CHAPTER V

SOCIETY

5.1.0  When we come to analyse their views on society we find again phenomenal differences between Gandhi, Nehru and Chaudhuri. Gandhi believes that all the political, economic and educational problems of man in the society can be solved by 'spiritual awakening'. He desires to establish a Sarvodaya order of society, first in India, and through India, in the world. He visualises that such a society will be based on Truth and non-violence. He calls for an agrarian society - Ram Raj - where everyone engages in manual labour, and where a reformed caste system gives the untouchables and low caste Indians personal dignity and economic self-sufficiency. Exploitation of any sort will be conspicuous in it by its absence. Equal opportunities for all will be the order of the day and everybody will put his or her quota of manual labour and work for the common good of the society. There will be complete decentralization of power and industries. Thus a casteless, classless society of individual will function peacefully, with Satyagraha and non-violence as effective weapons in times of need. If Gandhi sounds rural, Nehru is urban in his approach to society. His strategy, dramatically different from Gandhi's, calls for industrial development, an active state
to promote social and economic reform, an end to the rigidities of the caste system, and an effort to achieve equality of opportunity. However, Nehru realises that industrialization cannot provide employment to the millions in the villages and urban centres in the country. Therefore, in accordance with Gandhi's preference for development of cottage and village industries, Nehru emphasises their establishment along with industrialisation. Though non-religious, he does not rule out the influence of religion on the society and even appreciates the works of religious reformers who tried to change the society. Whereas, Chaudhuri's critical surgery of the social and familial relationship is highly controversial. To him, Nehru's zeal for industrialization will only modernize the aboriginals thereby destroying their culture. Surprisingly, he defends caste system. He believes that the ancient Hindu society made adherence to the caste system as a sacred duty. Therefore the various charges which are made against the caste system are totally baseless.

5.2.0 Not only is man a being who only attains his real nature in society; he is a being who has always lived in some form or other of society, even if his earliest society was only that of the family group. (Joad 1948: 36-37)
It is a well known fact that man has always belonged to a society of one kind or another and that without it he cannot exist. That society might have been the state, the tribe or even the family to which he might have belonged. Pascual Gilbert says;

That 'man' has not only a 'capacity' for social life but also an 'intrinsic need of it, it is a self obvious fact... No human being is known to have normally developed in isolation.

(Gilbert 1963: 44)

It is clear that society is nothing accidently added to or superimposed on human nature. It is something which is consonant with it and fulfils a vital need in man's constitution. Indeed, as Aristotle said, 'Man is social by nature'.

5.2.1 It is interesting to note that society as a complex of social relationships never stands still and is in a perennial state of flux. The alterations in the nature, content and structure of groups and institutions and in the relationships among men, groups, and institutions, during a sequence of time, constitute the bind of social change. Changes in society are not isolated happenings and
purposeless events and they have in fact links in the continuous chain of events which follow a definite course and pattern. In the words of Macluer and Page:

If people no longer observe a custom, the custom no longer exists on the face of the earth. A mode of relationships cannot be abstracted from the life of which it is an expression; a social structure cannot be placed in a museum to save it from the savages of time. (Macluer 1926: 18)

5.2.2 Since society is primarily a system of relationships, social changes in the first instance appear as changes in social relationships and structural changes may follow later on. Men are continuously trying to overcome difficulties - both within themselves and in the world outside. To overcome difficulties, they have to change the outside conditions and to some degree remould and reshape their own selves. Further changes are spontaneously occurring in the society by virtue of many complex factors and human interactions themselves present new problems which have to be solved and solutions are always accompanied by changes.

5.2.3 If man is the measure of things, then his changing social needs in turn are those prescribed by the changing
nature of man. The evolving and changing system of morality thus comes into its own as constituting the spirit of every age, as its guiding principle. While explaining the interaction between man and nature, many eighteenth century philosophers were strictly materialists but they had only a feeble explanation as to how the material environment itself changed through history. In analysing history, they ended up with reference to human nature and moral sentiments appropriate to the existence and continuance of a social state.

5.2.4 History, in the final analysis, in their view, is characterized in terms of the changing nature of man. Moreover, the relation between man and nature, between forces of production and relations of production, between structure and superstructure are themselves not inflexibly fixed and they too have changed through history. The problems of the present have their origin in the history and the possibility of their resolution in future lies in the present. So, the task for the social philosophers is not only to understand the present, but use that understanding in practice. Marx observes: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it" (Kripalani 1982: 87).
5.2.5 Gandhi, Nehru and Chaudhuri are writers who desire a social change to rebuild a new India. Gandhi and Nehru symbolize not only the best of India's age-old culture and civilization but also its will to build a new civilization on its old foundations. In fact, Gandhi and Nehru both hold the view that the challenge of building a new society is far more formidable than that of overthrowing foreign rule. The effort requires for this unfinished task is of a qualitatively different kind than that required to win political freedom. Chaudhuri, on the other hand, is over enthusiastic to change the modern society and therefore he makes a vitriolic attack on the entire social fabric of a people, his men, and its morals. His works inquire into the internal structure of a society and throw light on its complex, confusing and ridiculous nature.

5.3.0 Gandhi wants to create a society which is based on the spirit of Vajna which means an act directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. His is a casteless, classless society. Nehru wants to create an industrialized society with equal economic justice and equality of all. Whereas Chaudhuri reveals only the shallowness of the Indian society and advises that the western social relations may help to solve a number of
problems in India. It again clearly reveals Chaudhuri's Anglicism.

5.3.1.0 Gandhi is against the class war. He advocates class cooperation and points out the performance of duty and observance of morality are the pro-basic requirements in the society. The three important factors in the Gandhian concept of social change are i) Awareness building, ii) constructive work and iii) Satyagraha. He explains 'that a society that is based on non-violence, and which functions non-violently is 'enlightened anarchy'. An ideal government should operate from below, the power being the people of each village. He also strives for the mutual understanding between the society and the state.

5.3.1.1 According to Gandhi, society is "a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality" (CW IV: 75). Therefore, he does not accept the doctrine of class-war, which he declares to be "foreign to the essential genius of India" (CW IV: 76). He accepts that "class divisions there will be, but they will be horizontal, not vertical" (CW IV: 88). He insists that the real way of progress is class-cooperation and not class conflict, which is really a conflict "between intelligence and unintelligence" (CW IV: 90). He does not want to liquidate the capitalist but to
convert him and make believe as a trustee on behalf of the workers for the property he claims to own.

5.3.1.2 The ethos of a society is reflected in its civilization, which Gandhi defines as "that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty" (CW IV: 121). Therefore, 'duty' and 'morality' are in a way, one and the same. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. He states that "civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants" (CW IV: 89).

5.3.1.3 As a spiritualist, Gandhi believes that progress can be gained through making mistakes and securing their rectification, for "no good comes fully fashioned out of God's hands but has to be carved out through repeated experiments and repeated failures by ourselves" (CW IV: 112). Sir Stafford Cripps has rightly says: "I hope of no other man of any time or indeed recent history, who so forcefully and convincingly demonstrated the power of spirit over material things" (Cripps 1921: 112).

5.3.1.4 According to Gandhi the ideal society will not be the one in which there is constant tug of war between its
members, each one seeking to maximize his benefits, but in which everyone will try to give the best that he is capable of to the society, taking just enough for his efficient survival. Therefore, Gandhi's concept of social freedom is more extensive than his concept of political freedom.

5.3.1.5 Unto Tahtinen calls Gandhi an "enlightened anarchist" (Tahtinen 1979: 80). Gandhi believes that a perfect and non-violent state is that in which the people are governed the least. The nearest alternative to pure anarchy is a non-violent democracy. Gandhi uses the word "anarchy" rather seldom, however, perhaps partly because of the double meaning of the word: it could have been wrongly interpreted or understood. On the other hand, he frequently speaks of the decentralization of political power and economic life. It must be pointed out that the decentralized or anarchic ideal can only be approached to the extent to which social life becomes self-controlling and the powers of the state, based on external violence, become correspondingly unnecessary. The presupposition for anarchy is thus a positive ideal society.

5.3.1.6 In Gandhi's time, the division between society and the state was seen in the fact that the British colonial government represented the state and the Indian independence
movement represented society. Thus the society appeared so nakedly that the state was opposed to it, even though it had the support of the great majority of the people. Society, in this case, was experienced as a national power based on natural right, whereas the state propped itself up on the army, the police, the prison, and other coercive measures. Since independence and Gandhi's death, the conflict of society versus state has arisen again. In that the state has proved to be well-meaning towards the citizens in principle, but ineffective in practice. Society still has to make its own way and the state does not directly oppose its development.

5.3.1.7 If we think of society and the state as two different powers, this also elucidates the question as to when the state must be opposed; that is to say, when it is clearly in conflict with the society. When they are not in conflict, it is the duty of the citizen to fulfil the demands of the state. The ideal, however, is anarchic, and this means that a non-violent society has replaced the state.

5.3.2.0 Unlike Gandhi, Nehru calls for an industrial society. He believes either a welfare state or a socialist society would provide opportunities for individual growth.
and development. Nehru is one of the leaders of the Indian national liberation movement to formulate the task of improving the plight of the working masses not by way of charity but by way of fundamentally changing the social structure, by moving towards socialism. His concept of social change is deep-rooted in scientific methodology building a classless, new and strong India. He abolishes landlordism and advocates co-operative farming and the establishment of service co-operatives. He is of the view that the service co-operatives and co-operative farming are apt to bring about a glimpse of socialism to the villages of India.

5.3.2.1 Discussing Nehru's views of the industrial society, P.C. Joshi observes:

Nehru's contribution lay in wholeheartedly welcoming the industrial civilization and in linking Indian nationalism with the perspective of India's transformation into an industrial society.

(cited in B.R. Nanda 1979:41)

Nehru holds that industrialization is necessary to any society committed to the dignity of all of its citizens. In thinking about a just society for India, Nehru appreciates
that national independence and economic development are necessary but hardly sufficient. Despite substantial industrialization, unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy still plague much of India. Moreover, communalism, caste, regionalism, and linguistic issues still retard the development of our nation.

5.3.2.2 Nehru attempts a secular, political approach to solving the problems of untouchability. However, customs and perceptions embedded in the cultural, religious, social and economic practices and in the other institutions of a society are not easy to alter, and Nehru faces exceedingly difficult problems in his quest for equality of opportunity. To minimize these obstacles he relies on the strategies of modernization and secularization to introduce new norms into Indian society and a new structure for reward and mobility for those at the bottom. V.T. Patil points out:

In his vision of the ideal society, Nehru consistently discussed the replacement of competition with co-operation and personal acquisitiveness with a search for the public good. Men and women would rise not only to higher material and cultural levels but also to a cultivation of spiritual values and unselfishness.
In this sense, equality of opportunity meant the development of the full moral potential of each individual and the promotion of psychological and ethical growth (Patil 1987: 87).

5.3.2.3 Nehru openly proclaims his sympathies for socialism, although he realises that the Congress cannot adopt a full socialistic programme. Nehru continues to preach socialism in his speeches and statements, though he never claims that Congress has accepted the creed. He does not even spare Gandhi whose socialism he describes as "somewhat vague" (SW IV: 88). He said in a press interview at Bombay that "Gandhi's socialism can be called more humanitarianism than scientific socialism" (SW V: 114).

5.3.2.4 Nehru believes that true revolution in a country occurs as a result of political, economic and social changes. He expresses his views on May 22, 1954, in a debate in the Lok Sabha:

We have gone through the political revolution in the country and became independent. We are going through a process of economic change. Another aspect which is equally important is social change. Political change ignoring economic change and social change is not possible (SW III: 67).
According to him, "the consequences of the socialistic view is that we must change all customs which are based on privilege and birth" (SW III: 89).

5.3.2.5 Nehru believes that the traditional values and earlier civilizations are not meant for today's conditions. Unfortunately, people regardless of what is happening all round us, still live in the ancient past. Some want the vedic past, others are mere reproduction of the early days of Islam. They forget that our ancient civilizations were meant for different conditions. Many of our traditions, our social laws, our class system, the position we give to women and the dogmas which religion has imposed on us, are the relics of a past utterly out of joint with modern conditions.

5.3.2.6 To Nehru, "socialism is associated with the idea of justice and equality which is as old as civilization. Indian socialism, its theory and practice, have developed in conditions radically different from those of western socialism, viz., industrial backwardness and foreign rule" (SW III: 81). In 1936 Lucknow Session of Congress, Nehru declared that the world was then divided into two camps, viz., one was imperialist and facist, and the other was socialist and nationalist. Thus he sketches socialism as an
integral part of nationalism. Socialism aims at the control by the state of the means of production, i.e., land and mines and factories and the means of distribution like railways etc and also banks and other institutions. According to Nehru, the individuals should not be allowed to exploit any of these methods or institutions, or the labour of others, to their own personal advantage. Today most of these are privately owned and exploited with the result that some people prosper and grow rich; society as a whole suffers greatly and the masses remain poor.

5.3.2.7 Though not a Marxist-Leninist in strict sense, Nehru is the most consistent propagator of the socialist ideas. In a sense, every country, whether it is capitalist, socialist or communist, accept the ideal of welfare state. Nehru gives up the idea of class conflict and considers that democracy could help solving the conflicts in the society. In so far as practice is concerned, there is not much difference between democratic socialism and welfarism. Both want to remove income disparities, ensure against unemployment, sickness and old age; provide free education and medical service. Both believe in taxing the rich. Both use similar methods of controlling economic crises which are taken for granted under capitalism. Both have faith in democratic method of solving social problems. There is yet
a basic difference between the two. Socialists think capitalism as evil, whereas the proponents of the welfare state uphold the values of capitalism. Nehru recognizes different forms of socialism and feels that these are highly misunderstood. He wrote in a letter to Gandhi that,

...a strange way of dealing with the subject of socialism is to use the word, which has clearly defined meaning with English language. For individuals to use words in a sense peculiar to themselves is not helpful in the commerce of ideas. A person who declares himself to be an engine driver and then adds that his engine is of wood and is drawn by bullock, is misusing the word engine-driver (SW III:11).

5.3.3.0 Chaudhuri is a keen observer of the social milieu of his land. In his book, To Live or Not to Live he discusses how we can have a happy social and family life. He contrasts the social behaviour of the English people with that of Indians. He endeavours his best to white wash the inhuman and offensive behaviour of English man towards Indians during the British rule in India by eulogising their geniality and kindliness. He states very clearly that his idea of good and happy social life is built on the European
model. Chaudhuri digs at the shallownesses of Punjabi and Delhi societies. He is highly critical of Indian social life. But he is still hopeful that an ideal society can be built inspite of many formidable obstacles.

5.3.3.1 Most of the scholars and critics who have tried to assess Chaudhuri and his works admit that he is one of the very keen observers of the Indian society. While discussing Chaudhuri's *The Continent of Circe*, Paul Verghese remarks:

The *Continent of Circe* is Chaudhuri's critique on Hindu society written from the perspectives of history, ethnology, sociology and philosophy, and the views he expresses are so extra-ordinary that they constitute Chaudhuri's original contribution to Hindu cultural anthropology (Verghese 1973:73).

R.K. Kaul in his article entitled "Indian through an Indian's Eyes" - says "whatever Mr. Chaudhuri may think of himself, the reader is likely to think of him as an amateur sociologist" (Kaul 1969: 14).

5.3.3.2 In his book *To Live or Not to Live* Chaudhuri discusses at length how we can have a happy social and
family life under the conditions which we are born in this country. He says,

I have tried to see social life and family life in the light of highest ideals of life ... to live a happy 'life' in our social, and family relations is the first stage of living well. It will also be seen that I have not shrunk from probing into the sociological foundations of our social and family life (TLNTL: 15).

Tara Sinha points out:

Mr Chaudhuri's books are decidedly a contribution to the field of sociology. They inquire into the internal structure of society, what are the internal problems faced by a society, what are the most common components found in most societies, how the societies typically allocate responsibility for various functions, what are the consequences of combining certain institutions.

(Sinha 1981: 35)

In To Live or Not to Live Chaudhuri examines social and family norms, man-woman relationship and marital fidelity.
His embittered view of the Hindu world has been assuaged to some extent and he cares for happiness and peace in human relations and values them more than anything else in the world.

5.3.3.3 Chaudhuri's idea of good and true social life is to be in the company of people for whom he sincerely cares. He says:

... good social life, true social life, consists in being positively happy in our human relations. This calls for certain qualities in our environment, in other human beings, and, above all, in ourselves (TLNTL: 18).

His Anglicism is again reflected in the following passage, wherein he says an ideal social life can be built on the European model:

I yearned for a sincere and sophisticated social life, because I had read novels, biographies, and memories in English and in French, which had given me an idea of social life at its best (TLNTL: 20).

5.3.3.4 Chaudhuri examines the material setting of our social life that is to be found in big cities like Delhi,
Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. According to him, our big cities are inorganic, unecological, and unhealthy, socially and orally. They do not contain organised societies and are thus unfavourable to all human relations. He attacks the shallowness of Punjabi society and to him Delhi, too, is incapable of making an ideal society. At its best, it remains only a conglomeration of human beings without a definite psychological, cultural and social unit. He appreciates the social relations between the western residents of Delhi and their Indian friends and acquaintances. He comments:

It was in such gathering that I was enabled to see at first-hand the expression of European social life I had read about. This has been a very happy experience for me, and all the more so because European social custom always includes the wife. (TLNTL: 44).

These lines clearly reveal Chaudhuri's Anglicism. It is only a social life on the pattern of European social life, and that too of the rich and well to do, that gives him happiness. He also gives a timely advice to the Indians not to exploit their contacts with the westerners for social climbing.
5.3.3.5 Chaudhuri contrasts the social behaviour of English people with that of Indians. The distinction between private and public affairs does not exist in India, whereas it is a conspicuous trait of English social behaviour. English men keep their work and social life separate. In India, the official position is of supreme importance even in private intercourse. "In our society", Chaudhuri says, "a man is always what his designation makes him" (PE: 92). The Hindu society and the western society are poles apart in regard to love. It is easily perceptible in western society. Indians are reticent about love. In this respect Chaudhuri comments:

In England, as indeed all over Europe, love seemed to be a primary motivation of human beings, a major occupation of man and women, and as serious a pursuit as money-making is in our society.

(PE: 115)

5.4.0 According to Gandhi, untouchability is a cruel and inhuman institution which violates human dignity. Therefore he calls upon the caste Hindus to make all the sacrifices necessary to remove the evil practice from India. He sets up several organisations for the removal of untouchability. As a result of all these efforts, untouchability has been abolished by law after independence. But it was under
Nehru's guidance that the Indian constitution abolished untouchability. He firmly believes untouchability has no place in modern India. It is surprising, however, that Chaudhuri not only advocates caste system but very strongly defends it. To him it neither creates diversity nor disunity. It is clear that Chaudhuri's society is born out of a kind of 'misplaced prejudice'.

5.4.1.0 Gandhi's contribution in the field of social reforms is important for the reconstruction of the life of the nation. It can be said that the whole of his constructive programme is devoted to social reform. The first and foremost item of this reform is the removal of untouchability. Gandhi understands the sad plight of the untouchables in the society. He requests the caste Hindus to shoulder the responsibilities for rendering justice to the untouchables. He does not agree that Hinduism has its sanction for untouchability. He sets up several organisations for the removal of untouchability.

5.4.1.1 Gandhi believes that untouchability violates human dignity. Everyman is a member of the society. He is equal to every other man in the same society, because all men are equal in the eyes of God. So, he is equal in the eyes of law also. Untouchability is a social crime and Gandhi considers the practice of untouchability as the greatest
blot on Hinduism. The untouchables are the poorest section of Indian society. They live apart, in unhygienic surroundings, on the outskirts of villages and cities. Though they are Hindus and believe in and worship Hindu gods and goddesses, they are not allowed to enter Hindu temples. Public institutions like schools, hotels, hostels, etc. are closed to them. Gandhi feels that they who deny justice to those who suffer injustice at their hands have no right to demand justice for themselves from their oppressors.

5.4.1.2 Gandhi realizes this social injustice and abhors the systems which have reduced a large number of Hindus to a level less than that of beasts. He levels serious charges against the Hindus, who degrade Harijans and then have the audacity to use their very degradation against their rise. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so called superior castes. Gandhi says:

... There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which binds us, superior Hindus, to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our suppressed and whom we keep under suppression (CW III: 190).
Therefore, he calls upon the caste Hindus to remove untouchability. He says that they would thus be rendering only belated justice for the grievous injury inflicted by their ancestors on the untouchables through the centuries. Gandhi is so hard on caste Hindus as to say that droughts, floods, earthquakes, and the like are visiting them because of the sin they are committing on the downtrodden people.

5.4.1.3 Gandhi also believes that so long as the Hindus willfully regard untouchability as part of their religion, so long as the mass of Hindus considers it a sin to touch a section of their brethren, Swaraj is impossible to attain. According to him, Hinduism will perish if untouchability exists. He proclaims that there is no sanction in Hinduism for treating a single human being as untouchable. He even goes to the extent of saying, "but as I have repeatedly said in other places, if I found that Hinduism really countenanced untouchability, I should have no hesitation in renouncing Hinduism itself" (CW III: 20). He pours out his anguish of his soul, when he says:

I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings, and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may
endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition (CW III: 50).

5.4.1.4 The equality that Gandhi claims for the untouchables in Hindu society includes the right to enter Hindu temples. It does not matter if these temples are built or endowed by caste Hindus. Gandhi says:

Temple entry is the one spiritual act that would constitute the message of freedom to the untouchables and assure them that they are not outcastes before God (CWIII: 69).

In consonance with his views about temple entry for Harijans, Gandhi makes it a point not to enter a Hindu temple which is not open for Harijans.

5.4.1.5 Gandhi sets up an organisation, called "Harijan Sevak Sangh", to work for the removal of all their disabilities. He throws himself into his new Harijan work with the fanatical zeal characteristic of him when he is sure of his moral ground. Judith M. Brown observes: "It devoured his thoughts and energy and he even dreamed of it!" (Brown 1990: 268). To set an example, Gandhi, brought a Harijan family to live in the ashram. He adopted their daughter as his own. He also blessed all the marriages that
were celebrated between Harijans and Hindus. In February 1933, he started publishing a weekly paper, *The Harijan*, to promote anti-untouchability campaign.

5.4.2.0 Nehru also believes that untouchability is a social crime and it has no place in modern India. It is under Nehru's guidance and approval, untouchability is abolished in India. He thinks that some special opportunities should be given to them so as to enable them to compete with others.

5.4.2.1 In thinking about a just society for India, Nehru considers that national independence and economic development are necessary but hardly sufficient. There is no need for any industrialization which degrades a human being, and lessens his dignity. Although he argues that the caste system once provided important benefits to India, it has become exclusive and rigid over the centuries and has become "the citadel of social reaction and a basis for the exploitation of the masses" (SW II: 21). He also insists that the caste system divides the country into many divisions, saps the energy of the nation, and turns Indian against Indian. He says:

In the context of society today, the caste system and much that goes with it are wholly
incompatible, reactionary, restrictive, and barriers to progress. There can be no equality in status and opportunity within the framework, nor can there be political democracy and much less economic democracy. Between these two conceptions conflict is inherent and only one of them can survive (D9: 257).

5.4.2.2 For Nehru, "the curse of untouchability and other forms of enforced inequality" (SW III: 107) must be removed from India. By using the Constitution and the law to condemn the practice of untouchability, he committed the government to end traditional inequalities and rigidities. By reserving places for the untouchables and scheduled castes, he showed that his commitment was serious, and should be implemented immediately. Thanks to his efforts, the cruel system of untouchability was abolished. According to Article 17, the practice of untouchability "in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law" (cited in Patil 1987:88).

5.4.2.3 Nehru knows, however, that real equality of opportunity for the untouchables is not likely to follow
simply because certain forms of discrimination are barred by law. The untouchables would still have to carry their crosses of unequal treatment that had existed for centuries. Recognizing the disabilities of the untouchables, Nehru holds that "not only must equal opportunities be given to all, but special opportunities for educational, economic, and cultural growth must be given to backward group so as to enable them to catch up to those who are ahead of them" (D9: 395). Few if any other official concepts would have served as well to dismantle the traditional system as Nehru's various interpretations of equality of opportunity. The urban life "provided some power for untouchables who wished to escape the traditionalism of the countryside" (Ahluwalia 1988: 86).

5.4.3.0 Chaudhuri is a strong supporter of caste system. Unlike Gandhi and Nehru, he considers that the ancient Hindu society entertained the caste system as a sacred duty. According to him it is a social system, which is specially designed for India. It should be noted here that Chaudhuri's highly individualistic theories regarding the caste system are born out of his prejudiced mind.

5.4.3.1 To Chaudhuri, the caste system neither creates diversity and disunity, nor interferes with economic
freedom, nor bars the way for talented people. He argues:

Hindu society did not attempt to suppress the immense range of racial, social, cultural, and economic diversities which history, was creating for it in unending succession. On the contrary, it accepted them, gave to each its place and niche and brought into existence a living association of human groups of all sorts, which was a federation of its parts, without ever trying to be any one thing. Caste system is the name given to the federation. (CC: 58)

5.4.3.2 To him, apart from caste-system, there was no other way in which the Aryans could preserve their ethnic, social and cultural personality from being submerged in a conglomeration with the native darks. Therefore he says:

For this reason the caste system may be described as a symbiosis in human life on the lines of the zoological. It canalized competitions and helped the co-existence of elements which otherwise would have been at war. It was a social system specially suited to a country like India, which history has made into a warehouse of
The very origin of the caste system can be refuted with the help of the Vedic scriptures and the learned theories of eminent historians. "The caste originally meant the division of function and responsibility in the agrarian society of the Arya Hindus" (Kai 1972: 35). It was the division of labour which was the main inspiration behind the 'kind of classification' to which the label "caste system" is attached today. Even if it is accepted that the caste system in the Vedic society had a noble beginning, many evils crept into it as time advanced. Modern social reformers like Gandhi and Nehru want to abolish the caste system because of the those subsequently developed evils. Tara Sinha is right when she says:

Chaudhuri is not justified in defending this system; because, in its modern context, the caste system has no utility or validity to exist any longer. It has brought more misery than any other social evil. The social critic that Chaudhuri is, one least expects such biased, contradictory arguments from him. (Sinha 1981: 118)
5.5.0 In Vedic times, men and women are equal in all walks of life, including the religious and the intellectual. Therefore Gandhi is against the purdah system which cripples the free movement of women and curtails their capacity for doing any useful work to society. Similarly, he feels a great concern for the prostitutes, whom he calls "fallen sisters". Nehru feels that in the world of tomorrow, there can be no place for such dreadful absurdities like purdah. Chaudhuri is equally concerned about the plight of women in the society. He firmly believes that there is no intercommunication between the sexes even in the cultured families. He also feels pity for the aboriginal women who are exploited by the British planters to satisfy their lust.

5.5.1.0 Gandhi is of the opinion that the purdah system is a real drag on women's social progress. Therefore he works incessantly against this cruel practice. He is equally concerned about the prostitutes and works out several programmes for the welfare of these 'sisters'.

5.5.1.1 Not only is Gandhi concerned with social reforms designed to get rid of the unfair customs that are weighing heavily on women; but he also gives philosophical considerations to every aspect of the problem of women's emancipation and works for it. Therefore, he is against the
purdah system. His constant attacks on this old custom are expressed here in his usual fearless accents:

Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the purdah. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything, it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation... what we are doing to our women and what we are doing to the 'untouchables' recoils upon our heads with a force thousand times multiplied. It partly accounts for our own weakness, indecision, narrowness and helplessness. Let us tear down the purdah system with one mighty effort. (CW III: 32).

5.5.1.2 Gandhi used a new technique to make women, discard their purdah. He always insisted on his being taken to the inner circle of the ladies' quarters. And nobody could resist him. The Hindu women considered themselves as blessed to have the 'darshan' of the 'Mahatma'. Even in Muslim families which strictly observed purdah, he insisted on meeting the ladies and would take no refusal. The women of such families also would want to see him face to face. Judith Brown observes:

All through the 1920s he hammered home that
purdah, enforced seclusion of women, practised among some Hindu castes as well as Muslims, was inhumane, immoral and deprived the emerging nation of the work for Swaraj which its women could perform. (Brown 1990: 210)

5.5.1.3 There is another unhappy issue in regard to some women that is causing great concern to Gandhi. This is a group of women who are compelled by circumstances to lead the life of prostitutes whom he calls "fallen sisters". Gandhi addressed innumerable meetings and is never tired of speaking about this and chalking out a programme for the welfare of them. He requests them to give the profession and take to any honourable living including that of 'Chakra'. Many have faithfully followed his instructions.

5.5.2. Nehru tries equality of opportunity for all. What is radical about Nehru's use of the concept is his effort to eliminate the social, cultural and religious stratification in the country and to push for new ways in which people judged themselves and others. Nehru is dead against the purdah system. They are in fact puzzling to him to a great extent. He strives for the perfect equality of one and all. Women are subjected to seclusion and purdah and such dreadful absurdities are not only puzzling to him, but they
bothers him to a great extent. He says:

I have no doubt at all that among the causes of India's decay in recent centuries, purdah, or the seclusion of women, holds an important place. I am even more convinced that the complete ending of their barbarous custom is essential before India can have a progressive social life. That it injures women is obvious enough, but the injury to man, to the growing child who has to spend much of its time among women in purdah, and to social life generally is equally great. (D9: 343)

Nehru believes imperfect equal of women and men. She is to have equal status, equal respect. Women are not to be barred from any sphere of activity merely on grounds of sex. Therefore he says:

It amazes me to think that some people put up with this barbarity still. Whenever I think of the women in purdah, cut off from the outside world, I invariably think of a prison or a zoo! How can a nation go ahead if half of its population is kept hidden away in a kind of prison? (GWH: 149)
5.5.3.0 As an iconoclast, Chaudhuri feels that there is no healthy intercommunication between man and woman. He admits that there is no seclusion of women in the ancient Hindu society. The puritanical attitude of some of the orthodox Hindus is also one of the important reasons for the seclusion of women in the Hindu society. He feels pity for aboriginal girls who are being seduced by the British planters.

5.5.3.1 "The greatest shortcoming" in our social life", according to Chaudhuri, "is the virtual segregation of man and women in it" (TLNTL: 67). It was the Muslim conquest that subsequently put an end to the freedom, chivalry, and sophistication of the 'man-woman' relationship so prevalent among the ancient Hindu societies.

5.5.3.2 Chaudhuri feels sorry that there is no healthy relationship between the sexes in the modern Hindu society. Even the highly sophisticated and cultural families are no exception. He sympathises with the modern girls who are really more active than men. He regrets that we have not been able to live according to the ancient Hindu society where they were no traces of seclusion of women. He thinks that Indian's obsession with sex is mainly responsible for this kind of segregation.
5.5.3.3 While discussing the sad plight of the oboriginals following heavy industrialisation by the greedy landlords and rulers, he also points out that the degradation and humiliation of their women by the British planters. He says,

Their woman, if attractive and young drew the lust of the planters and their underlings, and were forced to lead the life of concubines or even common prostitutes. If their menfolk tried to protect them, they were shot (CC: 87).

Though Chaudhuri attacks the entire social fabric of India, he levels his charges in such a way so as to bring out the follies of his time, its men and women and its moral.

5.6.0 Gandhi believes in the ancient Varnanashrama system when he thinks about the utopian form of an ideal society. Though the social ideal of Gandhi and Nehru has many common elements yet there is a considerable difference in composition and emphasis. Nehru is enamoured of western science and technology and is appreciative of economic advances caused by it. Therefore he dreams of an industrial society. Chaudhuri is not altogether pessimistic in his outlook of a new society and suggests some remedies for the betterment of the Indian society based on the western model.
5.6.1.0 Gandhi's vision of a new society is utopian, based on the principles of Varna. It is an ideal state where there is no police force necessary to suppress any rebellion. Everyone has sufficient basic requirements and there is economic equality. His thoughts on industrialism still hold good in our present-day society.

5.6.1.1 Gandhi longs for an utopian society. He accepts the principle of 'Varna'—an immutable law of nature. Four main classes will correspond to old Brahmin Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra castes. They will work under some set conditions on account of radical transformation both in our present society and also in the minds of men inhabiting it. They have been stated as follows: a) all professions and callings are treated as equal. In it, the hierarchical gradation does not exist. b) the earnings of the different professions are made as nearly equal as possible, in order to avoid glaring disparities in their earnings and subsequently the social prestige. c) a profession is taken for a means for performance of one's duty and earning one's livelihood rather than amassing wealth (Bhagwan 1983: 130).

5.6.1.2 Gandhi firmly believes that an ideal social order could be evidenced on the basis of the ancient Varnanashrama system, provided that the system is reformed radically as
suggested and enshrined in itself the great idea of social equality. Gandhi's idea of a new society is an ideal state where police consists of non-violent soldiers and where prison will be a reformatory.

5.6.1.3 Gandhi's new society is a socialistic state where everyone has sufficient and balanced food to eat, a proper house to live and sufficient Khadi to cover oneself. There will be no economic inequality. He does not deprive the landlords and the capitalists of their property by confiscation. Like Christian missionaries, he wants to achieve his goal of economic equality by bringing transformation in the mentality of the capitalists through love and persuasion. He wants the capitalists to act as the trustees of the peasants and the workers.

5.6.1.4 Gandhi believes that industrialism is going to prove a curse to mankind. But he is not against machinery as such. He is against the craze for machinery. He argues that factories, mills and industrial plants do create jobs for a few hundred or a few thousand persons, but in that very process, they render thousands and millions unemployed. Therefore the industries are not to be run for profit but for the benefit of the whole society.
5.6.1.5 Gandhi's vision of a new society holds good even in our modern times. We still find that mechanization and automation create unemployment in the first instance. It is noteworthy to find that the employees of the Life Insurance Corporation of India have opposed the introduction of computers in the offices. Similarly there is a threat in Bombay to the effect that the civic employee would destroy all the mechanical sweepers and automatic garbage loaders for doing sanitary work.

5.6.2.0 Unlike Gandhi, Nehru believes in roaring industries and gigantic machines in order to become self-sufficient. According to him the problem of poverty cannot be solved and India cannot become politically and economically self-sufficient till she industrializes herself and makes use of modern science and technology. Rejecting Gandhi's backward looking ruralism, he recognizes the role of rural development.

5.6.2.1 Nehru's new society is obviously an industrial society for he does not approve of Gandhi's old-fashioned ideas of life, which has no relevance to the realities of the modern world. He, however, frankly admits that modern "civilization is full of evils, but it is also full of good; and it has the capacity in it to rid itself of its evils."
To destroy its root and branch is to remove that capacity from it and to revert to a dull, senseless and miserable existence. We cannot stop the river of change or cut ourselves adrift from it, and psychologically we, "who have eaten of the apple of Eden, cannot forget the taste and go back to primitiveness" (SW III: 44).

5.6.2.2 The luxury of the rich knows no bounds, while the poor have sunk deeper in the scheme of poverty. Therefore India aims at welfare of the people, she necessitates a new social and economic set up, she requires a society which is not dominated by the urge of private profit and individual greed and which is a classless society based on co-operative effort. Such a society is described by Nehru as a socialistic pattern of society and a sort of 'economic democracy'.

5.6.2.3 Nehru, at the same time, realises that industrialism alone cannot provide employment to the millions in the villages and urban centres in the country. Therefore he makes an attempt to recreate a new society in accordance with Gandhi's preference for development of cottage and village industries. He believes that a politically free but industrially backward country would create tensions by upsetting the world equilibrium. The
world would degenerate into chaos with nations fighting one another to establish the dominance of one over another. But at the same time, Nehru, with all his love of industrialisation, is not prepared to sacrifice the individual in favour of a rapid increase in production. He conceives of an economic programme which is based on a human outlook that does not sacrifice men for money.

5.6.3.0 Chaudhuri's vision of a new society is very much western. He strives for perfect equality between man and man. He criticizes Indians for not encouraging agriculture in the truest sense of the term. Though he attacks Indians for their cultural behaviour, he still hopes for the best and suggests some methods of improvement.

5.6.3.1 Chaudhuri vision of a new society is one where man is valued as man. According to him, the Hindu society does not care a fig for one "without reference to his worldly status (TLNTL: 59). In his book To Live or Not to Live he raises a Hamletian dilemma of how the Indian society makes it difficult for a sensitive man to continue to live meaningfully in that society. Life in India has become so paradoxial and farcical that one who wants to relate the actual values practised to the ideals professed, one is bound to have a Hamletian question as to whether to live or
not to live in such a context of multiple contradictions. Therefore he gives his own ideas of an ideal society. In doing so, he evinces his temperamental partiality to English life and manners and unscrupulously passes derogatory comments on Indian society.

5.6.3.2 He criticizes the educated Indians who crave for clerical jobs. As India is an agricultural country, the Indians are guilty of neglecting agriculture. They think that cultivating land is below their dignity and is supposed to be meant only for the illiterate. His vision of a new Indian society should necessarily rest in agriculture and farming.

5.6.3.3 Chaudhuri wants the Indians to be properly educated in social behaviour. They can be very sociable in streets and bazaars but not in close gatherings as they lack the capacity for intelligent conversation. Basavaraj S. Naikar rightly says that Chaudhuri's conclusion is that "the Indian social behaviour is marked by gregariousness rather than by genuine sociability" (Naikar 1985: 83).

5.6.3.4 Another paradox of Indian society, according to Chaudhuri, is the fact that the minority of intellectuals in India forms part of the ruling class, whereas the uneducated
masses "have been Sudras, and if they continue in this state, they will not play a significant part in any future conflict of cultures in India (II: 28). The majority of the dominant minority are to be found in the liberal professions and the higher ranks of civil service. Therefore, he opts for a new society where everyone is treated equal.

5.6.3.5 Chaudhuri suggests some useful remedies for the uplift of the Indian society. Though he is highly critical of Indian social life, he advocates a rational approach to the problems of life. He suggests three remedies:

... that there are individuals who possess considerable social capability; that our women can be brought into our general social life so as to remove its greatest shortcoming; and that conversation which as a social grace is virtually absent among us, can be created (TLNTL: 63).

He also gives some suggestions for those who want to enjoy their social life. The first and the foremost is the realization that "social life properly so called is communication between like minds" (TLNTL: 87). One should be ready to tolerate the unpleasant behaviour on the part of others and have the moral courage to show indifference "to social relations which are compulsive and not pleasant"
(TLNTL: 89) and an attitude of give and take and the imposition of a limit on one's social circle for the sake of better enjoyment (TLNTL: 89).

5.7.0 Just as drops make the ocean, the individuals constitute the society. They are the two sides of the same coin so mutually interwined as not to be separated. In other words, they are complementary to each other. If one is stressed at the cost of the other, we will be creating an unwanted imbalance in the world, which will ultimately lead it to utter destruction. In order to avoid such a disastrous situation we have necessarily to arrange for the co-existence of the individual and the society. For Gandhi man is important equally as an individual and as a member of society. Man is therefore the supreme consideration in the Gandhian concept of the individual and society. Nehru's faith in the dignity of the individual makes him develop faith in the people as well. Whereas Chaudhuri brings out the follies of the Bengali society and is not satisfied with its men either.

5.7.1.0 For Gandhi man is important equally as an individual and as a member of society. As a spiritualist, he feels that every man should contribute his mite to enrich the society in which he lives. Therefore he interprets the
word yajna to mean that each one is to do the best he is capable of for the society and to take from it the bare necessities for his own efficient upkeep. Equality after all implies that each man should get what he needs provided that the needs are natural.

5.7.1.1 An individual is a unit of society and he first feels the presence of the society within group and in a way, group is also a unit of society. For an individual, the group and the society merge into one at one point or the other, or at one time or other. In fact, the individual's very existence is wielded into the fabrics of group of the society. The first and foremost concept of Sarvodaya advocated by Gandhi is "The good of the individual is contained in the good of the society" (CW IV: 74). This lucidly brings out the part to be played by the individual as well as the society.

5.7.1.2 Gandhi has his own conception of man as one having free will, reason, conscience and love. He is at the same time aware of man's limitations. So, he thinks that man can reveal and perfect himself through a society based upon Truth and Non-violence. He does not want that the society should swallow the man. But, as Manmohan Choudhuri says "Individuals would have to actualize themselves in the final
analysis, but the social order should not be a constant drag on them but provide a helpful climate" (Choudhuri 1989: 128).

5.7.1.3 Gandhi does not believe that the freedom and individuality of man and woman have to be curtailed in order to make social life possible. The society and the individual have to grow together.

A nation cannot advance without the units of which it consists advancing, and, conversely, no individual can advance without the nation of which he is also part advancing (CW IV: 341).

5.7.1.4 Gandhi uses the term yajna for activities undertaken in the modern context with the good of society in view. In its original sense, yajna means various kinds of religious rituals performed for the welfare of the society in view. Gandhi uses this ancient word for expressing his new concept that turns the Marxist formula inside out. One has to render his selfless sacrifice to the society and just take from it his basic requirements. This is how Gandhi interprets yajna. In the Gandhian scheme of things the individual is to put his energies at the service of the society voluntarily. He will be free to choose his career, but every individual has to stand up for what he considers to be the truth and take the consequence. Gandhi's
programme for inner change in the individual has its origin in a preparation for social change. Manmohan Choudhuri observes:

For him (Gandhi) it was neither a way of the individual first perfecting himself and then setting about to change society, nor of changing society first so that its members would acquire the appropriate new qualities thereafter, but a process in which individual change and social change continually react to and reinforce each other (Choudhuri 1989: 14).

5.7.2.0 Nehru believes that unrestricted freedom induces an individual to interfere with the freedom and rights of other individuals in the society. This creates social inequality. He visualizes the socialistic pattern of society where there is no inequality. Even though he advocates an industrial revolution, he is not prepared to sacrifice man for money. As a secular humanist, he gives greater importance to human qualities than to political expediency.

5.7.2.1 "If any people choose to think of me", wrote Nehru "I should like them to say," 'This was a man, who with all
his mind and heart loved India and the Indian people. And they, in turn, were indulgent to him and gave their love most abundantly and extravagantly' (SW IV: 57). No doubt, he redeems his pledge - the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity. In the words of Tyson, "until his last illness he was not only lively and alert, he was indefatigable, and for India he poured out his energy with a rare prodigality" (Tyson 1983: 272).

5.7.2.2 Nehru never felt tired while speaking to men and women whom he loved. Rather, as he often confessed, this contact with the masses refreshed him. In his heart of hearts, he is always thinking about the happiness and welfare of the millions of his countrymen. Once he was asked, "What is your principal problem, and how many problems have you got?" He replied: "We have got 360 million problems in India. What do the 360 million people want? It is fairly easy to begin making a list - later there may be differences of opinion - but it is obvious enough that they want food; it's obvious enough they want clothing, that they want shelter; that they want health. They want such things regardless of any social and economic policies we may have in mind" (SW III: 91).
5.7.2.3 Unlike Gandhi, Nehru believes that the individual freedom should be curtailed through collective planning and control. In other words, Nehru's ideal society is governed by controls and designed by planning. However, undue restrictions dwarfing the personality of the individual are to be avoided and the individual be allowed freedom consistent with the equal distribution of freedom and equitable distribution of wealth. Though his dream of a new India consists of roaring industries, he is not ready to sacrifice men to money. He says if an industry cannot be run without starving its workers, it must be closed down. Thus a key to a just and equal society lies in a more just and more equal man than he is and he was.

5.7.3.0 Chaudhuri wants every individual to play his part in order to create an ideal society. Due to his Anglicism and subjectivity, it is but natural for Chaudhuri to present a hostile and scathing criticism on the individuals in the society. According to him, money has a definite role to play in the Indian society. It is rather disheartening to note that he generalizes the customs and norms of the Bengali society as if it is the microcosm of the entire Indian society.

5.7.3.1 Chaudhuri wants the individual to rise above petty prides and prejudices in order to make him a positive
contributer to the total welfare of the society. It is natural therefore that Chaudhuri should be highly critical of the forms and occasions of Indian social life in particular and Indians in general.

5.7.3.2 According to Chaudhuri, the wedding ceremony is unnecessary waste of time, money and energy and offers no genuine hospitality to guests. Likewise, illnesses are important events in Indian life in that whenever a person in a family is taken ill, it becomes mandatory on the part of the relatives and friends to go and see and console him and the members of his family. But even this is turned by Indians into a farce. He says:

It is the traditional Indian habit of making illness, and more especially a serious illness, as frivolous a social gathering as a cocktail party in New Delhi. (TLNTL: 52)

5.7.3.3 The overall impression of Chaudhuri about Indian life is that money plays an extraordinary role in the life of the major groups of society like the youths, the intellectuals and the politicians. Money, thus becomes the keynote of the Indian society of human relations, of enjoyment and of achievement. The Indians, according to
Chaudhuri, can do anything and everything for money and are the potential sharks of swindlers.

5.7.3.4 Thus we see that most of what Chaudhuri says about the evils of our social practices is quite true but he does not take on account of the changes which are the result of reformative measures introduced by our social reformers to remove these evils from our society.

5.7.3.5 He generalizes the customs and norms of the Bengali society as those of entire India. One may argue that the method Chaudhuri follows in laying down sociological theories is not in keeping with the scientific methods advocated by the social scientists, since his theories are highly controversial and can be refuted on many grounds. Chaudhuri is not eventually a social scientist but a social thinker. First and foremost he is a literary figure and therefore it is not right to impose on him the standards generally imposed on the specialists of the subject.

5.8.0 Gandhi's vision of a stateless and a classless society which entitles him to be called anarchist is said to be a utopian dream. A society of his vision is neither practicable nor feasible in the modern context of things. The critics are of the view that "such a society may be a
fit place for the angels to fly rather than a proper place for the poor mortals to walk" (Bhagwan 1983: 146). Therefore, Gandhi's concept of socialism has been a victim of perennial shafts of the critics. Further, Gandhi's stress on Khadi and simplicity at the cost of huge industries and ostentatious life is considered to be a sheer anachronism. Nehru's industrial society is created out of his 'faulty vision'. His chief inadequacy lay not in his myopic views, but in his failure to create new instruments with which to implement the programmes of national development and social change. P.C. Joshi rightly points out that "Nehru failed to create a new social force capable of bringing about a social revolution and economic transformation" (Nanda 1979: 49). Chaudhuri's bitter attacks on the Indian society are not for the weaker stomachs to enjoy. The only remedy suggested by him for the betterment of the Hindu society is to seek asylum in the western civilization and culture. The suggestions given by him seem to be very inadequate and much of them stem from his myopic cultural and historical views of the Indian culture and civilization. It is only his originality, brilliance, straightforwardness, rationality and intellectuality which compel our admiration for him.