CHAPTER- I
INTRODUCTION
As social animals we live in a society and adopt some standards or rules or principles of action in order to regulate and organise social relations or society. It is true that we are not the only animals with such preferences, since a number of animals live in organised habitats. However, man is distinguishable in this respect from other animals in the complexity and intricacies in the organisation it lives in. The adopted rules or principles of behaviour become our conventions, which are informal public systems. However, these conventions or informal public systems are not static; they change according to the needs of the society in course of time. These conventions of conduct governing our behaviour become the basis of moral discourse and depicted as code of conduct.

Morality in turn generally comes to be understood as the criterion that distinguishes good from bad and right from wrong behaviour. This criterion gives rise to the possibility of a consistent system of values or principles. This system visualises and attempts to approximate to the ideal. The ideality may come from within or without the society. The latter is the notion of moral governance by a being, which is not part of the world, that is the notion of God or some such power, which is embedded in all theistic religions. The secularisation of society has led to the abandonment of such religious governance and has given rise to
attempted consistent system of values or principles that is directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, related to the human enterprises. However, in the emphasis placed on human enterprise of developing or evolving morality or code of conduct the notion of interests or obligations of some individual or group of individuals in the society being served and its standardising the interpersonal conduct within the society cannot be ignored. In other words, it is sometimes claimed that the origin and sanction of morality inheres in the society and functions as an instrument for the guidance to fulfill the demands of individual or group of individuals. It evaluates the good or bad conduct through the yardstick of these accepted social rules or principles. The system of morality is a form of life which serves to attain the human purposes, aims or goals and therefore it is conjectured that to attain them the means adopted must also be supported by the value system, which raises the question of morality of ends and means.

The debate on morality of ends as well as its means is an integral part of human history and is as old as humanity itself, since humanity has always been concerned with achieving its professed or not professed ends, which may be in a simple and highly complex manner. Morality through history reflects social, political and economic patterns and symbolises the rise and
decline of civilisations. The concept of morality emerged when human beings tried to live together for which some norms or rules were necessary. Philosophy is the oldest coherent thought that has articulated conception of life and the world and has within it the integration of morality as a deliberation. However, the consideration of the principles lying behind the construction of the philosophy of morality later on came to be identified as ethics.

The philosophical study of morality or ethics historically shows that there has hardly been an attempt to look at concept of morality in terms of the relation of ends and means. The texts on ends and means are scattered and there is hardly any consolidated work on the issue. It appears that philosophers or thinkers have taken ‘ends and means’ only as an explanation or support for their larger arguments or projects. There is hardly any effort to consider ends and means in its own respect, isolating it from other related issues for which it has only become a stepping stone. In this sense, this research is pioneering as it is an attempt to bring the literature on ‘ends and means’ together in a systematic manner and pick up the threads to weave a network out of which certain confusions can be cleared making room for development of the debate. It is because of the scattered-ness of the literature on the topic and the confusion that the present thesis has to go into the historical developments of morality, as it
was felt that without clearing the debris a clear perspective on the contemporary debate on the morality of ends and means would not be possible.

Although an action by itself is morally neutral; it is its judgment that tags what is good or bad, which then is translated to signify the ends and means perspective, as what would be the best thing to do and the best manner to do it. It is in this sense we choose an action or a plan of action to aim at some purpose, goal or end. In realising our purpose, goal or end we need to organise ourselves into a society which then demands conforming of the action to the prevalent value system. It is through this perspective that we visualise and consider ‘ends’, ‘means’ and their relation and distinction, which is problematised as morality of ends and means. The philosophical discussion on ends and means helps us to understand the problem and the organising practices of man, especially the classification of ends and means as good or bad, which primarily depends on an understanding of relation of ends and means. However, this use of relation of ends and means in moral philosophy requires further clarification, which is the embedded purpose of this thesis.

In this sense the term ‘means’ is ordinarily understood as the engagement of a subject intended to bring about certain ‘ends’. It may also be said that ‘means’ can be treated conjointly
with ‘ends’, which ordinarily signifies the intended or proposed purpose, goal or aim of a person or group of persons. The word ‘means’ imply the processes of achieving something, which may or may not be appropriate to achieve the intended ‘end’. An ‘end’ is something we want to achieve and the means represent the way in which we achieve it. In other words, we may say that an end is something we want to realise and the means represent the way in which we endeavour to do so.

The discussion on ‘means’ is a discussion that places a restrain on ‘ends’ by invoking moral implications, since morality restricts the ‘means’ acceptable and thereby also controls and limits the permissible ‘ends’. The possible available ends may be personal fulfillment, greatest happiness of the greatest number, or welfare of humanity.

A discussion of relation of ends and means has to confront the maxim ‘end justifies the means’, around which the contemporary debate is focused. Like any other topical issue there are sharp differences on the evaluation of the maxim ‘end justifies the means’, not only in everyday discussions but also in the academia among philosophers and thinkers. The controversy arises primarily because we cannot straight away say that a particular end justifies the means adopted to realise it. The debate gathers greater significance since the maxim ‘end justifies
the means’ is connected with the prevalent morality in the society governing individuals and group of individuals alike. It cannot be disputed that means are tools to achieve ends but the logical distinction of ‘ends’ and ‘means’ is raised only in the context of moral dilemma of use of not acceptable means to achieve a good end. Therefore, one cannot blindly reject or accept the maxim that ‘end justifies the means’, which then requires a thorough examination of not only the relation of ends and means but also the moral implication of the relation.

The first intention of this research is to historically and critically examine the concept and development of morality. In order to gain maximum clarity, the thesis considers the relation between morality and its cognates, such as, ethics and politics. Ethics is held to be morality but is theoretical in nature in contrast to morality which is identified with practical inter-relations of living beings in the society. The relation of morality with the political is especially interesting since political is understood as group morality. Morality is claimed to be related to politics, which is required to deal with welfare and interrelations of groups of individuals or society as a whole, in short, collectivities or public domain. Morality is a system of values or principles governing the individual or private domain.
The concept of ‘ends’ and ‘means’, and its relation and distinction are locatable in Greek philosophy but apparently there was no controversy over its understanding as there was no discourse on their relation. The origin of the controversy on morality of ends and means started with Machiavelli and then Jesuits, when the relation of ends and means was interrogated. However, there was confusion in identifying the debate as moral or political due to logical un-tenability of the relation of ends and means. The controversy then was regenerated in the modern era as a debate on the morality of ends and means. The modernism debate starts as a conflict within the liberal ideology between deontology and teleology. In deontological moral theory Kant separates the ends from the means by relating them to morality. The teleological moral theory or Consequentialism relates ends and means to consequences, preferring some moral means. Simultaneously, the Indian practical social philosopher Gandhi also through his method of Truth and Non-Violence tries to separate the ends from means.

The Marxists have argued that the prevalent or Liberal morality cannot be anything else apart from propagation and continuation of its class morality, which is political in nature. Marxists further point out that class morality is a form of class ideology rationalised by the Liberals. The Marxists through their
criticism of the class morality, concealed by the arguments of idealised morality, argue that morality evolves, intentionally or unintentionally, from the living relations in the society. The present living relations, as far as the Marxists are concerned, are the hegemonising relations of the dominant classes represented by the Liberals. The dominant class morality is identified by the Marxists as Liberal politics.

This ideological class character of Liberal politics makes the maxim ‘end justifies the means’, a tool to be used against their opponents to retain their hegemony. It is in this connection that the controversy appears to have been started by Liberal moral philosophy, which insisted on preferring justification of means adopted to realise the ends. The preference of justifying is the moral high ground adopted, which helps in the ideological condemnation. The maxim ‘end justifies the means’ raked up the ideological controversy between the Liberals and the Marxists and opened up the contemporary debate. However, the uncovering of inter-dialectical relation between ends and means too opened up the controversy in the early twentieth century and as a reaction the Liberals demanded a justification of the maxim ‘end justifies the means’.

The Marxist thinkers argue that the morality of ‘ends and means’ is clearly shown historically to originate in class
dominance and its ideology. They argue that the relation of ends and means are dialectically interdependent and coherently connected with the material conditions of the society. There is no predetermined means, as argued by the Marxists, in attaining an end, as liberals identify it with some given morality. The difference between the Liberals and Marxists is that the former are concerned with individuals while the latter with group of individuals and the society as a whole taking into account its material conditions. Liberals concentrate on the moral means separated from the ends because morality is almost an end in itself but Marxists concentrate on the ends of society as a whole based on equality with the considerations of proper means for human emancipation from oppression or class domination. Liberals explicate the ideas of capitalists while the Marxists problematise equality among all the ingredients of a socialistic approach.

Liberals highlight the maxim that ‘end justifies the means’ and they argue that Marxists are identified with this maxim and accuse them of being Machiavellian. Almost all modern liberal philosophers condemn violence as means to an end and hold that end does not justify the means. The exception are the Utilitarians or Consequentialists, who differ by arguing that the maxim ‘end justifies the means’ cannot be rejected in general, since some of
the time end justifies the means, however, their approach remains and is identified as liberal for it is individual centered. On regeneration of the debate the controversy between the Liberals and Marxists is on one side identified with morality and on the other with the political.

The contemporary debate deals with the perspective on morality of ends and means of the pragmatist Liberal philosophers and Marxist thinkers. In late 1930’s John Dewey, the liberal and pragmatist philosopher and Leon Trotsky, the Marxists thinker extended the debate on ‘ends and means’. This thesis has confined itself to the debate between Dewey and Trotsky for the two epitomise their respective schools of thought. The morality of ‘ends and means’ has evolved in contemporary period as an issue on morality as well as in political theory and practice. The controversy on morality of ends and means, in contemporary perspective, deals with the issues on the agreements and differences on the traditional approach of the Liberals and the Marxists. Though Dewey and Trotsky agree on the maxim ‘end justifies the means’ and that both ends and means are interdependent, yet they persist on their classical difference of their respective emphasis on the individual and collectivity.

This thesis is an attempt to deal with the contemporary debate on morality of ‘ends and means’ in terms of the maxim
that the ‘end justifies the means’ and work out the sources of the difference. The thesis further explores the controversy of the relation of ends means being moral or political in nature, which leads to interrogate whether Liberal philosophers are using the debate as an instrument or tool to maintain and retain the existing power nexus of the society. The inter-dialectical relation, as maintained by the Marxists, and distinction of ‘ends-means’, as claimed by the Liberals, is analysed and the thesis considers the centering on the ideological twists of the promoters and advocators of the morality of ends and means.