

CHAPTER

10

**Protest Movements
(Civil Rights Movement, Anti-Apartheid
Movement and Feminist Movement)**

10.1. RACIAL PROBLEMS AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN USA-- RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE-CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL RIGHTS (Dr. MARTIN LUTHER'S ROLE)

After the Second World War, the United States of America emerged as a great power in world politics. In spite of the general affluence, there were a number of problems in American society. One of the important issues was the racial problem in the country. Slavery was abolished in America in 1863. The black people residing in America for a long time expected that they would be entitled to enjoy the same rights as the whites enjoy like the right to own land, to receive a good education and to vote. In the Southern states, slavery existed for over 200 years. The white people residing in the Southern states always took the black people as slave and inferiors. Naturally this people felt it difficult to treat them as equals. Very soon, the black people felt that they were discriminated against in all respects. Namely,

1. They were prevented from voting;

2. They were forced to attend separate schools of poorer quality of education than that enjoyed by the whites;
3. They were segregated in places like restaurants, on buses and trains;
4. They had to do the most unpleasant and ill-paid jobs. Not only that, most of the trade unions, which meant to protect the interests of the workers, refused to allow black people to join as members.

The first organized attempt to campaign for black people's right began in 1910 with the formation of the **National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP)**. But this organization failed to make any headway and the black people were still treated as second class citizen during the Second World War.

THE CHANGED ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT

In 1946, **President Truman** appointed a Committee to investigate civil rights. The Committee recommended that the Congress should pass laws to stop racial discrimination in jobs and to allow the blacks the right to vote. The Committee itself gave several reasons for its recommendations.

1. Some politicians felt that it was not morally right to treat the blacks in this way.
2. It was a waste of talent to exclude the blacks from top jobs.
3. The blacks gradually became outspoken in their demands for Civil Rights.
4. America could not claim that the country is really a democratic country as 10% of the population was denied the voting right.
5. Nationalism had gradually developed in Asia and Africa. The non-white people of India and Indonesia were on the verge of getting independence. These new states might turn against America and move towards communism if American whites continued this unfair treatment towards the black people.

As a result, within the next few years, **the Government and the Supreme Court** declared new laws to introduce racial equality in the country.

- (a) Separate schools for the black and the whites were declared illegal. Some black people had to be included on all juries (1954).
- (b) Schools should be desegregated, it meant black children had to attend white schools and vice versa.
- (c) The 1957 Civil Rights Act thus set up a Commission to investigate the denial of voting rights to the black people.
- (d) The 1960 Civil Rights Act had provision for the blacks to register as voters, but it was not really very effective. Moreover, the blacks were afraid of registering themselves as voters for fear of being harassed by the whites.

But unfortunately the laws were not always carried out. Some of the Southern states refused to implement the schools desegregated order. **Ultimately President Eisenhower sent Federal**

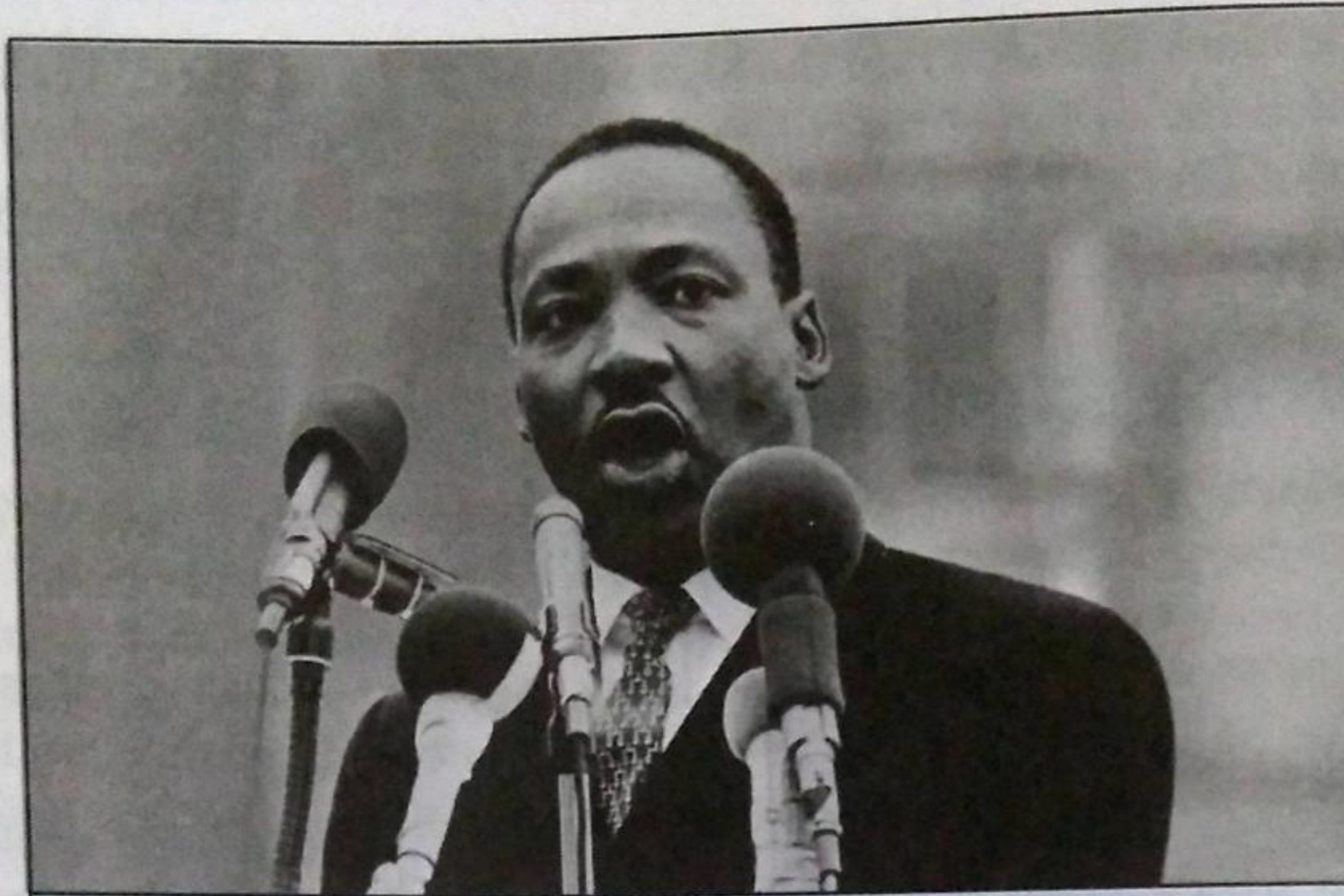
troops to escort the black children into the high schools at Little Rock, Arkansas, where the Governor had defied the order of the Supreme Court. This was a symbolic victory, but the Southern whites continued to defy the law. By 1961, only 25% of schools and colleges in the South were desegregated.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

In the mid-1950s a mass civil rights movement developed in America for a number of reasons.

- (a) A huge number of black people lived in the Northern industrial cities. They became aware of the political issues. In the mean time, a black middle class had emerged in America. They produced a number of talented leaders.
- (b) In Asia and Africa, states like India and Ghana became independent. Inspired by these developments, the black Americans protested against the unfair treatment of the white people.
- (c) The Truman Committee had raised the hopes of the black people. But they became impatient at the slow pace and the small amount of change in the society. The small advances they made created strong hostility among the Southern whites. Some Southern state governments even banned the NAACP. It was now felt that a national mass movement should be started to change the situation.

This national campaign started in 1955 with the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King, a Baptist minister, as an outstanding leader of non-violent civil rights movement. After a black lady, **Rosa Parks**, had been arrested for sitting in a seat reserved for the whites on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Dr. Martin Luther King organized a boycott of all Montgomery buses. Martin Luther King insisted that the movement should be peaceful. This campaign was successful and segregated sitting arrangements were stopped on Montgomery buses. This was the beginning of his campaign of sit-in and peaceful disobedience. This movement reached its climax in 1963 when a massive rally in **Washington for Jobs and Freedom** was attended by a quarter of a million people. There were a number of civil right activists present there known as **Big Six**. They were **Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King, Whitney Young, James Farmer and John Lewis**. Although these leaders came from different political horizons, they were intent on the peacefulness of the march. There were own marshals to ensure that the event would be peaceful and respectful of the law. Martin Luther delivered a speech in which he talked about his dream of a future America in which everybody would be equal. **'I have a dream'** part of the speech of Martin Luther King ultimately turned into a national text. Another important feature was that a lot of feminine civil rights groups had participated in the organization of the March. This march can be remembered for the **"I have a dream" speech**, but for most female activists it was a new awakening forcing black women not only to fight for civil rights but also to engage in the Feminist movement. **In 1967 Martin Luther King was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, but tragically in April, 1968, he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.**



Martin Luther King

Progress was very slow, and some blacks broke away from non-violent movement and thus formed a number of militant organizations. Democratic **Presidents Kennedy and Johnson** were sympathetic towards the demands of the black people. Kennedy appointed first a black ambassador of the USA. He also presented a **Civil Rights Bill** to the Congress. **This bill was passed in 1964 after a debate lasting 736 hours. This was a landmark piece of civil rights legislation in the United States.** This bill guaranteed the vote for the blacks and made racial discrimination in public facilities such as hotels, restaurants and stores and in jobs illegal. However, this Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not include a number of provisions deemed essential by civil right leaders including protection against police brutality, ending discrimination in private employment, or granting the Justice Department power to initiate desegregation or job discrimination lawsuits. Again the act was not always carried out, especially in the South, where black peoples were still afraid to vote.



John Kennedy

Johnson introduced the Voting Right Act of 1965 and tried to make sure that blacks could exercise their right to vote. He followed it up with another **Civil Rights Act in 1968**. This act made it illegal to discriminate in selling property or letting accommodation. Again there was bitter white hostility to these reforms. The problem of the administration was how to make sure that the Acts were carried out. During the 1970s, much progress was made in voting. By 1975, a large number of black people were elected to Congress and other government bodies.

10.2. ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA; MAIN FEATURES OF APARTHEID, OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID (DR. NELSON MENDELA'S ROLE), TRANSITION TO BLACK MAJORITY RULE AND THE END OF APARTHEID

The Dutch East India Company founded a colony at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. It remained a Dutch Colony till 1795. During this time, the Dutch were known as **Afrikaners or Boers** (meaning farmers). During this time, the Dutch or Boers took away lands from the native Africans and forced them to work as labourers and treated them as little better than slaves. During the French Revolutionary Wars in 1795, the Cape was captured by the British. In the 1814 Peace Settlement, it was decided that Cape Colony would remain under British control. The Dutch Settlers or the Boers became restless under British rule. They now moved towards North and set up their independent Republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State. In the Boer War (1899-1902), the British defeated the Boers and in 1910, they joined with Cape Colony and Natal to form the Union of South Africa.

In the Union of South Africa, the white people dominated both in political and economic life of the country. The black people were discriminated like anything. They were not allowed to vote and had to live in the reserved area. The government controlled the movements of the blacks by a system of **Pass Laws**. Living and working conditions of the blacks were primitive. They were barred from holding skilled jobs and were not allowed to hold strike.

INTRODUCTION OF APARTHEID BY DR. MALAN (1948-54)

After the Second World War, the Prime Minister **Dr. Malan** introduced a new policy called *apartheid* (Separateness). The object was to keep the blacks in tight position. Most of the whites were against racial equality. The extreme was the **Afrikaner (The Dutch or Boers) Nationalist Party led by Dr. Malan**. They claimed that the whites were a master race and the non-whites were inferior beings. In 1948 this Nationalist Party won the elections with promise to rescue the whites from the 'black menace' and to preserve the racial purity of the whites. This policy was continued and developed by the succeeding Prime Ministers.

MAIN FEATURES OF APARTHEID

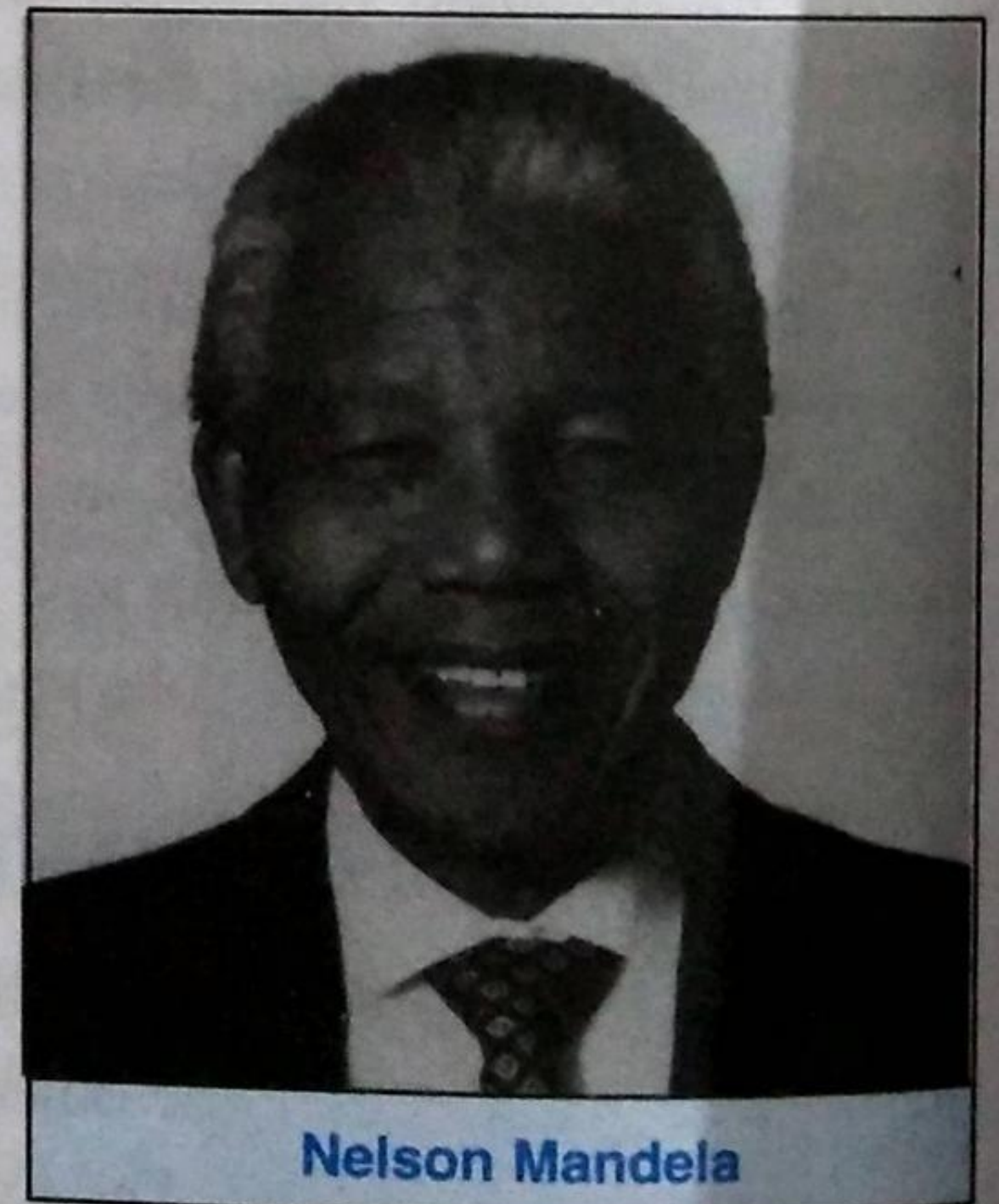
1. **Apartheid means complete separation of blacks and whites as far as possible at all levels.** It implied complete segregation, socially and politically, of the white and non-white people. There were separate buses, coaches, trains, cafes, toilets, park benches, hospitals, beaches, picnic areas, sports and even Churches. Black children went to separate schools and were given a much more inferior education.

2. Every person was given a racial classification and an identity card. The blacks had to stay in their reserved areas or fixed townships. The blacks would carry documents at all times and in all places so that the authority can put a check on their movements.
3. Marriage relations between whites and non-whites were forbidden. This was followed strictly to preserve the purity of the white race.
4. Thus Africans lost all political rights and their representation to Parliament was abolished.

Thus according to Alan Paton, apartheid is **“in essence a rejection of man.”** It robs the non-whites of their land and liberty. It breaks up homes, it separates fathers from children and husbands from wives. The African children are to be trained that they become efficient domestic servants and unskilled farm hands. It means sickness and death for lakhs of children.

Role of Nelson Mandela in the Anti-Apartheid Moment

Nelson Mandela was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician and philanthropist. He studied law and gradually became involved in anti-colonial and African nationalist politics. He joined the African National Party and founded its Youth League. When the Afrikaner minority government of the National Party established apartheid, a system of racial segregation that privileged the white people, he became the President of the African National Party's Transvaal branch. Mandela became prominent for his involvement in the 1952 Anti-Apartheid Defiance Campaign. He was repeatedly arrested for seditious activities and was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia Trial. Mandela served 27 years in prison. Amid international pressure and growing fear of a racial civil war, President F.W. de Klerk released him from jail in 1990. Mandela and Klerk negotiated to end apartheid and organised the 1994 multiracial general election. Mandela led the ANC to victory and became the President of South Africa. His administration introduced measures to encourage land reform, combat poverty, expand health care service and the removal of apartheid policy of the government. He declined a second presidential term. He was awarded Nobel Peace Prize. He died on 5 December, 2013 at the age of 95. The South African people respect him as the 'Father of the Nation'.



Nelson Mandela

Answer the following:

1. Mention the grounds where the black people were discriminated in American society.
2. Mention the reasons to start mass civil rights movement in America with special reference to the campaign for equal rights.
3. Discuss the main features of Apartheid and role played by Nelson Mandela in the anti-apartheid movement.