FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN INDIA: A STUDY OF GANDHI AND JINNAH

ABSTRACT

Statement of the problem

End of the colonial control over India resulted in both happiness and tragedy manifesting the emergence of an independent federal nation on the one hand, and the partition of the British India resulting into the creation of Pakistan along with a curse of massive violence ruining the life of millions on both sides. Both these newly independent countries were led by the two famous personalities—Mahatma Gandhi and Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah who were in the mainstream politics of colonial India. They began their journey as key players in the freedom struggle movement with the sole purpose of creating an independent united India with a democratic, federal and inclusive polity but later they parted their ways in two different directions.

There are a lot of instances indicating their common desire for freedom but the introduction of administrative and political reforms by the British in India opened up multiple channels of power sharing opportunities to build fortunes. Mahatma Gandhi’s method of mass mobilization and the use of religion in driving political power was opposed by Jinnah who had shown his commitment to the constitutional means of achieving independence. Jinnah was perturbed over these methods as they would adversely affect the principles of democratic governance. He began to differ with Gandhiji on many counts in order to build his own leadership of the Muslim community. On the other hand, Gandhiji was claiming to represent all communities which was not acceptable to Jinnah who suspected Gandhi advancing the interests of the Hindu community.
Despite the commonality of the basic goal of attaining independence, gaps began to widen between both the leaders. Jinnah’s suspicion of the dominance of the Caste-Hindus led by the Indian National Congress particularly Gandhiji culminated into the separatist claim for ensuring rights and dignity of the Muslim community in newly created Pakistan. Owing to this type of distrust and disagreements, various measures initiated by the British government failed to develop consensus between the two leaders.

In other words, the two leaders believed in different methods, approaches and mechanisms for the attainment of independence and the settlement of the communal question. They differed in their appeals to their masses and communities and entered into their own style of consultations with the British. Their disagreements in fact manifested great differences in their personalities, views, perspectives, methods to nation building and constitution making.

**Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine and analyse the nature and purpose of the political relationships between Gandhiji and Jinnah who began journey in the same boat but moved to two different directions. The objective of the study is to explore their demands to the British colonial masters and commitments to people and the community on the pretext of freedom, equality, justice, development and peace. This study is also an attempt to look into the critical stages of history where acute differences developed.
Rationale of the Study

This work attempts to fill major lacunae in the field of research done on Gandhiji and Jinnah particularly in the context of freedom struggle, partition politics, and two-nation theory. Moreover, nationalist scholars have generally attempted to discover the heroic deeds of their leaders in order to justify their works and contributions. Gandhiji referred as Father of the Nation, an advocate of non-violence and ethical aspects in politics. On the other hand, Jinnah is glorified as Qaed-i-Azam for creating a new nation for the Muslim community who wanted to leave India to settle in the newly carved country. There have been many works on them in various parts of the world. This work is a modest attempt to make a comparative study of the two stalwarts in order to draw a closer sketch of their vital differences on the ground.

Research Question

The main primary research question is to:

a. Examine their role in India’s freedom struggle and their deep concerns over the issues of post-colonial governance of the country,

b. Examine their methods and approaches to attain freedom from the colonial yoke,

c. Look into the factors and situations where the two leaders moved into two different directions,

d. Examine the important events where the two leaders could have reconciled to create united India,

e. Look into their demands, accusations, commitments and agenda.
Hypothesis of the Study

Existing works and the established opinion have created the hero-like image of both Gandhiji and Jinnah in their respective political settings as there exists no space for any criticism or critical assessments of their role in colonial India. Their nationalistic images required an academic assessment to reach out to their political realism. The main assumption was that a comparative study would certainly raise the main curtain to look at the matter more sharply in order to identify major differences between the narratives and realities.

Scope of the Study

There are many institutions, bodies and scholars who have been dealing with the subject of freedom struggle in colonial India, deficiencies and contributions of Gandhiji and Jinnah. Their views, initiatives, activities and suggestions have become the guiding principles of governance, conflict resolution, social harmony, development and peace. They have also become the motivating factors for various political developments in addition to have become national portrait in various parts of the concerned countries. It is also a fact that both the parties each following its respective leader claims domineering stakes in freedom struggle and denies the similar role of the other. Thus it becomes a kind of monotonous rather than becoming competitive discourse.

This research work is an attempt to re-engage discussions over the subject of freedom struggle in the context of comparing the role of the two leaders. This does not extend to a detailed analysis either of the freedom struggle or of the other situations. The main objective of the study is to view it as a site of
academic discourse to find out comparative deficiencies and contributions of Gandhiji and Jinnah in India’s freedom struggle. It is a historical examination of the role of the two leaders in relation to each other and in relation to India’s freedom struggle. The critical assessment of their role would at least contribute to develop a new thinking to avoid the study of freedom struggle, Gandhiji and Jinnah in concentric circle of personified discussion.

Methodology and Sources of Data
The present study is based on qualitative research methodology. The study is based on historical and analytical method which include the use of primary and secondary sources. A large number of books, articles, journals and periodicals have been consulted as the secondary source.

Chapter Plan
The present study has been organized into six chapters in which both the introduction and the conclusion are included.

Chapter-I
This is the introduction chapter focusing on the background of the freedom struggle in British controlled India. The quest of freedom for the British controlled India by the dependent people gained stupendous momentum in the first half of the twentieth century when two great leaders with their mesmerizing personalities and deep political insights arrived on the political stage of the enslaved homeland. In the beginning, although both were steered by the same motives and for the same goal, but ironically they got drifted during the last phase of the march for the struggle of the India’s freedom. It
seemed that their ideologies started irking each other and this ultimately ended with the liberation of India at the cost of massive killings, exodus, destructions of properties and illegal capture of lands, buildings and religious institutions caused by the partition of British India. While Mohammed Ali Jinnah kept intimate relations with Western life style and carried a deep influence of the western education and analysis, on the other hand Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi found solace with the Hindu life style, ideology with strong belief in Hinduism and differed with western ideologies in political thoughts.

In Gandhian thought we would certainly find reflections of all the religions and a synthesis par excellence of all the then existed philosophies dealing with both personal and public life. In the field of politics and his political experiments of Non-cooperation and civil disobedience and Ahimsa, Gandhiji seemed to have been heavily charged and deeply moved and swayed by Tolstoy and Ruskin. His concept of Ram Rajya seems to have clear impression of Ramayana and Bhagwat Gita. He was also an ardent advocate of the principle of non violence in both theory and practice. The whole life of Gandhiji was directed, regulated and molded by the spirit of non-Violence. Gandhi-Jinnah conflict which first began with simple political overtone finally rent the freedom movement and ultimately led to the widening of the divide between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League resulting in the partition of the British controlled country along with deadly communal violence. The Indian freedom struggle culminated into a powerful national movement and set a novel
example of composite nationalism and patriotism among diverse groups and communities.

There exist extreme views which need to be closely examined and must be presented in balanced and justifiable manner. Both Gandhi and Jinnah had similar educational background of juridical matters but their views, concerns and commitments were starkly different. Their differences were clearly apparent over the role morality and political realism in the domain of power and governance. M.K. Gandhi was discovering the virtues of common truths in all religions with his firm commitment to Caste-oriented Hinduism. He was busy with raising objections over the wrongs of the British rulers without looking into the fears of the Muslim minority community. M.A. Jinnah was moving towards other side of the fence. He was concerned with legal reforms, institutions of governance and policies of the colonial rulers along with his firm commitment to achieve independence. He was facing challenges at the two levels—first to get rid of the colonial masters and second, to seek a legitimate State safeguarding the interests of minorities particularly Muslims in the post-colonial era.

Gandhiji’s love, ahimsa and service of the humanity seemed no longer doing any good to the great leaders of both the Congress and the League. Gandhiji now was alone in his experiment while be remained busy in calming down the unscrupulous communal passion, it is interesting to see that M.A. Jinnah in the same time was busy in the celebration of his achievement and in the consolidation of his Pakistan. Gandhiji could indeed show to the world that he
deserved the word Mahatma ascribed to his name when he got the bullets in his chest Nathuram Godse for saving the community of which quite ironically Jinnah claimed to be the Quaid-i-Azam.

Chapter-II

This chapter deals with social, educational and religious orientation of M.K. Gandhi and M.A. Jinnah. Although there are many semblances between M.K. Gandhi and M.A. Jinnah, there are numerous differences which enabled the two leaders to rise to the highest acme of political and social power. They indeed could setup standards in political life; however there cannot be any analogy between Gandhi and Jinnah in the social and religious realms of life. While Gandhiji had tremendous religious orientation it was almost none for Jinnah. In social environment while Gandhiji had tremendous influence on the lower and middle strata of the society, M.A. Jinnah was deeply attached with the higher strata of the society and had the wit of language and conviction to prevail upon higher classes. Ironically both the leaders could accomplish the herculean task of liberating India yet they could achieve different goals through different routes.

If the passage of time is to be traced, the two leaders would be found immersed in the deep love and loyalty to the service of their nation. Unfortunately time could see the parting of one from the other with anguish, pain and hatred. Both seemed to have miserably mistaken with regard to the prevailing reality which had they not overlooked India would have walked in to the freedom without any animosity. Despite the fact that Gandhiji belonged to Bania Caste but for
three generations Gandhi’s father and grandfather held the post of prime ministers in several Kathiawar darbars. Apart from his mother’s religious guidance, Gandhiji’s nurse Rambha\(^3\) had also installed in him good seeds of religion. In his political life although he headed congress but that too with a mission to teach his fellow Indians lessons of love and devotion and remained insulated from greed in all through his journey.

Since nothing is documented about Jinnah’s religious orientation, his seemingly secular posturing in the political life indicates that he chose not to reveal or not to limit his personality to the Islamic religious life. Although his education began with *Sind Madrasat-ul-Islam*, is only paradoxical that nothing of the religious flavour had its appearance in Jinnah’s life. He was admitted to Christian missionary high school. He was a vociferous reader. He sought admission to the Lincoln’s Inn which become the most coveted profession of barristership. He also traded in his traditional Sindhi long yellow coat for smartly tailored Sallille Row Suits and heavily-starched detachable-collared shirts. His tall lean frame was perfectly suited to display London’s finest fashions. In April 1895 after three attempts to pass the bar examination he finally got success and was declared qualified among 53 other students.

His keenness to learn made him visit high places of British power like visitor’s gallery of Westminster’s House of Commons. There was a galaxy of eminent disciples of great men who shaped the mind of the modern man M.A. Jinnah. He was destined to come under their influence and imbued their ideas. He passed much his time in the reading room of the British Museum which was
then the centre-point of scholars all over the world. He would visit Hyde Park Corner at the Marble Arch on Sundays to listen to the open air oratory. In those days of awakening Jinnah came across many political stalwarts of India who were relentlessly raising issues about India and Indians, their rights and privileges. He also came across a charismatic Indian who was elected to the House of Commons from Central Finsbury on a Liberal ticket. He was a Bombay Parsi Dadabhai Naoroji. He had earned commendable success in at least raising concerns about Indians in British Parliament. He was known to Indian youths as the Grand Old Man of National Politics. Jinnah was greatly impressed by him.

Chapter-III

This chapter deals with the role of the two important leaders in India’s freedom struggle. Gandhiji began his political career in South Africa where he used his non-violent method against the colonial masters suppressing the native people and the Indian community as part of the enslaved nation. His tremendous success in South Africa gave credence to his belief and strengthened his conviction. His return to India in 1915 saw the public opinion tilted towards him with hope and respect. His moral struggle made him not only stalwart among various organizations engaged in National Movement in India but also gave him high position among the general Indian masses. The poor and illiterate of the Indian masses started seeing towards him as the man who dressed like them, ate like them and talked for the highest morality. Gandhiji’s method of political mobilization of the masses was nothing less than magical.
Gandhiji after his arrival took extensive tour of the nation to get to know first-hand information regarding the plight of Indians under the British Raj. Meanwhile he maintained silence and continued to keep close watch on the situation. He participated in the session of Indian National Congress and the Muslim League but chose not to intervene. Gandhiji had no faith in any constitutional and political methods which were in momentum in the colonial country and believed that none of these methods could bring any relief to Indians unless these movements own up the policies and principles of Satyagraha. Clearly Gandhiji seemed not to entertain any one policy, idea, opinion, methods.

The Indian National Congress up to 1916 remained as an organization of moderates but from 1916 the Indian National Congress turned out to be an extremist organization. After the advent of Gandhiji, the Congress ceased to be either a ‘Moderate’ or an ‘Extremist’ body, but Gandhian, because he gave the Congress an indelible print of his ideology and programme. Gandhi’s defiance against the British in the ceremonial function of the Benares Hindu university in 1916 had indicated his disliking of the English language.

His magical power as crowd puller is although a hard fact and that his words were regarded as sacrosanct as religious rituals which was perhaps the sole mover of Gandhiji to a political height. He had long realized that to the majority of Indians what mattered was religious sentiment and Gandhiji left no opportunity to grab that. When Gandhi’s call for non-cooperation against the Rowlatt Act paid no dividend, he used the Khilafat movement card which drew
man against the British. The Indian national Congress passed a resolution at the Calcutta session in September 1920 which included three demands, i.e., the demands for the redress of the Khilafat wrong, the Punjab wrong and the demand for the establishment of Swaraj. However many Stalwarts vehemently opposed Gandhiji’s arbitrary move. Poet Rabindranath Tagore expressed his anxiety against Gandhi’s rejection of the spirit of the Occident.

M.A. Jinnah too got repulsive and opposed the resolution. Despite the clear cut majority support for Gandhiji, M.A. Jinnah could not budge an inch and warned the Congress not to go for it as it would throw the unprepared largely ignorant mass into a serious kind of disaster but no one could dare to stop Gandhiji as his magic had cast his spell. Gandhiji rejected Jinnah’s advice. Gandhiji said that he did not rely merely upon the lawyer class or highly educated men to carry out all the stages of non-cooperation. His hope was more with the masses, so far as the later stages of non-cooperation are concerned. The methods through which M.A. Jinnah wished to conquer his people and nation seems to fast losing its ground. The man who stood for his people seemed utter loneliness particularly after the 1920 Congress session, which not only endorsed Gandhiji’s methods but at the same time refused to acknowledge any voice of dissent. Jinnah although had the same bitterness as Gandhiji against the British but his methods and styles seemed to exercise cautions and restraint and avoided to throw his people into the abyss of civil war. Both began to differ on various issues together with their achievements in political field. They
finally got separated at the height of political development when Jinnah finally sought for an independent and separate country of his own.

Chapter-IV

This chapter deals with the fact that Gandhiji and Jinnah played very important role in India’s freedom from the British colonial rule. In the course of their contributions to the people of undivided India, they have also shown their common concerns on many issues but later they parted their ways leading to the same goal of freedom. This chapter reflects both convergence and divergence in the case of the working of the two leaders in India’s struggle for freedom. Both Gandhiji and Jinnah represented, at one time, unity of the people, yet there were big gaps between their choice to use and avoid religion in political game. While it is amply clear that Gandhiji was a practicing Hindu and that his political domination through mass appeal and travelling had much to do with his faith in Hindu religion and identification with his community. However, he differed from Tilak who got himself closely associated with the orthodox sections of the Hindu society as well as with the militant and revolutionary activities in western India and in fact laid down the foundation of militant Hindu party within the Indian National Congress and which all culminated into anti-Muslim bias that was responsible for the communal tension in Maharashtra and subsequently in the rest of India. Although on political horizon Gandhiji came quite at a later stage on 1915, his immense faith in religion and his adherence to the basic dogma of truth, kindness and
service to humanity, he had equally been lacking in tactical measures rather political measures to ensure that he stood for all without distinction.

He came to be seen as biased Hindu who could in way wish to accommodate Muslims for his political gain, while the fanatic Hindus considered him as a man who is more titled towards Muslims and give them extra concessions. It could, however, be a political propaganda by both Hindus and Muslims where everyone would try to dislodge Gandhiji from either arms. On the other hand, Dalit intellectuals criticize Gandhi for endorsing the Caste system in Hindu religion. This it true that the possibility of error and mistakes lies inherent in man’s nature and it doesn’t matter how high morale he has set for himself but as being human he errs and that also happens to Gandhiji. But again his mistakes do not make him stained to be called to have hatred for any one.

His decisions to show affiliation with Khilafat Movement and at the same time he was tinkering with Shudhi Movement, may be seen as meddling with everything without purpose but it was not really meant by Gandhiji. The allegations that Gandhiji did not denounce Shudhi and Sangathan and in fact supported and applauded their efforts. It is also alleged that he lent his support to the Hindu Mahasabha’s appeal for one million rupees for carrying on the work. He is also depicted as a communalist when he is shown to be a deep rooted orthodox Hindu not ready to reconcile with any one and boast of his religion on the top of others. But having seen through all these allegations, it does not implicate Gandhiji as being a communalist.
Jinnah, on the other hand, was just the opposite of Gandhi and remained bitterly critical of Gandhiji’s methods. Jinnah never allowed religions to dominate his political outlook or activity. He hated caste violence and also communalism. Jinnah disliked Mullahs so much that he was to appoint a backward Hindu Jogindarnath Mandal as the first Kazi of sovereign republic of Pakistan which he was to create as the Quaid-i-Aam. Most of Jinnah’s intimate friends were Hindus and Parsis. Jinnah was essentially a politician and had no live consciousness of his religion. He repulsed those who thought and worked for sectional interests.

The birth of Jinnah as a Congressman incidentally occurred at a time when All India Muslim League was born in 1906. Jinnah did not join the Muslim League. Jinnah in those days was exhorting Indians and particularly Muslims to join Congress. He bitterly opposed reservation in the Congress Session of 1906. He became highly critical of Communal Electorates in 1908. Thus we can clearly see the role of M.A. Jinnah for over two decades was dedicated to the cause of Nation. He always counseled, towards Hindu ‘our attitude should be one of goodwill and brotherly feelings’. And as Sarojini Naidu puts it, he was a confirm nationalist and was great hearted prince of Indian Nationalist.

His influence on the educated class of Indians was of such a dimension he was not the member of Muslim League yet the twin decision taken at 1912 Council meeting of the Indian Muslim League was due to his influence which made the League to revise its constitution and to work for Hindu-Muslim Unity. It was again his influence that worked as a magic and made the Muslim League in
1913 to demand the self Government, through constitutional means, as its ultimate objective. He warned the Leaguers in the Muslim League Session held in 1918 in Delhi, not to dabble in Khilafat issue as it did not concern India.Jinnah opposed Gandhian politics solely because of Gandhi’s approach and methods which for many reasons had potential to jeopardise the whole concept of national unity. In Gandhi’s view religion is a binding force but as the history revealed, it took the digression and communalism became the ultimate ruler of Indians’ minds as M.A. Jinnah had predicted.

His fame, popularity and following also remained intact. At that time Jinnah’s popularity was unbeatable and he had his influence on the people of India. It was his strong belief in secularism that M. A. Jinnah became the target of both Hindu and Muslim communalists. Allegations kept pouring on him from both the sides but he remained unaffected. He gave a strong rebuttal to TheTimes of India on being quoted him as calling Congress ‘A Hindu institution’.His transformation from a hard-core secularist to a formidable communal separatist was something which was the outcome of political greed and temptation and stiff competition for gaining the soul proprietorship of Indian masses. Many of us blame Gandhiji and many of us blame Jinnah but the fact is written on the wall that both of them in their hearts had immense love for the country and its people and they were both true ambassadors of Hindu-Muslim unity. Unfortunately, however, the human errings and mistakes did blanket them and in the darkness our lovely country got partitioned.
Chapter-V
This chapter deals with the conflicting ideas and interests of both the leaders in freedom struggle. There are numerous instances where the two stalwarts M.A. Jinnah and M.K. Gandhi came to direct clashes both in words and policies. Both the leaders are credited to gear up the movement to its logical end yet in terms of accomplishments. Indeed Gandhiji in the years to come had to understand, discover, strengthen Indian psyche vis-a-vis his new fangled notions. He tried to combine spiritually with politics and at the same time tried to undermine or even disregard the current political ideologies which was the basis of the movement led by many political leaders including M.A. Jinnah. On the other hand, the otherwise secular Jinnah, being insulted and humiliated chose to craft a policy of domination and supremacy in order to marginalize Gandhiji. This is not to say that Gandhiji at any point of time talked about disengagement of any Muslim cause, purely on the humane line but Gandhiji certainly failed in realizing that the revival of the so-called great Hindu tradition, in order to exhume the buried essence of the Indian nation may give an opportunity to those who were lurking on both sides of the community to incite communal passion.
M.A. Jinnah was secular and there is no doubt in it but his secularism was not contained in the literal meaning of it. For Jinnah, seeking security, welfare and due share of power for the community doesn’t mean any diversion from secularism. In Jinnah the cult of Muslim League found an able, shrewd, intelligent, verbose, indomitable and impressive personality who would at
any moment route the opponents in any debates. While Jinnah found in Muslim League his dream vehicle on which he would ride and charge the opponents with the big mass following. It was precisely the same what Gandhiji was doing to achieve his objectives. But for Jinnah his tilt was not sudden and even was not thought of prior to Gandhiji plunge into Khilafat movement in 1920. The political horizons in which the two leaders M.A. Jinnah and M.K. Gandhi plunged into actions were quite different.

Jinnah never believed that the Congress and Gandhi represented the whole of India. So long as they deny true facts and the absolute truth that the Muslim League is the only authoritative organization of the Muslims, and so long as they continue in this vicious circle, there can and will be no compromise or freedom. Gandhiji wanted, as the sole architect of the post 1920 Congress was to see British out from his India but his greatest misery was Jinnah who was the main stumbling block in the realization of Gandhiji’s desire. For Jinnah his new found love for Pakistan was the only viable alternative of Gandhiji’s vision of Ram Rajya. The clashes may have occurred on many issues but the central issue was the issue of leadership between two giants whose prestige lied not in the submission but in flaunting their philosophy and principle unshakable and unbending. It was thus expected that the clash would not fizzle out until the two parted and got what they deserved in their own carved out Nations.
Chapter-VI

This chapter includes conclusion. This is quite ironical that a man who left a momentous legacy behind him and adorned and honoured as the Quaid-e-Azam of Pakistan and who fought and won his Pakistan on the single plea of ‘Muslim under siege’ by Hindu majoritism; could himself never show up as a poster boy of the then practised traditional Islam. Jinnah undertook his journey from Karachi to Bombay and then back to Karachi, forsaking his intense and emotional relationship with the Congress. This is also strange that a man who loved delicacies in taste, style and action and who loved to put on the most fashionable suits of the time and loved to speak in the accent of an educated Englishman and yet his steps are seen quite paradoxically coming out from the steps of Sind Madrassat ul-Islam.

This being quite opposite to what Jinnah stood for in his political career. A man who was secular to the hilt and not even Gandhiji was a match. Jinnah’s personality, his guts and gumption, his dedication and honesty, his accomplishments and the indomitable courage had all without match in any of the arena he stepped in. All the historians of the world over do pass laudatory remarks for M. A. Jinnah when it comes to his forthcoming nature and unswerving personality, his awesome style of conversation and penetrating logic and more over his unbending nature and his stubbornness on the question of Pakistan, yet we hardly know how M.A. Jinnah could admit himself that his Pakistan was the biggest blunder of his career. His acceptance entails his agony he suffered during the birth of Pakistan. It cannot be dismissed altogether that it
was like a predicament from where return to his long cherished goal of Hindu-Muslim unity, secularism and patriotism was just impossible.

Undoubtedly Jinnah abhorred and detested violence of any form and he always believed that any form of movement whether civil disobedience a non-cooperation which was opted by his political counterpart Mahatma Gandhi, could always turn into uncontrollable violence which subsequently would give the government a plea to resort to ruthless repression. Not surprising that Gandhi’s methods were always questioned by Jinnah and though he was shouted down when he called upon Gandhiji to retract and had said that the constitutional way is the only right way. If constituted authority is to be overthrown what will happen to the country, was the question Jinnah posed repeatedly. It was his blatant disregard to M.K. Gandhi’s principles and methods perhaps which made him repugnant to the Congress leadership undoubtedly his aversion to the Congress.

Till early 1937, Jinnah believed that Muslim rights and interests would be, and could be, made safe in a truly federal constitution; so he worked for a federation and for Hindu-Muslim unity. But by the late thirties, chiefly as a result of the Congress policy and posture in the provinces under its rule, he got convinced that the Congress would turn even a federal constitution into a machinery for oppression of the Muslims and other minorities, so by 1937-38 he began to oppose it tooth and nail. Increasingly and inexorably was he to direct all his energies hence forth towards building up Muslim unity, a single political platform, and a uniform all-India policy to be followed loyally by
Muslims throughout the subcontinent. He was thus to establish himself, with the passage of time, as the unquestioned leader of Indian Muslims.

No one can describe Gandhiji as beautiful as Tagore did. Although Tagore himself was harshly critical of Gandhiji methods and principles. On the question of non cooperation Gandhiji had chosen an extreme radical view. He considered it a sin to cooperate with the satanic British Government and hence he commanded non cooperation but on the other hand M.A. Jinnah bitterly contested this view point by maintaining that in the present situation where majority of Indians are steeped into ignorance there will be hardly any taker of Gandhiji view point in its essence and this movement Shall finally be taken over by the “hot heads” and shall aggravate the gospel of hatred against the British.

Gandhiji was a Mahatma, a political mystic or a mystic-politician, but his mystic nature had a greater influence on him and his political visibility largely over shadowed by his mystic nature and so we find that Gandhiji in his political wisdom could make numerous blunders and continued to disenchant not only M.A. Jinnah but also his close friends, be it the question of giving support to the British in the first world war or be it the Khilafat movement or be it the changing of the Home Rule constitution or be it the question of Swaraj or be it the non cooperation and Civil disobedience, or be it the question of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In any case, Gandhiji suffered from several “inherent limitations” in his role as the arbiter of the Hindu-Muslim conflict. In many respects, Gandhiji was a
rather conservative Hindu. In his philosophy and methods, in his daily rituals,
in prayer and preachings, in his attempt to rouse the masses through Hindu
religious songs like the Ramdhun, in his constant reference to Ram Raj as the
ideal form of state and society. His practically life-long support of the caste
system and his opposition to cow-slaughter, and in many other respects, he was
a thoroughly orthodox Hindu and proudly declared himself to be so. Indeed, no
historian worth his salt can deny the fact that in many ways Mahatma Gandhi
was one of the greatest architects of Hindu revivalism in modern India.
Gandhiji as a person, his philosophy and methods were, therefore, particularly
unsuited to the resolution of the Hindu-Muslim conflict. A party to a dispute
cannot hope to assume successfully the role of the Judge or the arbiter. In order
to bring about a harmony between contending forces, one has to rise above and
beyond these forces. This Gandhiji failed to do. The fact of the matter is that to
regard the communal problem in India as an essentially religious problem, as
Gandhiji apparently did, is a gross oversimplification. It requires only a casual
understanding of the problem to know that deep-rooted historical, political,
economic and social factors are involved. Any attempt to solve this problem, if
there is to be even partial success, must be based on an essentially secular
approach. But this was obviously beyond Mahatma Gandhi.