CHAPTER I

HUMANISM AND ITS PARAMETERS

1.1. Introduction to Humanism

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated the importance of humanism in his inaugural speech at Pune University on 10th February, 1949 as

“The University stands for humanism and tolerance, for reason, for adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the forward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately then it is well with the nation and the people.” (Nehru. Inaugural speech)

The chapter first, ‘Humanism’ is a study of numerous possible ways of humanism and its different meanings in different contexts. It attempts to elaborate the meaning of humanism, its forms, its history and different points of view and perceptions. To illustrate it in a better and comprehensive way, this chapter is deliberately divided into various sub sections for better understanding of the term. After studying the term from various angles, it is obvious that it is almost impossible to deliver an ultimate or single definition of the umbrella term ‘humanism’. Humanism so far has been assumed and explicated differently following multiple insights and clarifications.

1.1.1. Definitions and Meaning of Humanism

To make simple sense of the term, Humanism shows all the concerns for human beings as a whole. It puts Human at the center of the social and universal systems. As it is associated with human need, human welfare, human liberation and global brotherhood, it sustains human as the paramount creation in the world concerning his abilities, needs and facilities. Humanism as an ideology is not a set of thoughts or of beliefs or a philosophical system but a value system which goes with the suffix, “ism”. It cannot be attributed to any sect, that is located into specific geographical boundaries. It is therefore neither time bound nor geographically bound. Humanism is an attitude or perspective of life which may include all philosophies and systems of beliefs.
The originality of the term is found in its Latin roots where the term *humble* (humilis) is sourced from *humus* which means soil or earth. Therefore ‘homo’ stands for an earthly being and ‘human’ means ‘of the land or soil’. The term has the exact opposite connotations of being an earthly being i.e. plans, animals or incest against the dwellers of the sky or gods which are above humans. Nicolas Walter defines ‘Humanism’ in his as

“Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over established doctrine or faith (fideism).” (Walter, 1977: 234)

The meaning of the term humanism has altered and has gone through many changes over the period of time according to the successive intellectual movements over a long period of time. Humanism has been used from various points of views. In the entry on Humanism in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* it has been said that,

“Humanism as a technical term and as an intellectual or moral conception has always leaned heavily on its etymology, which is characteristically human, not supernatural, that belongs to man and not to external nature, that which raises man to his greatest height or gives him, as man, his greatest satisfaction, is apt to be called humanism.” (Encyclopedia, 2012: 340)

Another definition according to *Collins Dictionary* on Humanism says that the rejection of religion in favor of the advancement of humanity by its own efforts. Some more definitions go closer to the established meaning of the term as *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* speaks about humanism as, “It is an outlook or system of thought concerned with human rather than divine or supernatural matters. It is more human than divine.”

*The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies (1980)* summarizes humanism in a more specific way,

“Humanism- the doctrine that people’s duty is to promote human welfare, humanitarianism doctrine, ism, philosophical system, and philosophy, school of thought, a belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school. This doctrine emphasizes on a person’s capacity for self-realization through reason; rejects religion and the supernatural. The cultural
movement of the Renaissance; based on classical studies cultural movement – a group of people working together to advance certain cultural goals." (The Sage Dictionary, 1980: 88)

Humanism therefore stands for more than one thing and is likely to create much confusion. It may be the practical resemblance of life rather than merely a theoretical concept. The early humanists among the Greek philosophers revealed that it was simply the study of the humanities or scholarly letters and according to them this was what humanism meant. It suggested that it was a freedom from religious domination which was evident in that era. It also spoke about its rich interest in all walks of life. It also included the enthusiasm to all human passions and obsession of arts, paintings, music, literature and architect as well. Humanism therefore lends men to enjoy Shakespeare and Milton, or Goethe. It may be the aesthetics of Aristotle or meaninglessness of T.S. Eliot. It may be the pictures of poverty and squalor in the novels of Dickens’s or the romantic verses of Shelley, Keats or Byron. It may be a philosophy where man is at the center. It may be surrealism of Modern Times. Edward Said rationalizes it in modern terms as,

"Humanism is the only and the final resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history. And the essence of humanism is to understand human history as a continuous process of self-understanding and self-realization, not just for us, as white, male, European, and American but for everyone." (Said Edward, 2004: 26)

Taking into account all these perspectives, the term Humanisms is a culmination and synthesis of all the above meanings defined by the various scholars and supported by different movements and definitions. Though it seems that the meaning may have some ambiguities, Humanism definitely stands for all the principles that uphold human welfare.

1.1.2. Historiography of Humanism

The first attempt to put human reason higher than myth and rituals is found in Pre Socratic period especially in the works of Thales of Miletus (624 to 546 BC) and Xenophanes of Colophon (569-469 BC). Thales, being the first humanist, asked the question about the supreme powers of Gods and showed his faith in reason. In India, Gautam Buddha brought Enlightenment to the entire humanity by stressing the
principles of rationality, righteousness, rigorous moral conduct and compassion with equanimity. The Lokajat school, the theories propounded by Charvak and Kanad testify the same fact when Charvale declares that there is no return after the body is burnt and turned to ashes. This noble tradition of rationalism and humanitarianism was enlightened around the tenth century or so when the conservative traditionalism started dominating the life of Indians.

1.1.3. Renaissance Humanism

The early Greek philosophers found nature around them more significant to study than the supernaturalism. The journey of rationality reached Athens with the efforts of Anaxagoras (510 to 428 BC) Pericles (495 to 429 BC). Protagoras (490 to 420 BC) who put forth the famous saying, “man is the measure of all things” stressed the rationality more profoundly. Democritus (460 to 370 BC) upheld the science and proposed that “matter is composed of atoms”. Epicurus (341 to 270 BC) refuted the notions of rebirth, heaven and soul. He admitted girls in his school which was the first attempt in Greece. The founder pioneer of Western Philosophy, Socrates came on the scene from 470 to 399 BC. True knowledge exists in knowing that you know nothing, based on this thinking, he founded a legacy based on reason, doubt and experiment. His disciple Plato (428- 348 BC) was the prominent figure in the establishment of Western Philosophy and Founder of Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western World. Aristotle (384- 322 BC) together with Socrates and Plato laid much of the groundwork for Western philosophy.

The distinctive division of growth and re-moulding of Humanism appeared in the era of Renaissance. Humanism became a reascent with the study of classism that began in Italy and it spread across Europe particularly towards the western parts in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The term Renaissance (rebirth) and the term humanism culminated together. Renaissance and humanist philosophy was the counter-thought to narrow pedantry which was a medieval mindset. Humanists sought to build up to form righteous and prudent measures.

“Primary Italian humanism, which in many esteems continued the grammatical and rhetorical traditions of the Middle Ages, not merely provided the old Tritium with a new and more ambitious name (Studia
but also increased its actual scope, content and significance in the curriculum of the schools and universities and in its own extensive literary production. The *Studia humanitatis* excluded logic, but they added to the traditional grammar and rhetoric not only history, Greek, and moral philosophy, but also made poetry, once a sequel of grammar and rhetoric, the most important member of the whole group.” (Kristeller, 1965: 178)

The revival of culture and academics with the legacy of ancient and classical philosophy in the favour of Humanism flourished its path in entire Italy and Europe. Petrarch, Coluccio, Poggio, Salutati and Bracciolini were the torch bearers with large collections of classical manuscripts but of all Petrarch (1304 to 1374 AD) was credited with the title of the ‘Father of Humanism’ as his contribution surpassed all in both Latin and Roman. Many were people of high rank such as Petrarch (holy order of Church) and however got easy access to and luxury of classical books. Humanist became favorite choice of academic programs with its rapid acceptance and with mid fifteen century many of the elite and wealthy class adopted to humanist educations. Many cardinals, lawyers, learned scholars; Popes inspired the Humanist movement in those times.

"Yet it was from the Renaissance that modern Secular Humanism grew, with the development of an important split between reason and religion. This occurred as the church's complacent authority was exposed in two vital areas. In science, Galileo's support of the Copernican revolution upset the church's adherence to the theories of Aristotle, exposing them as false. In theology, the Dutch scholar Erasmus with his new Greek text showed that the Roman Catholic adherence to Jerome's Vulgate was frequently in error. A tiny wedge was thus forced between reason and authority, as both of them were then understood." (Guinness, 1973 : 5)

1.1.4. From Enlightenment Humanism to Modern humanism

The age of Enlightenment is an era of rational society and the artistic height which reached its highest summit in European Nationals amongst the seventeenth and eighteenth century and outperformed its pinnacle. While describing the special features of enlightenment, one of the pioneers of the movement, Immanuel Kant explained in the introduction that, "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity." (Kant, 2009 : 12) He advocated that the childishness of the era is self-inserted, not from the absence of knowledge, but from the absence of adventure to
application of reasonability, scientific temperament and courage. He illustrated the fulfillment of enlightenment in his famous phrase Sapere Aude (Dare to be wise!) Sapere Aude is the Latin expression meaning ‘Dare to know’ and is loosely translated as ‘Dare to be wise’. Originally used in the First Book of Letters (Twentieth BC), by the Roman poet Horace, the phrase Sapere Aude became concomitant with the Age of Enlightenment during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, after Immanuel Kant popularized it in his essay. The common element was the trust in human cognitive faculty and reason. This is in accordance with the sense that the application of reason was illuminating the lights to shed away the superstition, prejudices and anarchy. Enlightenment contributes towards releasing humanity from its former dependence on small power and unexplained custom. It opens the prospects of progress towards free, equal and happy society. Kant apprehends the common people or the majority satisfied to go behind the guiding institutional principles of society, such as the religion and kingdom. They have the inability to discard the weight of their pettiness because of the lack of determination to be self-directed. The biggest challenge in front of the individuals is to pave their way out of the ignorance and cowardice and come out of the comfort zone.

1.1.4.1. Revolting Against the Past
Immanuel Kant added that if the people dared to push out even if did throw off the prejudiced notions, it would be impossible to imagine the unity of people for their own betterment. The most significant action in this regard was the psychological burden of accepting reason to religion. There would be hope that all the community would throw off the burden of ignorance. They would not be compelled to do so because they were guided the institutional patents that consider themselves as individuals. Kant shows himself a man of his times when he observes that a revolution might well put an end to autocratic despotism or power-seeking oppression, but it would never produce a true reform in the ways of thinking. The American Revolution had left its significant impression on the Western World but Kant was skeptical that the new prejudices would take over the old ideas and would control the mindset of the common masses.
Immanuel Kant’s idea opposed to the earlier notions of hegemony of religion and political authority. For him Enlightenment was mankind's final ‘coming of age’, the emancipation of the human consciousness from an immature state of ignorance. Bertrand Russell, another notable philosopher, states, “The enlightenment was a phase in a progressive development, which began in antiquity, and that reason and challenges to the established order were constant ideals throughout that time.” (Russell, 1790: 492–494)

In Russell’s argument the enlightenment was ultimately a product of the anti-catholic religious movement in the favor of Protestants or the crystallization of theoretical views from previous centuries created a common cohesive perspective. According to him many of the idealistic principles, for example democracy against monarchy could be seen among Protestants in the early sixteenth century to realize the need to cut off from the hegemony of the Pope who was the representative of Catholic Church. Catholics adopted some of the ideas and by the Eighteenth century Enlightenment became the dividing force between Catholics and Protestants leading to the leadership of Martin Luther.

1.1.4.2. Humanism and New Dimensions

From the sixteenth century onwards Humanism was associated with the concept of education and comprised the study of disciplines like poetry, music, morality, history and rhetoric. The moral and emotional subjects were considered as humanism and the cognitive subjects like mathematics, physics, science and natural philosophy were kept out of the circle of humanism. The humanist studies focused on classical literature and particularly on Latin language. This resulted into emergence of Renaissance in Europe during that period of time. The humanist followed and referred to the works of classical writers like Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. In the nineteenth century the word Humanism found its association with the philosophy that included human nature (psychology), general moral values and ethical studies.

Renaissance humanism believed in the self reverence of human in the universal system replacing God or Almighty as a governor of the system. The emphasis was shifted on classical imaginative and philosophical literature implicating morality and
reasonability from aesthetic and religious values. Reason became the focal point against the hegemony of transcendental powers. Humanist asserted that human development should be concerned with individual’s various abilities, artistic, aesthetic and moral as against only technical or mechanical and specialized training.

The exact starting point of enlightenment is not clear. Some consider it is at the beginning of eighteenth Century while some state that it was started the process in the middle of the eighteenth century. Some fix the date with the publication of Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* (1637) which had a huge impact on the period. Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (1687) is considered as the mark of the enlightenment. The credit to these writers is attributed because the focus was shifted from external powers to the inner capabilities of human. French revolution (1789) is also considered as the beginning point of the enlightenment movement because there would not be a greater movement than this at that time. Scientific truth became more important than supernaturalism and ‘human’ is fixed as a ‘Master’ of the system. The rapid growth of science and technology and the advancement of knowledge started on its upward journey in the enlightenment period.

### 1.1.4.3. Humanism and Religion

Enlightenment humanists shared some common principles, values and philosophical assumptions about religion and reason. There were disputes and disagreements amongst scholars but the common ground and goals were rationality in opposition to superstitions, reason and logic opposed to faith and beliefs. The society was introduced to new adventures and knowledge. The people were reluctant to be conventional and orthodox and the new fashion was to feel free and independent. The church also went through rapid purification. According to Immanuel Kant it is simply freedom from one’s intelligence. The period left its mark with a tremendous increase in experiments, scientific research which challenged religious domination.

The religious doctrine had restricted thinking earlier. The people were exploited by the opportunist nexus of monarchy and church. The inter relationship of two had kept the freedom under check. The powers of both had crushed the freedom of the people. Martin Luther challenged the concept of ‘Divine Rights of Kings’ and the supremacy of Pope as a religious head. The doctrine had authorized the rule of King and in return
King protected the rights of the Church. The Enlightenment Humanism took the beneficial ideas like freedom, reason, democratic rights and hence refuted the divine rights of Kings and the Pope. With the enhancement of trade and tourism, the capitalization, market oriented society was established which led to the scientific temperament and religious harmony. Rationality and logical application became the new trend of Enlightenment and the principle of science was observed in every aspect. The goals of scientific temperament were too ambitious to achieve in that era but it helped the Romantics and Victorians to go much higher in that direction. The modern Nineteenth and Twentieth century movements like movement for democratic rights, women’s rights and freedom, anti racial movements have their roots in the movement for the Enlightenment humanism. Anti establishment and anti religious movements which were motivated by that spirit of Enlightenment movement attained complete maturity in the Modern era. In France the government became hostile towards the philosophers and they were made to fly away or were imprisoned or were forced to exile. The English establishment ignored the enlightenment philosophers but Scotland honored Isaac Newton with a knighthood and with a very worthwhile government office.

The historian Keith Thomson argued that the Enlightenment is,

“The source of everything that is progressive about the modern world. For them, it stands for freedom of thought, rational inquiry, critical thinking, religious tolerance, political liberty, scientific achievement, the pursuit of happiness, and hope for the future” and adds further that “its enemies accused it of ‘shallow’ rationalism, naïve optimism, unrealistic universalism and moral darkness”(Thomson, 2014: 23)

According to Thomson there was an opposite wave against enlightenment humanism which criticized the materialism and skepticism as negative applications which culminated into growth of immorality and violence caused after French Revolution. In the concluding phase of enlightenment, the new romantic thinkers reiterated that the excessive force of reason and logic perpetuated the disregardful aggression against history, culture, faith, mythology and tradition which was also the necessary principle to hold the societal unity and harmony.
1.1.5. Political Implications of Enlightenment Humanism

The Enlightenment Movement is tagged as the ground for Western Political Movements like French Revolution (1789). ‘The consent of government’ established after the publication of Locke’s *Two Treatises on Government* (1689) brought an outrage amongst the people and they attacked the feudal system of governance. “The Divine Rights of the King” came under counter attack form the masses. The outrage of the public caused the revolutionary changes in the governance though it came in the most violent way. The King’s position as a supreme authority came under question. In John Locke’s ‘social contract’ the philosophy is advocated that the workers are the means and goals of profit. Thomas Hobbes, the contemporary political philosopher unleashed new philosophical debate over the rights of the citizen in his book *Leviathan* (1651). Both the philosophers developed the social theories promoting the natural rights of the people. Peter Gay, first pointed out the explanation as, “The Enlightenment brought political modernization to the West, in terms of introducing democratic values and institutions and the creation of modern, liberal democracies.” (Gay Peter, 1996: 12)

1.1.6. Modern Humanism

In the present sense, ‘Humanist’ is the label which goes with the person who values truth in a scientific manner and who bases human centered values on human dimensions. It is a direct disregard of religious revelation that proclaims the supremacy of religion without any question. Many renaissance humanists were devoted Christians who included ideas and opinions of atheist intellectuals into the Christian creed. This culminated into the atheist ideas flourishing in such a way that those challenged Christian belief in God. Matthew Arnold, the noble advocate of *Humanism* in the Victorian period, upheld the significant role of human subjects in the educational system. As a humanist, Arnold’s ideas about humanism are important in the present application of the term. He distinguished humanism from the animal passions and emphasized on the nobility of human nature. In the present era the new Humanism emerged in America which was propagated by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. Babbitt’s book *Literature and the American College* (1908) pointed out the educational gap between liberal arts college curriculum and university education.
system. He carried on the Arnold legacy who opposed the Romanticism. It was in 1890 that he came in contact with Paul Elmer More and both developed the novel concept of New Humanism. New Humanism was a literary and social movement that started in the late Nineteenth century and reached its heights in 1930. As a philosophy it confronted the romantic notion of culture and naturalism. The basic interest of new Humanism was focused on American Educational system which they called as the victim of the materialistic and democratic process in American life. The educational system has failed to promote highest intellectual education and is satisfied only by creating servants to work mechanically with only vocational trainings.

1.1.7. Humanist Manifesto and Modern Humanism

The modern and postmodern view of humanism which is relevant to the present context is reflected in the Amsterdam Declaration 2002. The Humanist Association dispensed the declaration of the ultimate values and virtues of modern Humanism supported solidly by the General Assembly of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) at the fiftieth anniversary World Humanist Congress in 2002. The IHEU declared The official statement of World Humanism. The statement says that humanism is ethical in design. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care for all humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.

Humanism as an ideology is formulated on rationality and scientific reason which is its backbone. It is established on scientific principles which seek to use logic effectively, not harmfully or violently. Humanists trust clearly upon the solutions to the human problems and they believe that the solution is in human efforts backed with force rather than spiritual interpretations. They promote the principles and laws of science and clear justification in the direction of human interests. Ultimately Humanists keep faith in the appreciation of science with modernity. These must be harnessed by human interests. Science and rationality offer us the means of living but human values make our internal growth and enhancement. Therefore humanism keeps
its firm faith in democracy and human equality. Science proposes these values. It stands for the fullest possible evolution and development of all humans across the world and upholds the democracy of majority and human development. The foundations of republic and democracy must be applied to much human welfare and are not limited to methods of government. It is instrumental in understanding the role of personal liberty with social responsibility. It endeavors to build a society on the concept of personal responsibility. The society’s dependence on responsibility is the common element. It is not imposing any dogma upon its believers. The role is thus to keep education free from religious propaganda. Blind religious followers are warned and kept under watch by revealing their exponents. The religions of the world claim to be based on disclosures and scriptures. They are aimed at ultimate solution and try to seek to execute their concern about all of humanity. The identifications of philanthropic knowledge of the world arise through a zealous observation towards assessment and modification which is scientific in nature. The humanist philosophy respects creative force and its expressions by reckoning the transforming power of art on all humanity. True humanism respects the value of art, fine arts, folk art, and the visually performing arts for personal and individual development and fulfillment. At the same time it protects the sentiments of the individual and groups. It is an orientation of life which aims at the fullest feasible fulfillment through the graduation of moral and imaginative life and gives an ethical and rational means of solving the challenges of coming generations. It is a way of life in which each one is benefitted. The welfare of all is the common agenda of a true humanist. Religious philosophy describes the supernatural as being more "logical" and propagates the truth which is above natural. Therefore the humanity should strive for logical truth and nothing else than truth. It is not against the natural growth of life with humanity. Rationalists of humanism with common sense view that it is the last possible earnings of nurturing knowledge in this world. This philosophy surely opposes the dehumanizing and depersonalizing tendencies of modern science.

It can be said then that as an ideology, a universal idea, or the thought process ‘humanism’ reflects a basic or overriding need with the concerns, problems and capabilities of humanity. It is ethically based upon human temperament and human
existence. It commands human life and our capability to enjoy our lives as long as all humans do not harm each other in the process. As a common scientific principle, humanists are not particularly anxious about the categorization of religion as “the supernatural.” Humanists in general stand against the supernaturalism because it causes an exploitation of ignorant and illiterates.

The problem for humanism is not an utter belief in something that is supernatural but the confidence upon the supernatural as an illustrative system for the survival. Such a reliance is rather common in human cultures naturally and human religions particularly. The refusal of the supernatural as resources to explain anything, on the other side; is an important distinguishing aspect of humanism. One of the affirmations of Humanism is that the humanist prohibits efforts to subvert human intelligence, to relate or to explain the world in supernatural symbolism, and to look beyond nature for salvation.

It is a fact that humanism considers supernatural claims either as ‘meaningless’ and if ‘meaningful’ then not relevant to human existence and attainment but irrelevant which does not stand as false. The individual might trust in something supernatural or transcendent and still remains a humanist. Although it is uncommon that a person cannot rely upon the supernatural to explain things about the universe subverting the scientific outlook and life yet he can be a humanist in its ideology. The interrogation about humanist attitude towards supernatural may seem irrelevant for ‘humanism’ but basically a humanist is a naturalist. As a naturalist, he relies on nature or natural law and its explanation to judge the principles of human existence and life as a whole. The personal perception also has a voice in the practice of humanism. The universe is naturally an evolutionary body as per the scientific discoveries and the planet has its natural origin in science but the scriptures draw a different picture of the universe. Morality, stamped as a cultural science, has natural origins whose roots lie certainly in religion. The supernatural point of view opposes explaining such things. Most of the basic questions in metaphysics or metaphysical truth are focused around the truth. The question becomes legitimately valuable as ‘what is the nature of our existence?’ The humanistic view of the universe is basically naturalistic and scientific, based on logic rather than assumptions. The Humanist’s justification of the universe is that it appears
naturally and for the sake rather than as an extension of any paranormal beings like almighty, and it does not require the existence of beings like gods to explain its existence. Even religious humanists typically describe the universe as self-existing and not created. In addition, this understanding of the universe does not require us to seek supernatural aid. The naturalistic sciences, relying upon rational processes, provide us with what we need to know.

1.2. Introduction to the Theoretical Perspective

Mahatma Gandhi (October 2, 1869 to January 30, 1948), Martin Luther King Jr. (January 10, 1929 to April 4, 1968) and Nelson Mandela (July 18, 1918 to 5 December, 2013) these three moral authorities have been linked together by many confluxes of ideology, means and methods of resistance. When Barrack Obama became President of the USA, he referred to Reverend Dr. King Jr. in his speech and owed his gratitude in following words,

"She (Ann Nixon Cooper, a 106 years old common woman of the USA) was there for the buses in Montgomery, the houses in Birmingham, a bridge in Selma, and a preacher from Atlanta (Martin Luther King Jr.) who told the people that 'We Shall Overcome' and that Madiba (Nelson Mandela) would emerge as the last great liberator of the 20th century. Like Gandhi, he would lead a resistance movement - a movement that at its beginning had little prospect for success. Like Dr. King Jr., he would give potent voice to the claims of the oppressed and the moral necessity of racial justice." (htpp# whitehouse.speech/ Obama)

In his Republic Day Speech as a Chief guest at New Delhi American President reiterated his thoughts as,

"Deeply moved by India’s movement to independence and the role that Gandhi played not only the nonviolent strategies here in India but how those ended up influencing the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement in the United States.”  (htpp# whitehousespeech/ Obama)

The legacy of philosophy and humanism that these men left behind is the central focus of this research study. The common dynamics shared by these three apostles, replicated and created together has a common aim and that can be summarized in the single word, that is, humanism. The juxtaposition of their ideologies which culminated in a unique composition of humanity is the foreground of this research study. Their thoughts are the primary data in this research work which attempts to analyze their
contribution to peace, justice and human values which can be collected in their literary works. But these personalities have left a mammoth size of work behind them in the forms of articles, news reports, interviews, speeches and books as well. To specify the purpose the researcher found their autobiographies quite reliable and profound in charting their thoughts and actions.

The selection of the autobiographies of these iconic personalities for the study of humanism has many more reasons. Their autobiographies are definitely considerable as the valuable and appropriate documents of their philosophy. These autobiographies are experiences of great personalities. Autobiography is a self narrated story and truth in them is very clear and open. The term Humanism can be searched very meticulously through their life stories. “My life is my message” a famous line that has become a tag line of Mahatma Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram, Sabarmati, Gujarat. The same can be applied to the remaining two autobiographers. All the three authors have inspired the whole world about how to tackle the challenges of life. Their journey of life has started from innocence and ignorance that turned into maturity and enlightenment after unending encounters against injustice done to the marginalized. These selected texts have become a touch stone of moral and spiritual values which have influenced and will influence the entire mankind.

The study of their voyage from an ordinary to extra-ordinary, from a common unnoticed man to ‘Mahatma’ (Great Soul), from a smaller and humbler background to men of millennia, that has been sprinkled with some idiosyncratic traits common amongst them. Autobiography is the easiest way to chart out the graph of their life, the inculcation and reflection of highest moral order and the uncanny fortitude which portray their human journey of ‘making of mahatmas’.

The study of ‘autobiography’ as a genre of literature is an integral and inevitable part of this research work. The study of the strength and weaknesses, the philosophical assumptions of reliability, truth, and honesty are the prime inquiries of this research work. The area of the research is primarily located in the humanism which is also a multi layered referential term in the discourse of literature and philosophy. The term has a connotative meaning which opens various debates about political systems, power structures and humanitarian values. Humanism connotes a set of ideologies that led us
to study a particular life in the point of view of religious, social, political, economic and cultural way of living. The researcher has proposed five chapters to elaborate his research statement that will ultimately lead to concluding remarks.

1.2.1. Rationale and Significance of the Study

The researcher has deliberately selected three widely read and critically appreciated autobiographies of the renowned leaders and politicians of the twentieth century that have inspired many lives for building revolutions against all kinds of injustices and cruelty. Their cry for 'treat one another as humans' have become a guiding principle. Justice, nonviolence, freedom, indiscrimination, peace, and passive resistance have become an answer to the postmodern nuclear threat of the twenty-first century. This study will encourage the students, scholars, researchers and laymen to search their true self. The selected texts end with the message that battle between the virtues and the vices has always ended with the victory of good and virtuous people. There are leaders, politicians, presidents in the world who have accepted these leaders as their role models. Barrack Obama after becoming the first black President of the United States of America immediately visited the memorial of Martin Luther King Jr. and he has often quoted Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela in his addresses. From Tibet to Myanmar and from Libya to Sri Lanka the peaceful processions are led by common people bearing the images of these leaders. The impact of Gandhian philosophy on the lives of Nelson Mandela and King Martin Luther Jr. will be highlighted from this study.

1.2.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research are:

1. To study autobiography as a genre of literature with its strength and limitations and to study its literary assumptions and its aspects with classifications on the common grounds.
2. To define and map of the historiography of humanism and to analyze the common parameters of humanism found commonly in selected autobiographies.
3. To identify and document all forms of humanism found in the autobiographies of selected writers and their quest for the same.
4. To attempt the critical evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography in the light of humanism.

5. To give critical and comparative analysis of Nelson Mandela’s autobiography from the perspective of humanism.

6. To make a critical and comparative analysis of Martin Luther King Jr’s autobiography and Gandhian impact on his way of struggle to achieve humanism.

7. To document the comparative analysis and evaluations of humanism from the three autobiographies and to analyze relevance of their values in contemporary times.

1.2.3. Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study for the research work is as follows:

Autobiography is the most reliable document to study the self realization of the autobiographer. The autobiographies of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. reflect their quest for humanism. Mahatma Gandhi’s humanism is the role model for the rest of the two autobiographers. They used similar set of means and methods and their journey of life exhibited the core principles of humanism.

1.2.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study has an immense scope as it relates to justice, peace and liberalization. The autobiography as a genre has not received proper attention as much as novels, poetry and drama. The genre needs to be given serious attention, as the basic purpose of literature is not just to entertain but to open and broaden our vision. The study will widen the scope for new humanistic leaders’ autobiographies.

The selected texts can be analyzed in a variety of perspectives but the present study merely focuses on socio-political and cultural humanitarian aspect of their lives. Numerous biographies of these famous people have been written by different authors in the world but the present study does not deal with it. The personal as well as national quest for the values of humanism which these personalities exhibited is worth understanding and studying. The other political, social, cultural thoughts and movements based on the philosophies are not the part of this study. These three autobiographers have touched many political and historical aspects in their different books and articles but they will not be considered in this study. The main focus of the
study is to compare their life incidents and their philosophical growth in the direction of two prominent virtues of humanism ie. truth and non-violence.

1.2.5. Research Methodology
The present research is an analytical and investigatory research that deals with comparison and contrast of the selected texts. The selected autobiographies are the primary data of the study. The main resource of the research is the secondary data collected from the libraries of universities and other educational institutions. This study will be accomplished by referring to the relevant conceptual tools related to the types of autobiographies, narratives, and structural patterns. This will lead in identifying the common grounds of the struggle. The comparative study will bring similarities and dissimilarities of their fights against the injustices. The selected texts will be analyzed in the light of a common quest for the greater cause of humanity. The present autobiographies are the texts of historical evidences hidden in the personal encounters with situation, people and events.

1.2.6. Research Design
The research designed is as follows-

1.2.6.1. Study I: Analyzing the primary data.
The three autobiographies selected for the research have been studied analytically and critically. The autobiography is studied critically as a distinct genre of literature and the classification of the autobiographies is carried out in respect of their aspects. The study of Humanism and mapping the historiography of this philosophy is also a prime object of the study.

1.2.6.2. Analyzing and comparing the secondary data.
While studying autobiography as a genre of literature, it is required to study the historiography and its growth in various literary movements. The genre has glorious history but is neglected as a special category of literature. Evaluating various trends with critical point of view is the essence of this research work. The three autobiographies will be studied comparatively. The humanitarian values of these three personalities are studied analytically and comparatively.

1.2.7. Chapters of the Present Study:-
The present research study is divided into six chapters and each chapter deals with a particular aspect of research independently. The chapters are as follows:

**Chapter I - Humanism and its Parameters**
Defining humanism from its various sources and mapping its glorious history is discussed in the first chapter. The umbrella term ‘Humanism’ is studied from various points of view. The parameters of Humanism are categorized and applied to the selected texts that is, autobiographies of three eminent personalities. The historiography of humanism is mapped from different literary movements. Mahatma Gandhi’s humanism is the central theme of this chapter. Different parameters have been searched and compiled together which are common in the autobiographies of these three personalities.

**Chapter II - A Study of Autobiography: The Quest for the ‘Self’**
Autobiographies are true documents of the autobiographers which portray the autobiographer’s own history in his own words. The genre is more elusive in terms of truth and recorded history. Autobiographies unfold the realities and secrets of the self. It is self retrospection as well as self discovery. In the case of politically eminent personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr, autobiographies not only remain their personal stories but rise above to represent a large movement and history of the nation to which they belonged. The autobiographies of these three apostles of peace, justice and non violence are the documents that represent their eternal quest for humanism. To apply different parameters of humanism to their autobiographies and to find at the different aspects of humanism from them is the central focus of this research.

**Chapter III - Mahatma Gandhi’s Humanism in his Autobiography**
This chapter illustrates the rhetoric of *Humanism* in Mahatma Gandhi’s *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1924) which is an embodiment of his idea of nationalism and his longing for the poorest person. The chapter tries to find and establish the relevance of examining this text in this study particularly in the radiance of Mahatma Gandhi’s understanding of the term "humanism". The second section seeks the discursive pattern of the text while the remaining four sections analyze the text in details. Mahatma Gandhi’s idea of
humanism is studied from different perspectives and they are compiled from his autobiography. The impact of his autobiography on other two autobiographies is studied comparatively. One could see the impact of Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography on the selected two autobiographies.

Chapter IV- Long Walk to Freedom: A Document of Humanism
Nelson Mandela’s autobiography fulfills all the distinctive integral features of the genre which it ought to possess and display in its content as well as form. The title Long Walk to Freedom has been reinforced with the subtitle as The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela. The title clarifies its literary stance which the prose writing sometimes leaves elusively about prose and fiction. Nelson Mandela assimilates his personal family and entire nation South Africa as another family and gratifies his love towards all – love which was the sole principle of his life and duty.

Nelson Mandela wrote this autobiography at the age of seventy three when he was President of South Africa so the ‘stand point’ Nelson Mandela chose was very vital because he wanted to personify his journey from ‘rags to riches’, from ‘literally nothing to becoming everything’ and he could see the life backward from the highest point of his life. As an autobiographer, Nelson Mandela has scored a point for choosing a right time of writing an autobiography as the very act of writing a life down constitutes an attempt on the part of the writer to justify one’s life and implicit in every act of autobiography is the judgment that ‘life is worth being written down’, Nelson Mandela’s humanism is reflected through his struggle for the values like anti-apartheid, anti-racial and anti-colonialism.

Chapter V- Martin Luther King Jr’s Humanism in his Autobiography
Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are indeed the glorious names that deserve a special place in the annals of history as champions of the poor, who in word and deed stood by them. They died for them. The history of the most eventful twentieth century can never be complete without an analytical study of these two personalities: there lies their greatness! Both men were assassinated. Martin Luther King Jr’s autobiography is a distinct type of autobiography which is published posthumously. It is an instance of collected and edited documentation which has become so vivid and original. A professor of history and the noted author and editor of
several books on the civil rights struggle, Dr. Clayborne Carlson was selected by the estate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to edit and publish Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s papers. Drawing upon an unprecedented archive of King’s onwards-including unpublished letters and diaries, as well as video footage and recordings, Dr. Carlson creates an unforgettable self portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Carlson except from the introduction in his lucid narration literally disappears as a second voice and the reader tunes into the real and original tone and voice of the self-narrator Dr. Martin Luther King. Humanism is the conflux of Gandhian and Martin Luther King Jr’s ideological similarity exhibited in the larger interests of Humanity.

Chapter VI—Conclusions

1. Relevance of Gandhian Humanism
Mahatma Gandhi outshines as a world-preceptor whose thoughts and sermons are still relevant throughout the world by virtue of their universality and concern for the entire humanity. He was neither a philosopher nor a saint. He portrayed himself as an ordinary man who has tried to experiment with his own life from the point of view of a seeker of the Truth. Truth for him is righteousness and simplicity of life and behavior. His experiments lead the story to new heights and draw the attention towards an ideal way of life that can be his principles of way of living. Gandhian principles are the parameters of humanism derived from his autobiography. His life principles which are summarized as his quest for humanism are analyzed critically. The impact of his principles on the other two autobiographers is also an important aspect of this research.

2. Impact of Mahatma Gandhi’s Humanism on Nelson Mandela
The First South African President Nelson Mandela owed a close link with India through Mahatma Gandhi whom he called his “political guru”. South Africa’s adored son Nelson Mandela will be recollected as much as an Indian leader and an inspirational figure in India. A man, who led his people to freedom in much the same way as Mahatma Gandhi did, wrote in his early diaries from Robben Island about his inspiration for resistance that came from the Indian community that Gandhi had led in South Africa, a country often called the cradle of Satyagraha.
"The Indians influenced our struggle here and especially a man like Mahatma Gandhi. So we respect them, honor them," Mandela had said. As South Africa's first black President from 1994 to 1999, Nelson Mandela drove close relations with India and the two countries forged bonds over groupings like IBSA and BRICS as a result of that closeness with India.

3. Mahatma Gandhi's Humanism and its Impact on Martin Luther King Jr.

Mahatma Gandhi's life and philosophy exerted a profound influence on the brilliant career of Martin Luther King Jr., creating a new legacy in a country born of military strength and guided all along by the principle of physical force and the rule of might. No biographical study of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. can be complete without a probe into the Gandhian ideology for which he stood. The great Indian leader had his political pioneering in South Africa, as something thrust upon him by an inscrutable destiny. Man is driven by the tide of time, but some have in them the inherent strength to stem the tide and change its course to a direction of their choice. Mahatma Gandhi belongs to this illustrious group and therein lies his greatness. Before Mahatma Gandhi arrived in South Africa, the Indian residents provided a case study in imperial futility and moral bankruptcy, instrumental for a political and social structure based on the denial of equality. Martin Luther King Jr's autobiography reflects the impact of Gandhian Humanism throughout the text.

1.2.8. Review of the Literature

Humanism is an ancient term and its use as a literary term is found in ancient Greek period. The history of the term Humanism dates back to the early era of civilization. All the movements in the history are the documentary evidences of humanism. The central concern of the movement which involves the welfare of human being can be categorized as humanism. All those movements and their growth is the documentary evidence of the history of humanism. All the texts related to humanism are an integral part of this research. The humanism as a quest is studied in the autobiographies of three torch bearers of humanitarian principles of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. The autobiography thus is studied as a special form of literature. The autobiographical study as a whole is undertaken in this research. The three autobiographies mentioned earlier are the primary data of this research and
books, movies, journals, websites and documentaries related to these primary sources are studied in the research.

1.2.9. Data Collection

Data is the soul of any research. The three selected autobiographies of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr are the primary data of the research. Humanism is an umbrella term which connotes various meanings and interpretations. The study of different meanings and different aspects of humanism is the core area of the research. The entire history of humanism is collected from various library sources. The data of humanism is analyzed in such a way to find the basic parameters of humanism. Autobiographies are studied from its historical origin till the date in order to find different aspects of autobiography as a literary genre. The critical, theoretical and comparative literature available on this subject is studied analytically to find out the different patterns of autobiographies. The secondary data is collected and studied from various print media sources as well as from non-print media sources such as CDs, radio and TV talks and shows, films and from e-media with internet, transistor and said networking.

1.3. Mahatma Gandhi as a Role Model for Humanism

While describing humanism, the critic Edward Said says,

“Although humanism is essentially an individual attitude,” Edward Said argues that “a fair degree of my own political and social activism has assured me that people all over the world can be and are moved by ideals of justice and equality”. (Said, 2000: 76)

Mahatma Gandhi's significant involvement with Humanism comprises in converting a religion that centers the common human and his importance in the world. Religion to him was as simple as it for all our day to day activities. It must not and ought not to be followed in seclusion from society and in separation from life's other activities. In Sanskrit scriptures 'Dharma' stands for a moral obligation and refers to individual's honesty as well as social integrity and social harmony. Mahatma Gandhi was completely religious and an absolute follower of religious ways but it was reformed religion from his own point of view. His religious practice was Humanism which for him was vital. For him religion was not a set of principles but it should discuss all the aspects and features of human living. It has to have rationalist and logicians attitude.
His Humanism differs from Romantic Humanism of Eighteenth century as well as Radical Humanism of the 19th century and yet synchronizes the two.

Common features are derived from the above definitions are:

a) Humanism strongly opposes religion which projects supernaturalism.
b) It proclaims that the core nature of human being is good and co-operative.
c) Human needs to stay in a society with harmony and peace.
d) The progression of human race is possible if efforts are aided by reason and scientific logic.
e) The reason is more important than depending upon transcendental beliefs to resolve the human challenges.
f) Human welfare must be at the center of the concerns.
g) Human dignity and human interests are paramount.
h) Humanism keeps its deep faith only in empirical evidence and scientific methods of acquiring knowledge; hence it does not believe in divine and supernatural matters.
i) It believes in the democracy of majority as a political system where the rights of minority are also protected.
j) Discrimination and marginalization is not tolerable in a cultured and civilized society.
k) The environmental challenges are a common responsibility and wildlife preservation is also a duty of civic society.

### 1.4. Humanism and its Parameters

Humanism is the most acceptable philosophy of the world today and it is centered on the welfare of human beings. Humanism is not an ‘ism’ in its stereotype but it is a culmination all of ‘isms’ which focus on the overall human development. Humanism therefore needs to be classified on the basis of some common parameters. Following are the parameters of humanism.

#### 1.4.1. Humanism: Local and Global

The humanism found in the principles of Mahatma Gandhi has two aspects. One is its local expression in the form of realizing local problems and the ways and means to fight against it. The local problems are the micro aspects of individualism. The other
aspect is its universal expressions. Mahatma Gandhi travelled to England initially for his studies then his destiny took him to South Africa before he came to his final destination that is India. His struggle in many ways symbolizes his global humanism. Mahatma Gandhi strengthened local spirits of the human beings. He created a feeling of dissatisfaction and created awareness amongst the localities to realize that they have lost something which they deserve to restore back. His fights for smaller issues had global associations. His Dandi march was an excellent example of local struggle for the commonest and cheapest commodity ‘salt’. His local awareness about the problems of common men was visionary. His movement created global impact. The British Government knelt down by his smaller struggles.

The Humanist assures that humans are the important part of the universal system therefore they believe in the equality of all in respect with the natural order. The humans obviously have a right to live in the universe. They try to understand the universe on their own capacity and are blessed with the power of thinking. The understanding of truth is essential because it helps humans to reside and flourish despite the problems and challenges faced by humanists. In this way, it is eventually a confident and positive posture to take because humans are secure in their capability to incessantly flourish and cultivate. The Humanists say that they are populace of the cosmos and are thrilled by inventions they dream in the universal system. Notwithstanding such a hope, they have acknowledged that science and the universal law are responsive to everyone living in this world. This ultimately seems at first to be a particularly important standard to accept, but it does involve a noteworthy cost for what principles they consider. By increasing a reasonable consideration about how nature works and why the universe is the way it is, humanists can do a better duty at avoiding or narrowing the effects of the ill things. Nonetheless, it is also in minds where humans will find the ability to achieve the understanding they seek. The realization of the fact is essential because it helps humans to live and to strive despite the problems they encounter. This is ultimately an optimistic view to look because humans are confident in their ability to consistently learn and thrive as they hope that, all human beings are the populace of the cosmos and are excited by discoveries still to
be made in the world. Withstanding such sanguinity, humanists must recognize that universal nature is supportive to human progress ahead.

Humanists believe in democracy as a way of life not just as a political system. In democracy all have equal rights and equal opportunities. There are many political systems which uphold the welfare state but humanists keep their highest faith in democracy. Democracy is the evolutionary system which has come up after the struggle of thousands years. Monarchy, feudalism, dictatorship and communism are the various other political systems. Each system has its merits and demerits but democracy is the ultimate solution for a humanist.

The preservation of culture is a humanist's responsibility. Culture is a creation of geographically united place and the dwellers. Culture is a continuous process which is a living pattern of that people. Cultural transmission is an integral part but the core culture is the precious heritage. The strong always dominate the cultural trend but the minorities must be protected by the humanist. Animal rights are also a responsibility of a humanist. Animals are an integral part of the eco system and hence this needs to be protected by the humans. Some species are losing their existence on the earth and hence need immediate attention. Rare species are vanishing and thus the duty of the humanist is precious. Environment is another issue that needs to be seen as a core issue of the time. The rising temperature and climatic changes are occurring and their ill effects are seen everywhere. The flood, the landslides, deforestations, river pollutions and land erosion are some of the deadly challenges for humanity. Secular humanism is a counter humanism for religious dogma, supernaturalism, and pseudoscience. The Global humanism talks about universal brotherhood and universal peace. All human beings are naturally divided by nationality, colour of their skins, religions, languages, economical classes and cultural identity yet they are human beings of the same universe. Humanists respect the individual identity of each individual yet he feels that there should be unity in diversity. The Gandhian Humanism believes that an individual may have personal self identity based on his local identity but he should see himself as a citizen of the universe and merge into the universal brotherhood. Oppression of one community is a challenge to all humanity.
Humanists believe that the universal problems cannot be solved unless we all come together.

1.4.2. A Role of Science and Reason

Science is viewed as opposition to anything that is superfluous, supernatural and illogical. Science is a practical answer to theological solutions. The scientific method is the only way to study and to inquire about the nature of the universe. Scientific thinking is propagated by great scientists like Galileo, Copernicus, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Newton, Einstein and Stephan Hawkins. Scientific thinking was not natural in the medieval times. Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543) was a renaissance astronomer and mathematician who put forth the theory of Earth’s revolution. A model which claimed that Earth is not the centre of the universe rather Sun is at the centre. His theory was an anti thesis to theology and religion. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was an Italian astronomer and scientist who studied and mastered engineering, mathematics, physics and philosophy. Rene Descartes (1596- 1650) was the pioneer of scientific thinking. A mathematician, a scientist, a writer and a philosopher Descartes was known for his theory of skepticism. His method was ‘refuse to accept’ anything that was not logical and not based on reason. He challenged the theological claims of previous philosophers. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was called the father of empiricism. Empiricism as a theory propagates that the knowledge comes from only scientific experiments as rationalism and skepticism are the parameters of all knowledge. His radical arguments that the scientific knowledge derived from experiments with nature is the foundation of all knowledge. The sacrifice of thousands of revolutionaries and scientists exerted for the truth which has emerged through science. Scientists exerted to establish truth that we see in a modern and rational world today. The scientists experimented with logic to inculcate scientific thinking amongst all the members of the society. Science is not just finding the solutions to human problems but it is a way of life and a way of philosophy. How to solve human problems is the concern of humanists and the possible way to deal with this concern is logical and scientific outlook. All scientists propagate and exemplify science; of course since they are studying and dealing with the nature of the things, they are actively involved in the complex investigations by using scientific methods. But
scientific thinking is not reserved to scientists alone. A developed society must ‘think like a scientist’. Superstitions are the beliefs in anything that keeps its faith in the cause and effect theory without scientific investigations. Astrology, omens, witchcraft, prophecies are some of the examples of superstitions. Humanists always try to oppose this dogmatic thinking. It is also applied to the thinking factor of luck and destiny. Nelson Mandela following the Gandhian principle became the proponent of science and reason in his country. After becoming President of South Africa he initiated many institutions and organizations to promote science and technology. He realized that science would be the key in solving the problems of poverty, education and health care. Martin Luther King Jr belonged to the country USA which was leader in scientific development and modern technologies. He fought against the racial segregation on the line of humanity and the principles of Christianity. He was believer of Christianity yet he adhered to science and technology and realized that only scientific temperament would destroy inhuman practices.

1.4.3. Religious Implications

Religion is not an anti thesis of science but it is one of the tools of human welfare but it should be taken in a positive way. Faith, emotional bonds amongst all, respecting the power beyond human capacity, moral trustworthiness and unification of all humans are the blessings of religion. Religion can be regarded as a unifying element in the human discourse.

The idea Secularism was coined in 1851 by George Holyoake to refute the idea of rebirth and it questioned the claims of religion. His starting of the Secular Society was the foundation of Leicester Secular Society in 1851 and in addition to that some regional societies were merged together to form the National Secular Society in 1856. Holyoake’s secularism was strongly influenced by August Crompt the founder and designer of Positivism. His theory said that human history would progress in the law of ‘Three Stages’. The first stage is the theological stage which followed by the second metaphysical stage and towards the mature stage of positivism. Though Crompte’s religious movement was a failure in France, it took new followers in London. Richard Congrave founded Positivism Society in London in 1867. The Church of Humanity was established in 1878 under Congreve’s efforts and translated Comte’s Positivism
polity. The New York version of the church was established by Henry Edger. Like English version it was not aesthetic in nature and included sermons and sacramental rites.

Felix Alder established New York Society for Ethical Culture in 1877. The society adopted the statement of principle. The statement includes that morality is independent of theology or religion. The modern problems which are growing in industrial society have not been adequately addressed by religion in general. The philanthropic work should be encouraged as a part of morality. Social reforms should begin with self reform. The young generation must take science and not theology for its future progress. A true humanist follows religion for its moral implication and its unifying force. Fundamentalism is the latest enemy of humanity and it can be stopped with proper religious understanding. Respect for each other religion is the visionary aim of a humanist. Mahatma Gandhi always proudly called himself as religious person but he viewed religion as a tool to purify and nurture human spirit. He was against all sorts of blind faiths as he criticized the inhuman practices in Hinduism very harshly. He found that religion can be a source of inspiration and motivating factor but it must be used with morality. Nelson Mandela was born Xosa and Christian but the moral force of religion was almost absent in his outlook. The religion of his oppressor was also the same hence colour of skin became a differentiating factor in his struggle. For Martin Luther King Jr there was no way left away from religion as he was born pastor. His family and society in which he was brought up was Christian and he became the proponent of humanity because of his religious belonging.

1.4.4. Individual and Social Freedom

The French Revolution of the Eighteenth century was a path breaking moment in the history of humanism. The revolution broke down the orthodox narrow mindedness and celebrated the victory of human rights and human potential. Freedom, equality and brotherhood are the three values that the French Revolution offered to humanity. With this modern humanism pays its deep gratitude towards the proponents of this new dawn in favor of humanism. Man is born free and if not, it is a duty of a humanist to free him from any kind of slavery. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed imperialism, colonization, racial discrimination, violations of human rights and the
exploitation of the weakest. Humanist is against the individual dishonor on any ground. At the same time humanist works for social freedom. Social freedom sometimes is the product of caste system, religious dogmas, class rituals and power structures. The concept and theory of ‘free will’ which is ancient in nature, is discussed by almost all renaissance and modern humanists in their areas. 'Man is the measure of all things' became the earliest declaration of humanistic outlook as the civilization progressed from ancient to medieval and from medieval to modern times. Humanists confirm that man is the maker of his own destiny and no other entity can control it. Mahatma Gandhi as a moralist believed in great importance of freedom and man’s ability. His entire life was an example for all how he utilized it for the freedom of individuals and nation. His idea of free will did not count slavery to bodily desires but freedom of ‘rational self’. The ‘rational and logical self’ is the drive on which one is free to move. Emerson (1803-1882), an American essayist and transcendentalist, whom Mahatma Gandhi admired, stated that a man is free to speak the truth not to lie, free to serve, not to exploit, free to sacrifice him but not free to kill or injure. Mahatma Gandhi’s life philosophy of wants, bodily needs and materialistic greed was habituated by self-restraint and control. Mahatma Gandhi’s faith in the individual and its freedom was unconditional. He upheld that the individual alone is real and important and the Society and the nation have smaller meaning than the individual. For Mahatma Gandhi man is the central point of the entire universe. As a humanist he upheld the nobility of the common man and his dignity. He started a campaign against the untouchability in National Congress and made a movement for them. Being a hardcore Hindu, he went against the norms and rituals of religion and supported the cause of harijans. The word Harijan was his new terminology for the downtrodden people. Both Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr fought for the socially affected and segregated people in their respective countries. Their philosophy was in the same line with the humanist of the world.

1.4.5. A Concept of Ethics and Morality

In Renaissance period the word humanism was given to those who used to study Latin literature and arts. Humanists were the privileged people who study poetry, rhetoric, history, ethics and politics which were the moral sciences. These disciplines alone deal
with morality and make man stand in accordance with the morality effectively to implement his freedom. Knowledge was attended with morality and virtue. Like earlier humanists who were his ideals, Mahatma Gandhi gave lots of importance to Social Sciences and morality. *Unto the Last* (1860) by Ruskin John had a profound influence on Gandhi and his philosophy. He got this book in his stay in Johannesburg in March 1904 through Henry Polak. Mahatma Gandhi radically announced not only to change his life according to Ruskin’s teaching but also published an article in newspaper *Indian Opinion*. In a farm everyone would get the equal salary without any hierarchy or distinction, race or nationality which was quite revolutionary. This emphasized his importance to individuality. The ethical attitude to life was the sole force to seek and to unite the folks in common pursuit of freedom and justice. The establishment of a moral order in world-society was his goal which resulted in achieving independence. Morality as a virtue was not a matter of outward consolation but of inward fulfillment and attainment. It is a deep conviction accomplished by right action by the person with hard work. Socratic dictum 'Virtue is knowledge', suggested that right thought must result into right action and right action leads to morality. Mahatma Gandhi believed in action and that was his domain. Mahatma Gandhi’s attitude lies in transforming noblest thoughts into mass action which is the highest achievement of man.

**1.4.6. Gandhian Concept of Seven Deadly Sins**

Mahatma Gandhi wanted people to put into practice morality in the seven main fields of life. He enumerated the following seven Social Sins:

1) *Politics without Principles*
2) *Wealth without Work*
3) *Commerce without Morality*
4) *Knowledge without Character*
5) *Pleasure without Conscience*
6) *Science without Humanity*
7) *Worship without Sacrifice*
1. Politics without Principles

Mahatma Gandhi believed that political life is an integral part of any system and that is why his first epigram deals with it. Mahatma Gandhi understood that either true or genuine philosophers find their way to political authority or powerful politicians by the favor of Providence take to true Philosophy. Philosophers ought to be the men of principles and moral stands. Rama for Gandhi was not just the symbol of a king dedicated to principles but he was the epitome of virtue. The Kings in Indian context were only the protectors and executors and servants of ‘Dharma’ which was their duty. Ramrajya was his idea of true kingship. Moral order of the statesman is the biggest virtue of a king or a ruler. Politics should be for the service of the poor.

2. Wealth without Work

The second epigram deals with the sphere of economics. Leo Tolstoy and Ruskin (whom he read in England) inspired Mahatma Gandhi on the idea of economic implications. His favorite book *The Bhagavad Gita* says that he who eats without offering sacrifice and hard work, eats stolen food which is immoral. Mahatma Gandhi put this into practice at his Ashrams. Bread-labour or the minimum wages was one of the oaths of his ‘Asrama’ prayer. The word 'Sacrifice' or hard work was interpreted in the sense of knowledge. But Mahatma Gandhi put this complex fact into the modern context when bread-labour was considered down upon with the spread of trade, commerce and class-discrimination. Mahatma Gandhi remembers the Bible, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread". As body only needs food, one should work hard for it with the help of one's body only. Hard labour makes one healthy, wealthy and creative. Mahatma Gandhi advocated more or less equal wages for all types of works without considerations.

3. Commerce without Morality

The third virtue was developed into this segment as a Trusteeship or the name bearer by Mahatma Gandhi. The man who does any business has to act only as a trustee or a watchman of the Society and whatever he has gained from the Society. Society is one single unit and individuals are just the parts of the society. The profit must be borne by the society equally and the classes should be united as a whole but singular unit.
4. Knowledge without Character
The fourth point deals with knowledge and information of the world. Education is the key in human development and for the all round growth of the individual. But education should create the character of the learner. Mahatma Gandhi insisted on the use of Basic Education for the system for development of one's character and principles. Real and rational knowledge leads to the composition of social character. It is necessary to evolve that through education.

5. Pleasure without Conscience
The pleasure is the temporary lust of the body. Man is made of two elements, one is his body and the other is his soul. Body demands pleasure and fulfillment of that pleasure through bodily means. Man becomes slave of his desires and blindly follows the greed. Conscience is a stance which always makes a realization that soul is higher than the body. One should not get carried away with bodily demands. Conscience is the anchor to harbour the ship safely. His famous saying also suggests that there is enough for everyone’s need but not sufficient for everyone’s greed. Science should work for the betterment of the poor not the tool for destruction and war.

6. Science without Humanity
Science and its progress amazed Mahatma Gandhi in London and he thought that science would be a means to solve poor India’s problems. Science can save the lives of millions. Science can bring happiness amongst the common people. It is the basic science that leads towards cultured society. Science should eradicate superstitions and create a society which believes in logic, reason and rationality. But Mahatma Gandhi was also aggrieved to see the misuse of science. Two world wars happened in front of his eyes and he realized that science can be the most destructive power on earth. The British power in India was based on science and machinery. The Science made Britishers to exploit India completely. That is why Mahatma Gandhi’s opposition to science was based on these thoughts.
7. Worship without Sacrifice

The seventh point of cardinal virtues is worship without sacrifice. Mahatma Gandhi was a great believer in God. For him God is the embodiment of truth and truth is a shadow of God. He believed that there is a supreme power that constitutes justice on earth and god controls the happenings on earth. But his god is not passive. God is not only in worship. The worship of the poor is the worship of god. The downtrodden and the lowest man is the object of all worship. The one who serves the poor is Mahatma. His preaching involved action more than mere worship. The Gita was the source of his life and he found that the Gita is a document of action and not just a philosophy of god. The Bible was also a book which he held in a very high regard it. But unfortunately people have misused the holy books for their selfishness. Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela were also the followers of ethical values as humanitarian principle. They realized that it was their ethical and moral duty to raise voice against inhuman segregation. Their entire struggle was focused on the principles of ethics and morality though their means and methods were different.

1.4.7. The Social Aspects of Humanism

Mahatma Gandhi’s ashram was his laboratory. What he believed theoretically, was practiced there. His mission was to improve the inner strength of a human. Moral religion was a supreme thing for him. For the sake of it, Mahatma Gandhi incorporated five vows or oaths for the development of morality in his Community center. They are as follows:-

1) Non violence - Opposition to any kind of use or misuse of violence. “Do not injure, abuse, oppress, enslave, torture, insult or kill any creature or living being”.

2) Truth - Anger, fear, jokes, ego, frivolity, fear and jealousy are the grounds of untruth. Truth is followed in thoughts, speech or mind.

3) Non-stealing - It is taking hold of another’s property or things without owner’s consent by immoral or unjust ways.

4) Chastity - Chastity is to abstain from sensual pleasures derived from five senses. Sensual pleasure is an enemy of virtue and spirituality.
5) Non possession - Possessions in any form of money, material and relations are the reasons for sins. The equanimity for music and noise, good and bad smells, soft and hard objects, dirty and beautiful things.

6) Bread labour - ‘Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow’ says the Bible and Mahatma Gandhi adopted it as his vow. Everyone must perform some useful body labour. The labor should be looked with respect.

7) Control of Palate - Food should be eaten to fulfill the hunger and not to indulge in taste. Excess food is waste of life. Food is meant to sustain body.

8) Equality of all religions - No religion is higher than the other. All religions are equal as well as god made and the purpose of each is to enhance the inner power of a person for the betterment of himself and humanity.

9) Fearlessness - It does not mean arrogance or aggressiveness. It simply means absence of fear like fear of death, injury, insults, loss of money or relations. Freedom from this is calmness and peace.

10) Use of local goods - The use of swadeshi (local goods) is the solution for the development of the lower classes in the society. All should be well in economic terms. My neighbors and village mates are my first stake holders.

All the oaths he described here is a way to good life. All religion speaks the same truth but Mahatma Gandhi simplified it for the sake of the common people and gave them courage to face the hard problems of life. Martin Luther King Jr justified the Gandhian way and his social principles. Nelson Mandela made Robben Island his social experimental laboratory and culminated all social section into one power. He motivated the prisoners to uplift their moral and showed forbearance and fortitude to continue their fight against racism.

1.4.8. Ahimsa (Non-Violence): Love Thyself

Mahatma Gandhi himself is synonymous with Ahimsa which he considered as the law of life and law of all religions. His definition of Ahimsa goes with universal love. As he propagated that all well cultured societies are based on the law of Non-Violence. The families, societies, nations and the humanity are bound together by ties of love and so are groups in the so called civilized society. The supremacy of the law of non-violence is the most profound in Gandhian discourse. Mahatma Gandhi transformed
the idea of Non-violence from a passive reaction and idle state to an active and aggressive factor by joining the action into one force. He was therefore the designer of a new tool for fight. Non violence was his design but his concept of Ram Rajya was to give justice to each and everyone in the state. Unlike Rama Mahatma Gandhi believed in changing the mind of the opponent. Rama killed Ravana which could be called as Himsa. Though he believed in Nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi cherished Ram as his ideal.

Ahimsa means not to hurt someone with violence or by any action which creates fear in the minds. Ahimsa or non-violence is the tool to fight with violence. As an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind, revenge is not the way of life and it will destroy the world. It is the weapon of the strongest. The mighty should provide safety to the weakest and both should live happily in the society together. Martin Luther King Jr also followed Gandhian non violence policy in the state of military democratic power of USA. He held American constitution as his guiding book and led the followers on the way of peaceful agitations.

1.4.9. The Quest for Truth: Satya

Non-violence is the basic proponent to seek and to establish Truth. Non-violence and truth are inseparable. It is virtually impossible and impractical to separate them. They are like two sides of the same coin or two banks of the same river. It has to observe, nor to revert. Ultimately non-violence is the means of Truth and it is the end. Mahatma Gandhi's idea of truth is similar to Vedic truth of Hinduism. The moral order of the universe and ultimate principles of the Universe is God with truth. He said that to him God was Truth and Love, God was ethics and morality, God was Humility, and truthfulness. Mahatma Gandhi was very sure what truth is and followed a path of humanism. Truth is not only truthfulness or eye witness in word, but also in behavior and followings. It is not the subjective truth of our imagination but the absolute truth which is in favor of humanity. Humanity is God. Existential meaning of God is Truth and the practical meaning of truth is god. His version of truth is freedom from ignorance, freedom of self-realization and the basic purpose is social development. Mahatma Gandhi's open fight was against three evils of social institutions as a nation and those were colonialism, capitalism and discrimination. It is an indomitable record
that his conception of truth was very much social welfare. Mahatma Gandhi’s all other
oaths and principle flow from Truth and Non-violence which were his highest
principles. Socratic virtue emerged from knowledge; Mahatma Gandhi’s principle was
the welfare of the commonest person. Mahatma Gandhi was a moralist and everything
he spoke and did was his morality. Nelson Mandela was practical person and had
realized the brutal conditions in South Africa since his childhood. He could not afford
to adopt peaceful tactics as his enemy was crueler and violently motivated. Still he
held the people together and after his release from the jail he spoke the policy of
reconciliation.

1.4.10. Tolerance: Equality and Harmony amongst All

The present pledge personifies in its meaning, the real spirit of humanism and co
existence among all the theological orders of the world. Mahatma Gandhi as
proponent of humanism has blessed us with the ultimate solution to the aggravated and
cruel difficulty of pseudo secularism. Humanism did not have an anti-religious or anti-
Christian and anti-Muslim temper. The humanist vision of harmony aims for two
characters; one is the social functions of religion and the tolerance of the larger ethnic
community. Both the views are inseparable and necessary for unification and
harmonious living. India is a country of many religions and many sects and there are
many sects in religions. Some religions are opposed to other religions on the basis of
their principles and virtues. It was a challenge to bring all in one movement and under
one leadership. Mahatma Gandhi was a man of tolerance and benevolence. His actions
were his words. People followed him because he propagated the religion of humanity.
He combined whatever was good in all religions. Satya and Ahimnsa were the
principles of Jain and Buddhist religions. Mahatma Gandhi brought opposite things
together. His leadership united the country. Martin Luther King Jr also stood for the
legitimate rights of the Blacks who were segregated legally and immorally. The
principles of his struggle were not to hate and abuse the Whites but to win their hearts
with patience and tolerance. He propagated harmony between the Blacks and the
Whites because he believed that no society could live with justice and harmony with
the feeling of hearted. His sacrifice for his principle paid off. Nelson Mandela was in
the favor of democracy of the majority but he too favored that the Whites must be
treated with honour and grace. The Whites were given minority rights after he took over as the President of South Africa.

1.4.11. A Quest for Nationalism: Socio-Political Aspect

The autobiography is originally written in Gujarati and was later translated into English by Mahadev Desai who was Mahatma Gandhi’s shadow. Mahatma Gandhi’s direct interventions and supervision is the result of the form in which it is now available to us. It is a narration of Mahatma Gandhi’s self-experiences. The depiction is his quest for humanism and national patriotism is not different from his quest for self-actualization in the search of truth. The story telling pattern further strengthens the complicated link between the spiritual and the humanist in his quest for truth. The pattern found in his book is a union of the confessional and the inspirational style of narration. The confessional mode is evident of the autobiographical rhetoric in many confessional autobiographies. The motivating tone and style is seen in many other autobiographical patterns from Rousseau to Benjamin Franklin's style of confronting the audience in his autobiography in which they displayed examples of ways of living in particular time and country. An amalgamation of various trends in Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography further designates the link between the humanism and political yet spiritual threshold in Mahatma Gandhi’s life. Mahatma Gandhi’s definition of humanism is largely mingled with religion which premised his struggle for India’s independence and earlier in South Africa. “I had made the religion of service my own as I felt that God could be realized only through service and service for me was the service of India.”(Gandhi, 1927: 132). Though it seems more patriotic and against British but his ultimate destination in the book was Humanism. To study his vision narrowly as nationalist will not be justifiable because he tolerated Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs and other religions equally. His autobiography thus can be said to be instilled with spirit of Humanism.

This phenomenal memoir is considered as one of the most moral lessons of human endeavors of all times. It might be the reason why the text has been welcomed very positively in school and college going adolescent in their curriculum.

Mahatma Gandhi’s life narration is full with childlike innocence and deeply meditated philosophical issues. At a point, it seems too simple to listen his smaller anecdotes
filled with moral lessons but on the other hand the philosophic depth stuns with amazement and the moral battles sometimes seem more thrilling than the great wars. The eternal battles which are fought with the ‘Self’ are more interesting. Human history is full of such sublime individually fought internal wars and Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography represents such ‘Mahabharata’ in the battlefield of his life. Paramahansa Yogananda in his distinguished autobiography views Mahatma Gandhi as “Innocent artist he was in all ways of his life, Gandhi became supreme artist at the moment of his death” (Yogananda, 1974: 446). A stalwart at one side and a childlike innocence on the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi’s personality is multi-dimensional. Over simplification sometime is more complex which is true with Mahatma Gandhi’s style. Sunil Khilnani in his introduction to the Penguin Edition of the autobiography adds,

“But perhaps a safer clue to understanding Mahatma Gandhi is to be found in his famous plea, “My writings should be cremated with my body. What I have done will endure, not what I have said or written”. (Khilnani, 1947:1)

For him Mahatma Gandhi was an ‘artful choreographer’ of his actions. He happened to have an insight to organize his haphazard daily actions into a formal and moral order with proper shape and meaning. Every act of his larger life story is an act of significance. That skill gets his epitome in his autobiography, adds Khilnani,

“The Story of My Experiments with Truth is a magnificent, puzzling, strenuous act of self-creation, which describes - as it enacts - the metamorphosis of a fearful, unsuccessful provincial lawyer into a leader who dominated India’s politics for almost four decades and who took on and successfully defeated the British imperial state.” (Khilnani, 1947: 1)

His art and life embodies his humanism quest. Mahatma Gandhi’s outward observation and its explanation seem more vital than an internal perception and commentary in the text. On one hand Mahatma Gandhi exemplifies his extraordinary but smallest victories but there always remains an authentication about contradictions and ambiguities. The narrative in this particular autobiography speaks a language with an expression of such directness and transparency that the reader finds it a walk on the water. Its simplicity of narration can play tricks with the readers. Gandhi was sole and
ardent satyagrihi who believed that the simplicity could represent honesty. Gandhi through his book would give new courage to Indians to give off their ‘ingrained fear’ and ‘acceptance’ of British hegemony in India. Because Gandhi was fearless he was able to face the real problems of India in a way that was uncommon in his days. Brown says

“Gandhi attempted to trace his spiritual erratic in the autobiography. In his case the difficulties are compounded by the fact that there is no ‘conversion experience’ as a landmark as is often in the case of Christian context. His experience was more of deepening enlightenment and discovery, influenced by multiple sources which reinforced each other.” (Brown, 1990: 74)

Mahatma Gandhi’s humanistic experience was more a process of deepening enlightenment and discovery and creating a fuel for Independence. But the story is not so uneven as Brown points it out to be. It is uneven, if one were to place it in the Christian context and then look for a ‘conversion experience’ as the turning point in his life. Brown’s dilemma comes from using Western theoretical paradigms to understand a text deeply rooted in the Indian culture. The analysis of *The story of My Experiments with Truth* demonstrates that it is possible to trace a clear chronological development or reasoned analysis of humanity in Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography. Nationalism for Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela was the inclusion of Black in the main stream and treating them with equality and respect. In the USA it was possible because the country was guided by democratic constitution. In South Africa the White rulers were not driven by democracy but by greed and prejudice. Nelson Mandela’s efforts in this regard were commendable and appreciable.

1.4.12. The Spirituality: An Unending Search for Truth

Spirituality is a controversial term. It has been defined by all philosophers and ideologists in different ways. Gautama Buddha has developed a spiritual practice of Vipashyana which a technique of meditation which is given to search one’s identity and to master the mind that craves for materialistic life. Swami Vivekanand asked to practice us to practice meditation and control “Shad Ripu” i.e. Ego, jealousy, greed, anger, lust and delusory attachment. Spirituality is often confused as a religious term. Religion is a specific belief and practice of a group of people where as spirituality is to search for meaning and purpose of life. It is also a journey in search of truth and
peace. Spirituality is the major cult of Humanism which is found at each step in Mahatma Gandhi's search for Humanism. In the primary part of the autobiography, he speaks about the initial portion of his life from his childhood memories at Porbandar to his departure for England for further studies. On the onset Mahatma Gandhi narrated honestly how he played 'a fool' at different occasions in London to bring down his 'Mahatma' status to very ordinary and common level which was his designing of producing the book. The concept of 'Truth' for Mahatma Gandhi was to showcase the experiences and to narrate the events from his point of view. Truth is spirituality more than science to him. His bold attitude which he shared every minute with his personal experience without any shame or sense of guilt was his mark. In the narration of his marital sexual experiences he resented a little and added,

"I wish that I had not to write this chapter, I know that I shall have to swallow many such bitter draughts in the course of this narrative. And I cannot do otherwise, if I claim to be worshipper of truth". (Gandhi, 1927: 7)

He unhesitatingly and straightforwardly admitted his "sexual lust". His narration on the personal issues however it might be shameful or personal was his virtue of sharing the truth. He admitted openly that he was blind with lust. His lustful teenage love even though for his wife knew no limitations He narrated one of the most shocking shameful incidents one would never dare to narrate in the chapter which he titled as, 'My father's death and my double shame.' At the time of Mahatma Gandhi's father on death bed when Mahatma Gandhi was massaging his father's head. His uncle relieved him for a while. Mahatma Gandhi found this chance and went to his wife's bedroom to satisfy his lust. His wife was in deep sleep and he forced her for the act. Soon after this, he heard the news of his father's death. He added, "The shame to which I have referred to in a foregoing chapter, was this shame of my carnal desire even at the critical hour of my father's death." (Gandhi, 1927: 26)

Mahatma Gandhi called himself as the most lustful husband but at the same time he was very faithful to his wife. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a teenager got married enthusiastically and performed his matrimonial duties and took part in all functions so enthusiastically that he described himself as "lustful yet faithful husband" (P-18).

Mahatma Gandhi attended the matrimonial loyalty and truthfulness which could be attributed to his god fearing attitude which was an outcome of Hinduism. Mahatma
Gandhi’s ideal of the Ramayana legend Lord Rama, was the symbol of matrimonial faithfulness. He reiterated his religious belief and his firm faith in following the religious values. His love for Kasturba though started at child age went through lustful passions in youths but ultimately remained as an example of an ideal Hindu couple. His faithfulness was tested on four occasions, “I can recall four more similar incidents in my life”. (P-20) but he came out of it victoriously and ‘saved for the ultimate sin’. While still in India he visited a brothel with his friend’s persistence and was stuck dumb in the den of vice. Later in England while he visited Portsmouth to attend a conference and at a game of bridge a landlady joined them which suddenly started some indecent joke and when Mahatma Gandhi was about to cross his limits, “God through the good companion uttered warning” and Mahatma Gandhi escaped through the dreadful and sinful incident. “God saved me.” were his words. (P-61) The later incident occurred when he was travelling to South Africa and the Captain who had become his good friend; both were taken to Negro women’s quarters by flaunt. He felt pity over those sex workers and their poor condition and he reiterated again, “I thanked God that the sight of woman had not moved me.” (P-87) He was surprisingly fast in thanking GOD “all merciful” and credited all good deeds to him, saying “The incident increased my faith in God.” On all three occasions, Mahatma Gandhi realized and confessed that he had been saved by divine intervention or merciful god. It is a wonder how clearly he was possessed with an idea of God’s ways. Mahatma Gandhi recalled the first incident as,

“God in his infinite mercy protected me from myself” His remarks opened a new debate of fate, free will and providence in the domain of god. In England he proclaimed that he only understood “vaguely ….that God had saved me on the occasion.” Although he nevertheless added further that, “on all occasions of trial He has saved me. I know that ‘the god saved me’ has a deeper meaning for me today and still I feel that I have not yet grasped its entire meaning.” His playing a husband of teenager, he admitted that he enjoyed in sexual pleasures in his teens. He saw no “moral argument in support of a preposterously early marriage.” (Gandhi, 1927: 13)

Mahatma Gandhi had highest faith that he was saved by God and being saved by god increased his faith. But he never admitted that his fear was more evident. He believed that god rescued him in his moral combats but admits that god saved him in all
experiences and he is god’s protected son and his morals are as a part of complete protective safeguard. Such admissions will baffle any European but one of the greatest Gandhian Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru quoted Mahatma Gandhi’s definition of Hinduism as,

“If I were asked to define the Hindu creed, I should simply say: search after truth through nonviolent means. A man may not believe in God and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth. Hinduism is the religion of truth. Truth is god. Denial of god we have known. Denial of truth we have not known.” (Nehru, 1935:75)

Nelson Mandela was not driven by any kind of religious or spiritual force because he realized that the common Black folks of South Africa were not aware about these abstract concepts. He understood that the ignorant and uneducated Blacks could not be driven with moral force for the action. Instead of this he was motivated with the idea of violence and aggressive action. Like Lokmanya Tilak, Nelson Mandela was in favour of quick and concrete action. The principle of ‘Karmayog’ (action for the sake of it) was followed by Nelson Mandela who tried to exploit every possible way to free his people from Apartheid.

1.4.13. Holistic Approach towards Life

To begin with holism which deals with analysis and interpretation of the mind and the body is a significant term in the humanism studies. Mahatma Gandhi’s holistic approach is a journey of a human being from innocence to maturity. One can achieve maturity in physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. It is a knowledge that leads up from irrational to rational. It is knowledge of using five senses in a proper spirit and to develop an uncommon sense. Psychologically Humanism is a Holistic approach that studies Human as a whole with special regards to his uniqueness of each individual. It studies Human being as a special entity and tries to elaborate individuality in a person and its expressions. It studies all the aspects of a human in totality and considers all qualities and limitations together. It is parallel to phenomenal approach which studies the personality from the point of view of the individual’s subjective experience. They subvert the theories of other psychologist and claims that an individual can be understood from his own perspective and the way he interprets the events. The study is focused on the self than the circumstances around the self.
Mahatma Gandhi’s views were not only focused on Independence of the country but he wanted to free all humanity from the slavery of abuse and hate. His unique philosophy, to uplift the entire humanity was his prime aim. It was his holistic approach towards solving social problems. This strategy which was identified as Gandhism became popular set of resistance against all kinds of injustice. Martin Luther King Jr was one of the strong followers of this ideology. Nelson Mandela initially adopted violent means of protest later on he was convinced with the fact that the hate and abuse could not form a just society so he also followed Gandhian way of politics. That may be one of the reasons for Nobel Award of Peace Prize for him.

1.4.14. Concept of a New Human Being

Humanism is a philosophy that keeps its highest faith in human rather than God and other supernatural beliefs. It affirms its ability and responsibility to create meaningful and ethical society based on humanitarian values. In the study of Humanism of Mahatma Gandhi a true Humanist or an ideal human has following qualities:

1. He or she must be ethically and morally strong in all circumstances and his concerns should be selfless.
2. He or she must believe in the self because a person can only bring the change what he or she desires.
3. He or she must keep faith in the moral system and believe that we shall reap what we have sown.
4. Truth is the ultimate God and the forgiveness is the weapon of the strong.
5. Non violence is not the cowardly act but the power of innocent.
6. Democracy of the majority is greater than the monopoly of a few.
7. The society must be free from hate and abuse and a place that accommodates all.
8. He or she must be the advocate of equality for all.
9. He or she must acknowledge that the service of the poor is the service of God.
10. He or she must consider human welfare at the center of concern.
Dr. Sangita Ghodake has brilliantly summarized the concept of new a human being in her thesis,

“The emergence of new human being will be possible by making, the forces of love, compassion and justice triumphant in the governing of human life all over the world. The establishment of Parliament of Nations and Confederation of Man is essential to prepare the ground for the emergence of new man. The sublimation of man to the higher level of consciousness, understanding, and spirituality is the real solution to the problems of the obstacles that come in way of materialization of the ideal republic. Christ’s message of love will enable man to know another man and every child as a child of God. Budhha’s path of enlightenment through compassion towards the brothers and sisters irrespective of the differences of caste, creed, race, religion, colour, community and nationality will foster the brotherhood of man. The guiding principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are to mould the thoughts and to motivate the actions of entire humanity.” (Ghodake, 2007: 134)

Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela followed the way of peaceful protest and harmonious society. The ‘Rainbow Nation’ is the concept of modern state where all colorful people can live happily and work for the united progress.

1.15. Conclusion

History sometimes referred to as his-story is more than the biography of those who create it. But people like Mahatma Gandhi whose footprints on the sands of history are so elusive that historiography has to take note of it. “My life is my message” the tag line of Gandhi Memorial at Sabarmati, Gujarat surely has inspired hundreds of biographers to re-capitulate his life from different possible angles. The title Mahatma which Rabindranath Tagore conferred upon him and the country upheld it is the same with two distinct names in history Jesus ‘the anointed’ and Gautam the Budhha ‘enlightened one’. Mahatma Gandhi would go down in history on a par with Buddha and Jesus Christ Lord Mount Batten on hearing the news of his assassination compared the similarity of the three and placed Gandhi with the two greatest emulates of humanity. Though the formers have reached the pinnacles of Godhood or sainthood and were far too long in the histories, Mahatma Gandhi ‘a man with flesh and blood’ is the noblest example of humanism in recent times.
When one gets acquainted with the life of this Mahatma, one feels compelled to enquire about his journey from ordinary to extraordinary. How a common man with no special background or a blessing of fortune or without professing a complex philosophical doctrines reached a profound and paramount position in life. It is not less than god’s magic. Though Mahatma Gandhi is also worshipped as political saint, this earthly saint never performed a supernatural or magical stunt. But some questions automatically pose. What was the source of his strength or power over millions? How did he convince the poor and illiterate masses of India that they can win against the mightiest power of the world, the British? How did he encourage thousands to go to jail or leave their lavish government positions? How did he win the trust of Muslims which were far radical and aggressive in nature? How did he lead the most heterogeneous mindset that no other country in the world possesses? How did he remain the source of inspiration for the non-violent, peaceful movements all over the globe particularly in Nelson Mandela’s South Africa and Martin Luther King Jr’s America? Ultimately what is the process of ‘the making of Mahatma?’ and ‘what is the source of dynamism in his unique persona “power of making hero out of clay?”’ Is Gandhism a true humanism? The critical enquiry in answering these questions is the hypothesis of this study. To acknowledge the power dynamics of his uniqueness there may be two ends possible one is scrutinizing the external factors that surrounded the course of his life and find out the answers to prove the hypothesis or to go deeply inside his personal life, his meditations and idiosyncrasies which poses the internal enquiry.

External facts sometimes are misleading because they are based on someone’s assumptions and evidences. Studying Biographies always has this risk of objectivity. “Be the change you want to see in the world” is the famous saying of this man can be applied to him and his ‘autobiography’ The Story of My Experiments with the Truth which is a unique memoir became the foreground of this study. By clearing his stand of writing an autobiography in the preface of his The Story of My Experiences with the Truth Mahatma Gandhi says “At the instance of some of my nearest co-workers, I agreed to write my autobiography”(Gandhi, 1927: ix). So it was not his inner voice that normally instigated the Mahatma to take up mighty challenges throughout his life.
neither it was a god’s command or intuitions which compelled him to write it but it was his associates. As he found it really a time consuming work like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela (who attempted autobiographies in jails) finally he found the right time in ‘Yerawada Jail’ a blissful solitude for the work and Sjt. Jeramdas asked him to put down everything and finish writing the autobiography. But Gandhi finished the history of “Satyagrah” and then with the repeated proposal by Swami Anand Mahatma Gandhi pertained to write it for Navsanjivan a Guajarati weekly and thus began “the hard at work” autobiography which went on to become a historical book in many perspectives. But his ‘god fearing friend’ had his doubts firstly the practice of writing an autobiography is completely ‘Western’ and importantly the stand Mahatma Gandhi takes in the book might be reversed in future and thence might ‘misled’ the masses. Mahatma Gandhi who always believed in challenging the skepticism says,

“I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truths and as my life consists of nothing but those experiments and it’s true that the story will take the shape of an autobiography.”(Gandhi, 1927: ix)

The purpose Mahatma Gandhi states is to open his life history to the people who are out of the “civilized” world. The title ‘Mahatma’ which was offered to him before “deeply pained me” and there was not a moment when it tickled him. To bring himself to the ordinary level seems his crystal clear purpose. He always held himself as a representative of common man; his attire which he purposely made for the representation of the half nude people of India makes him a perfect political saint. The autobiography is also a political instrument of mobilizing the ‘the spirituality’ of the masses which Mahatma Gandhi felt necessary to build purposely. This goes exactly in contrast with Adolf Hitler’s autobiography which instigated the people of Germany to be violent and aggressive to regain the lost glory of the nation. Hitler’s purpose contradicts Mahatma Gandhi’s purpose. He narrates, “What I want to achieve…striving for thirty years...is self-realization” (P-5) so Mahatma Gandhi’s perspective is to show his personal path that he travelled and to show others that for a common man it is “achievable”. His internal and external molding is the essence of his journey but the internal experiences which he categorically puts as “spiritual” cannot
be known to others. Mahatma Gandhi justifies his subjective stand and speaks about his spiritual morality and religious morality. In the autobiographies of the statespersons where the political happenings form an essential relationship to their image and personality, culminates the reflective marks of their personality. Margaret Thatcher’s *The Downing Street Years (1989)* is an autobiography of a statesman riveting first-hand portrait of the events and personalities of her eleven years in power. Mahatma Gandhi’s title *experiment* is moreover a scientific term of proving something logical and rational spirit. Only scientific activities can be verified with the objective experiments which involve scientific justification. But Mahatma Gandhi’s quest is to find or judge his personal ‘truth’.

“Far be it from me to claim for them nothing more than does a scientist who though he conducts his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusions, but keeps an open mind regarding them” (Gandhi, 1927: X).

It is his endeavor to narrate the scientific and objective *truth* which is the culmination of his self-experiments which he describes as ‘psychological situations’ yet he was not sure about his own finality of conclusions. For him whatever he has found in this quest is absolutely correct and for the time being to be final. His adherence to truth is a matter of both rationality and emotionality which must be a satisfying act by “reason and heart”. His findings of practical principles which were drawn from self-retrospection were really practicable in day to day life with great and everlasting effects. His experiments especially in his core domain of non-violence, celibacy and other principles of behavior are accounted in the book. Mahatma Gandhi associates the word truth with morality and its standards which are unchangeable and consistent. From the scientific point of view Mahatma Gandhi deviates and proclaims the sovereign principle as ‘absolute truth’ and eternal principle god.