nehru 1982: 26). At the same time, Nehru admits that "the traditional Chinese outlook, fundamentally ethical and yet irreligious or tinged with religious scepticism has an appeal for me" (Nehru: 1982: 377). The
scientific temperament of Nehru does not accept any idea of personal God or Goddess.

3.5.2.1 Nehru, has a soft corner for the Buddha. The Buddha story has had great attraction for Nehru ever since he was a boy. As an adult he carried Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia wherever he went. This book deals with the life and teachings of Buddha. When he visited the Buddhist countries he made it a point to trace the influence of Buddhism on the people there, though many of the things he saw in Buddhist monasteries did not appeal to him. Buddha's message is universal. Nehru says:

The ages roll by and Buddha seems not so far away after all; his voice whispers in our ears and tells us not to run away from the struggle, but, calm-eyed, to face it and see in life ever greater opportunities for growth and advancement (Nehru 1982: 132)

The message of Buddhism is based on the ideal of righteousness and self-discipline. Buddha's message is both psychological and scientific and Nehru likes the message because, "he (Buddha) preached without any religious sanction or any reference to God or another world" (Nehru 1982: 128). In fact, Buddha rose in rebellion against the
conventional practice of religion of his day. He played the role of a social revolutionary. So he angered the Brahmin class who were interested in the continuance of the existing social practices. Writing on the influences of Buddhism in India, Nehru asserts:

It was the ethical and social and practical idealism of Buddha and his religion that influenced our people and their imperishable marks upon them, even as the ethical ideas of Christianity affected Europe though it may not pay much attention to its dogmas, and as Islam's human, social, and practical approach influenced many people who were not attracted by its religious forms and beliefs (Nehru 1982: 175)

The ideas of non-violence, already present in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, was emphasized by Buddhism and even more so by Jainism. Another noteworthy feature of Buddhism is that it did not approve the caste system. More importance was attached to capacity, character, and occupation than birth.

3.5.2.2 Nehru is not wedded to any religion. He only believes in the innate spirituality of human beings. No religion should be granted any special privilege. No
community should be deprived of the legitimate right on the basis of religion. He says "we are building a free secular state where every religion and belief has full freedom and equal honour, whose every citizen has equal liberty and equal opportunity" (cited in Bhagwan 1983: 227). Chalapathi Rau rightly says "Secularism" therefore, is "the essence of Nehru's contribution to nation-building" like those of "democracy, planned development and non-alignment" (Rau 1980: 39-40). Nehru always depreciates the talk of Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj. He stands for People's Raj. Nehru condemns the decision of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly declaring Pakistan as an Islamic Republic. Such a policy is opposed to democracy as it creates "two classes of citizens - one having more opportunities, the other less" (cited in Bhagwan 1983: 228). Though he takes religion as a purely personal affair and does not wish to interfere with any person's belief, yet he objects strongly to the intervention of religion in social and political life. He, thus, works for the establishment of a state which "protects all religions but does not favour one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as the state religion" ("Secularism", SW III: 40). Metha rightly opines: "To make the state secular in the narrow sense of it being neutral towards religion is one thing, to extend the process of secularisation to all areas of social life including law
and politics is quite another. Here Nehru's approach was marked by caution particularly where sentiments of the main minority community were concerned" (Bhagwan 1983: 228).

3.5.3 As an inveterate anglophile, Chaudhuri cannot but admire Christianity, as one aspect of the cultural life of the English people is occupied by religion. In fact Christianity has been a great force behind the rise of Western civilizations. "Religion and culture have always intermingled in Europe, more so in England than anywhere else" (Chaudhuri 1966: 175). Chaudhuri is so profoundly impressed by the solemnity of the Church services, he attended in England that he cannot help exclaiming: "I said to myself that if anywhere I, a Hindu, could think of becoming a Christian it was in such a place" (Chaudhuri 1966: 176). This solemnity also reminds him the differences that exist between the Hindu and the Christian ways of worship.

We go to temples to look on the image of a divine potentate and to watch the ceremonials of his daily life, which are modelled on those of a king. But certainly the English people did not go to their churches to look on a Divine Ruler and his daily life (Chaudhuri 1966: 177).
He also notices that for a Christian, 'collective worship' in a temple is a duty whereas Hindu scriptures do not lay any such duty for their followers. The collective worship of the Christian inspires him but the worship of the 'Gods' in Hinduism makes him angry, as it only meant for materialistic prosperity. It is due to his anglicism and subjectivity that Chaudhuri presents a hostile criticism of Hinduism and hails Christianity to the skies. Certainly his approach is anglicised. Chaudhuri's anglicism is of such a nature that he is ready to take sides with Christianity, though he is a confirmed atheist. He deserves Narayana Menon's bitter criticism that he 'is like a dog trained to wag its tail when its master said "England". (cited in Philip 1986: 43).

3.6.0 According to Gandhi, God is the moral law, dharma. He equates God with truth. Eventhough he utters Ramanama, he makes it clear that Rama of his conception is not the husband of Sita but he who abides in the hearts of men. Thus, it is difficult to establish whether Gandhi's approach to God is monistic or monotheistic. At times he seems to waver between the two doctrines. Nehru does not believe in God or an unknown power in anthropomorphic terms. The conception of monism and the Advaita philosophy has an appeal for him. But what attracts him is the old Indian or
Greek pagan and pantheistic atmosphere, devoid of its conception of God or Gods. Therefore, any idea of personal God seems very odd to him. Chaudhuri believes that Hindu Gods are supernatural kings created in the image of the earthly kings. He has a dig at the Hindu Gods purely on the basis of literary evidence. As Hindus have completely lost their self-confidence, they call for supernatural powers to help them.

3.6.1.0 Gandhi equates God with the moral law, dharma, which is the predominating force in the universe. Therefore the different manifestations of God such as Vishnu, Ishwara and Bhagwan does not seem to convince him in the least. He believes that 'Truth' and 'God' are synonymous. However he deos not interfere with men and women who worship God in the form of the "Avathars". Gandhi interpreted the Bihar earth quake of 1934 as a punishment sent by God to the caste Hindus for practicing untouchability. It is hard to establish that Gandhi's approach to God is monistic or montotheistic as he seems to waver in his faith.

3.6.1.1 As Gandhi believes only in dharma, he considers that all those who believe in the moral law are spiritual eventhough they are called atheists. He equates God with law that governs the universe. The values he has included
in his concept of God are "Truth, love, fearlessness, freedom of conscience and free enquiry, freedom of choice, democracy, the right to make mistakes and cheerfulness" (Choudhuri 1989: 40). He gives importance to truth among the values and equates God with truth. He says;

To me God is Truth and love. God is ethics and morality. God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet he is above all these. God is conscience" ("God", CW III: 204).

But gradually he comes round to the view that appellations for the supreme power like Brahma, Vishnu, Ishwara and Bhagavan "were either meaningless or at least not significant enough, whereas Satya (Truth) is the perfect name for God" ("God", CW III: 205). So he later on comes to change the terms of the equation, God is truth, to give truth, the primary status.

... I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and even atheists have not denied the necessity or power of truth. Not only so, in their passion of discovering truth, they have not hesitated even to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view rightly—And
it was because of their reasoning I saw that I was not going to say "God is truth", but "Truth is God" ("God", CW III: 217).

R.R. Diwakar says: "... by declaring that Truth is God, he (Gandhi) lifts us from our own ancient moorings of theism, theology and all that they mean by it, and rank us afresh with every seeker of Truth, with radical thinkers, with rationalists, and so on. ... (Diwakar 1949: 617-618). According to Gandhi, Ahimsa is the means and Truth is the end.

3.6.1.2 Though Gandhi uttered Ramanama in a different sense, he does not confuse the minds of the ordinary man and woman to whom Rama and Krishna are the supreme beings even though they look upon themselves as human forms and worked for the establishment of righteousness, dharma and the destruction of adharma. For himself, he believes in a formless and attributeless God. He frankly admits that existence of God cannot be proved by reason though it is not against reason. Even if he cannot prove his existence by rational arguments which may not convince, he feels it within himself:

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that prevades everything. I feel it, though I do not
see it. It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses-It transcends the senses-But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent.


3.6.1.3 Reacting to the Bihar earthquake in 1934, Gandhi announced that the earthquake was God's punishment for the sin committed by the caste-Hindus by practicing untouchability. Rabindranath Tagore countered Gandhi's assertion by pointing out that such cataclysms occur according to natural laws and could have nothing to do with the feelings and foibles of human beings. Nehru joined the issue promptly asserting that "anything more opposed to the scientific outlook it would be difficult to imagine". (Nehru 1982: 490).

3.6.1.4 Whether Gandhi's approach is monistic or monotheistic is a matter of debate as he seems to waver between the two doctrines. But as a man of deep spirituality, he believes in the existence of an absolute truth which is beyond the reach of mere human beings who have to be satisfied with glimpses of it.
3.6.2.0 Nehru is non-religious and he does not believe in any personal God. He rather favours Greek pagan religious atmosphere which is totally deprived of God or Goddess. Though Nehru's approach is truly scientific, he knows the limitations of science, which cannot be applied to certain specific fields of knowledge. One should not remain good in the world in the hope of attaining a reward in the other world.

3.6.2.1 Any idea of personal God seems very odd to Nehru as he does not believe in God in anthropomorphic terms. He says:

> What the mysterious is I do not know, I do not call it God because God has come to mean much that I do not believe in. I find myself incapable of thinking of a deity or of any unknown supreme power, and the fact that many people think so is continually a source of surprise to me.

(Nehru 1982: 28)

The conception of monism and the Advaita philosophy seems to attract his attention and the old Indian or Greek pagan atmosphere, devoid of the conception of God or Gods is appealing to him very much. Nehru's outlook does not rest
on a monotheistic foundation. It has several layers, each corresponding to different levels of life and selecting its different aspects. Orset Martyshin points out that the specific feature of Nehru's views and their contradictory character comes from the fact that each one of these 'layers' rests on its own independent foundation (Martyshin 1981: 87).

3.6.2.2 Though Nehru is convinced that the scientific approach has revolutionized human life, he does not consider the use of scientific methods as something that can go on for ever. They can be applied only in certain specific fields of knowledge. Nehru told Brecher that although the religious approach to spiritual principles is narrow because of its multitude of forms and ceremonials, he knew of no other way maintaining moral and spiritual standards apart from religion (Brecher 1959: 607-608). This is what Crooker calls "the poetical strain... not without religious overtones" (Crooker 1966: 179). Thus Nehru has not totally denied religion, which, to a certain extent has shaped his world outlook.

3.6.2.3 Nehru is not concerned with the 'other world' or 'God'. He says that there are some people for whom 'religion' means 'the other world'. They are religious only in the hope of going to heaven. This reminds him of the
child who behaves in the hope of being rewarded with a sweet.

Of the child is always thinking of the jam puff or the jalebi, you would not say that it had been properly trained, would you? Much less would you approve of boys and girls who did everything for the sake of jam puffs and the like. What, then, shall we say of grown-up persons who think and act in this way? For, after all, there is no essential difference between the jam puff and the idea of Paradise.

(Nehru 1982: 37).

According to Nehru religion should not tempt people with reward after death.

3.6.3.0 The iconoclastic Chaudhuri is angry at Hindus for creating their 'Gods' in the image of earthly kings, decorating them with jewels and ornaments. He thinks that the Hindus are extremely materialistic in their approach and therefore they even create 'God and Goddess of money'. In his most controversial book 'The Continent of Circe', he elaborates the sex life of the Hindu Gods, but most of his theories are based on Hindu myths, legends and puranas. He also attacks the superstitious nature of the Hindus who
always crave for supernatural powers to heal even ordinary diseases. He considers that the Hindus are possessed by a demoness called 'Circe' and he suggests that the only remedy for the spell is to follow the European spirit in every walk of life.

3.6.3.1 Chaudhuri thinks that the Indian Gods are nothing but supernatural kings and the daily worship to them is merely meant for decoration and ornament. He thinks that the Hindus do not look up to the Gods in the Christian or Roman or Greek sense. The Hindus pray to God only for worldly prosperity and happiness. Chaudhuri says:

In olden days kings turned to religion for the sake of conquest, for the preservation of their kingdom, and for the recovery of lost thrones, the merchants for wealth; the peasants for crops, and all for Children, health and prosperity. We do so still, this is the prayer to our Mother Goddess: 'Give me longevity, fame, good fortune, O Goddess, give me sons, wealth, and all things desirable.'

(Chaudhuri 1972: 178)

The so-called religious people in India are self-centred and they only crave for all the earthly riches. They seldom
bother about any spiritual attainment. To Chaudhuri Lakshmi or Ganesh are all religious symbols of money. One cannot escape noticing in every normal Hindu home, a private shrine for a God or Goddess of money. In fact, as Chaudhuri asserts, the economic cult is so closely related to the religious cult in the Hindu society that it prompts him to comment:

Ever since the Rig-Vedic age, we have had economic gods and we shall continue to have them. Just as we do not even now leave medical treatment solely to the doctor or the surgeon, but requisition to the priest and the astrologer, so also we call upon the gods to help us in our economic and technological ventures even in what is described in current economic jargon as the public sector.

(Chaudhuri 1972: 107).

Chaudhuri has a dig at Hindu rituals, namely propitiation and coercion of gods through offering sacrifices and incantations.

3.6.3.2 Chaudhuri reconstructs a history of Hindu Gods' sex life purely on the basis of literary evidence – Hindu myths, legends and imaginative literature. Instances from
Hindu myths such as the lechery of Hindu Gods, the sexual life of the sages, and quotations from Kalidasa are produced in support of his thesis in his book *The Continent of Circe*. Paul Verghase says, "*The Continent of Circe* is clearly not history: it is not a disinterested assessment of the Hindu character, it is not even a satire, but only bitterness" (Verghese 1973: 95). About the Hindu Gods, Chaudhuri says:

> The Vedic and epic gods are as lecherous as the olympians, and Indra, supreme warrior God, is the most reckless of them all. He was always after the beautiful wives of the sages, and was given to seducing them by assuming the form of their husbands (Chaudhuri 1974: 226).

Even the Vedic and epic gods are not free from lust and thus they set a bad example for any religious man in India.

3.6.3.3 Nature, according to Chaudhuri, has completely destroyed man's self-confidence and underminded his faith in rational measures. Whenever he is in trouble and even when rational means exist and are applied, the Hindu will never remain satisfied with that but call in the supernatural for exceptional powers. This is what Shils calls "the loss of confidence in the image of the future" (Shils 1961: 383).
3.6.3.4 Chaudhuri concludes his satire *The Continent of Circe* ascribing the puzzling nature of the Hindu to the evil effect of the demoness called Circe. The Hindus have come under the spell of the demoness and that explains their negative life and character. The Hindus are at the mercy of the evil goddess:

They stood at the gate of the goddess with flowing tressess and heard her, Circe, sweetly singing before her loom, as she walked to and fro wearing an imperishable web, gorgeous and dazzling, such as only goddess can make.

(Chaudhuri 1974: 372).

To escape from Circe's spell, the Hindus should realise as Chaudhuri realised in 1955, when he visited West that "We Hindus were Europeans enslaved by a tropical country" (Chaudhuri 1974: 373). The only way to escape from Circe's spell is to 'recover at least our old European spirit'. This is another example of Chaudhuri's anglicised approach to Indian problems even in the matter of religion.

3.7.0 Gandhi's views about human nature are bound up indissolubly with his metaphysical assumption and the ethical principles he considers to be fundamental. Man, for
him, is not a physio-chemical aggregation, but a spiritual entity. He was not only concerned with man's being, but also with his becoming. Nehru is a secular humanist in the sense that he believes in the good for mankind. The service to the human beings is the best form of worship according to Nehru. The iconoclastic tendency of Chaudhuri colours his writings which are a critique of man and women of India. His treatment of men and women of his society is more satirical than sympathetic.

3.7.1.0 Gandhi's love for humanity leads him to the realization of God, who is bound up with all living beings. Though man, by nature, possesses the animal instinct, he is not merely a brute; he is capable of reaching a very superior status.

3.7.1.1 Gandhi says "My faith is in God and therefore also of humanity" (cited in Kripalani 1982: 392). Though we have many 'bodies' we have but one 'soul'. God is originally bound up with mankind and all living beings. Hence love for men leads to the realization of God. Truth, that is God for Gandhi, itself is defined in terms of the ordinary consciousness of man. "What a pure heart feels at a particular time is truth" (cited in Kripalani 1982: 116).
His concept of equality of man is also derived from the concept of the universal soul:

In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. . . I believe that all men are born equal. I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow being. He who claims superiority at once forefeits his claim to be called a man (cited in Kripalani 1982: 214).

3.7.1.2 Gandhi admits man's animal ancestry. But he will not admit that man's nature is all evil. Therefore he does not look upon man as a mere brute. Like all the seers of the Upanishads, Gandhi believes in the ultimate goal of man or human. The essential difference between man and brute, according to him, is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him.

3.7.2.0 Nehru's love for humanity is more practical and his entire life bears witness to this. Even though he is non-religious, he has a liking for Vedas because it is pregnant with human lessons that can shape mankind. He also understands the animal passion in 'man' but he thinks that
'he' can easily overcome it if he has the milk of human kindness.

3.7.2 Nehru's love of humanity which stems from his secularism is not just theoretical. He puts everything into practice. His love for his countrymen is evident from his epitaph on himself.

If any people choose to think of me, then I would like them to say: 'This was the man, who, with all his mind and heart, loved India and the Indian people. And they, in turn, were indulgent to him and gave him of their love most abundantly and extravagantly. (cited in Narasimhaiah 1959: 50).

Though Nehru is not a religious man, he has a liking for Indian mythology because it is 'a wonderful flowering of a richly endowed imagination, full of human lessons' (Nehru 1980: 78). If at all he appreciates Vedas it is because of their real significance which lies in the unfolding of human mind in the earliest stages of thought. K.K.R.V. Rao has rightly says, "Essentially, he (Nehru) was a religious man in the sense that he loved human life and humanity" (Rao 1971: 87-88). A true lover of humanity should be also considered as a lover of religion.
3.7.2.2 Like Gandhi, Nehru also believes man possesses a two-fold nature, part angel and part brute. He says "Whatever gods there be, there is something godlike in man, as there is also something of the devil in him" (Nehru 1982:33). But he has not lost faith in man. His optimism rests upon his belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop his potentialities. He exclaims:

How amazing is this spirit of man! In spite of innumerable failings, man, throughout the ages, has sacrificed his life and all he held dear for an ideal, for truth, for faith, for country and honour. That ideal may change, but that capacity for self-sacrifice continues, and because of that, much may be forgiven to man, and it is impossible to lose hope for him.

(Nehru 1982: 33).

Nehru believes in equality between man and man. He also has equal respect for women and fights for their freedom and equality.

3.7.3 Chaudhuri is of the opinion that in India, a man is known and recognised only by his designation. In fact,
the tradition of Indian society does not credit a person with anything unless he can display it effectively:

Self-advertisement is forced on us by the urge for survival. People who are endowed with the power to provide employment and recognition in India are incapable of seeing any merit in a man without having it dinned into their ears. These men cannot detect ability or talent.

(Chaudhuri 1966: 44).

Chaudhuri tries to absorb the phenomenal world through his senses and train himself to look at men and women with extreme alertness. That is why Chaudhuri is said to be more Indian than the Indians and more British than the Britishers themselves as far as this sensitivity is concerned (Naikar 1985: 42). K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says that Chaudhuri is "Fiercely honest and unsparing critic of men and morals and manners in contemporary India". (Iyengar: 1984: 591). Chaudhuri, however anti-religious, strives for equality between men and women. He again criticises 'men' for their ambivalent approach towards 'women' because of the rigid puritanical background of religious faith. It is because of the unusual social restriction about sex, that the Indians become sex-obsessed.
3.8.0 In fine, the spiritualistic Gandhi has respect for
popular religion, but wherever popular religions are on the
wrong track in his opinion, he does not hesitate to speak
out boldly. Gandhi's understanding of dharma is writ large
in his life's work. It is nothing but selfless service of
others, mastery over passions, fearlessness and most
important of all, devotion. Though he felt inspired by all
the religions, Hinduism has left a deep impact on his mind.
He believes in the stupendously creative force of religion
in human life. He is a practical religious idealist and is
not much interested in the transcendental and eschatological
aspects of religion. He equates God with truth believing
that there is 'no religion higher than truth'. Though Nehru
is a Hindu, he is not pinned to the fundamental tenents of
Hinduism. Endowed with a national and scientific mind, the
superstitions and customs associated with the Hindu
religion, appear irrelevant to him. According to him,
religious theories are only assumptions, and mere
speculations of an unknown world about which 'man' knows
next to nothing. Thus, an ethical approach to life and its
problems is the only thing that appealed to Nehru's
conscience. Work, or rather service to humanity and the
country is Nehru's religion. Chaudhuri is an iconoclast,
whose view on religion, Hinduism and Hindu society have been
vitiated by class hatred, personal prejudices and petty
jealousies. Christianity has a special attraction for this 'British Indian'. His sympathetic comments betray his anglicism. Chaudhuri is an atheist who furnishes the image of Hindu Gods, purely on the basis of library evidence. Thus, in the matter of religion, Chaudhuri has endeavoured his best to rationalise his anti-India prejudices and has vainly attempted to give them historical veneer. Therefore, his approach to religion is distorted and misleading.