CONCLUSION

The religio-philosophical doctrines of Dev Dharma and Buddhism have been compared with reference to the theory of soul, causation, epistemology, ontology and ethics. The comparative study of Buddhism and Dev Dharma reveals striking similarities in their respective analysis of the concept of 'soul', causation and certain epistemological issues. The core of their religions is ethical in nature. The comparative study has employed an analytical and critical approach in highlighting the parallels of thought exhibited in these religions and also reveals the common foundational structures behind philosophical issues in the comparative estimate.

The analysis of soul as depicted in these systems reveal the empirical content of their doctrines. These religions effect a direct break from tradition and are in accord in the rejection of mystical and supernatural beliefs. It is evident that there is a radical change from the traditional concept of religion involving the notion of Absolute Being as Creator and controller of man's destiny to the principle that elevates the position of man's autonomy so that he can fashion his destiny in accordance with causal laws. Buddhism and Dev Dharma
seek to break away from Idealistic/theories which refer to the linkage of the concept of eternal soul within the human personality complex. Substantival Being in the sense of an immutable Soul is denied by both thinkers and the individual is regarded as a psycho-physical being with functional dependence among the aggregates. Buddhism refers to the individual as anatta and the person is a composite of feelings, dispositions, subconscious predispositions and consciousness in a physical body. There is no reference to an eternal principle of Self. Dev Dharma allocates the 'soul' as being a 'life-force' having much in common with lower existences and aiding in body-building and sustaining activities. Since the life-force in the homo-sapien is evolved, although it shares the nutritive, motor and sensory functions of higher animals, it is not limited to them.

In Buddhism the psychic factors and psychology of soul are accounted for with reference to feelings, perception, dispositions and consciousness. In Dev Dharma, they can be likened to sensory feeling, perceptual activities, motivations largely derived from consciousness of 'ego' and the powers of the intellect. These thinkers contend that man can enlarge his perceptual
powers. These religions alike uphold the potency of actions and refer to the consequences of all good and evil deeds, and assert that the will is vested with the power to effect man's destiny. Dev Dharma is opposed to the principle of rebirth which occupies a prominent place in Buddhism. Both the thinkers are in accord with the fact that human desires are the root causes of activities and hence the cause of good and evil acts are immersed in the human personality in the form of disposition manifested through out-ward action. They alike deny any supernatural agency or retributing authority. Moral values are regarded as forming norms that operate like any other natural law evident in other spheres of Nature.

The theories of Dev Dharma and Buddhism exhibit positivistic trends and it is evident that they place reliance on experimental verification and rely on the results of empirical observations as tests of truth. The positivistic attitude is set out with reference to their adoption of experience as a method of truth discovery, their respective analysis of matter, basic principles underlying psychical phenomenon and in their rejection of speculative metaphysics. There is held to be no 'substance' independent of all attributes and
these attributes, qualities and phenomena are all held to be subject to the laws of change. In this context, the positivist stand can be shown to be similar to both thinkers. Though Buddhism and Dev Dharma exhibit the rudiments of a distinct positivist attitude, yet the concept of verification has been enlarged. Buddhism and Dev Dharma emphasise the enlargement of one's perceptual powers and in this sense tend to favour a Jamesian 'radical empiricism'. When any proposition concerning any philosophical concept is put forward by Buddhism or Dev Dharma, the discussion is at the factual and experiential level and the reference is not solely to meaning at the semantic level.

In Buddhism and Dev Dharma, causal efficacy forms the mainstay of the entire philosophical system. The doctrine of causation and its applicability can be observed in its operation in the physical, psychical and moral orders. They emphasise the inter-relatedness of all events and phenomena and set out the regularity, conditionality and uniformity of causal principles. Casual factors serve to explicate the consequences good and evil acts and delineate the path to achieve spiritual purity or ethical perfection.
Dev Dharma refers to emergent causation and sets out the fact that there is to be observed an uniqueness in certain features as a result of change in the form of evolution. Dev Dharma can be characterised as a form of naturalism or svabhāvavāda though it does not conform to traditional naturalism and does not assert that man is governed by his physical conditions and that the psychic counterpart has no efficacy. Evolution entails that new qualities with new causal properties and new laws of behaviour manifest themselves in the process of change.

The Buddhist account of causality exhibits some features of naturalism, yet differs from it in certain significant aspects. Buddhism does not adhere to a view of physical reductionism and sets out the causal order as it operates in the psychic, moral, social and ethical realms. While the naturalist believes that the principle of inherent nature is strictly determined, Buddhism on the other hand accepts the causal nexus among manifold phenomena as one of conditionality and not one of rigid determinism. The analysis of causation shows how the effect of one’s actions in any of the three modes, bodily, verbal or mental create accumulative effect and rebound on the
destiny of the individual.

The fundamental difference in this regard between Buddhism and Dev Dharma is the fact that unlike Dev Dharma, the Buddhist theory of causation entails the theory of rebirth. Devatma introduces the notion of prolongation of the life of a being in a 'subtle body' due to evolutionary trends. While Buddhism seeks a dissolution of the personality factors so that there is no more reconstitution of the psycho-physical aggregates, Dev Dharma upholds the persistence of existence due to the evolution of the life-force.

There are various methods of discovering truth and these include contemplation and revelation inclusive of mystical sources of knowledge. Justification of knowledge - claims is often set out on the grounds of authority, faith and pure reasoning. In contrast to these methods, the scientific revolution ushered in the dominance of experience, experimentation, observation and verification as the method of truth discovery. Dev Dharma which arose in latter half of the nineteenth century can be characterised as a naturalistic science-grounded religion. Dev Dharma adopted this method as a reliable method of truth discovery and also accepted the power and limitations of this method. One of the
drawbacks of such a doctrine is that any world view or philosophy derived from experience and supported by scientific evidences is liable to remain amenable to modification in the light of subsequent new facts which may either reinforce or call into question its knowledge-claims and the philosophical consequence which follows is that it cannot posit a fixed, permanent body of knowledge. Yet, Dev Dharma welcomes such flexibility in knowledge claims and admits that while the laws of Nature are to be discerned by this method, yet complete knowledge of Nature is not possible as it is an evolving system under the laws of perpetual change, giving rise to various new, emergent qualities. Hence the possibility of revisal in knowledge-claims is accepted.

The traditional view and common understanding of religion is such that it is largely linked to the belief in a transcendental supersensible reality and faith in a supersensible faculty for apprehending truth. Hence, traditional religion which refers to a supersensible reality is neither positivist, science-grounded nor naturalistic. Dev Dharma is oriented to a naturalistic framework and constitutes a new appraisal of religion which resembles a form of svabhāvavāda and is basically humanitarian in its outlook.
Buddhism, being a revolt against the traditional concept of religion shares many affinities with Dev Dharma. The mission of the Buddha was not to indulge in subtle, speculative, intellectual theorising on metaphysical issues, but had an eminently practical aim in view and the four noble truths and the ethical path is oriented to the goal in view. The Buddha places importance on the factors of \textit{silā} (right conduct), \textit{samādhi} (wisdom) and \textit{prajñā} (right concentration), as means to the goal. The Buddha sets out a religion based on experiential insight and does not entertain issues relating to the origin of the world, substantial being or any world view based on speculative metaphysics.

Buddhism and Dev Dharma exhibit the characteristics of process philosophy. In an Heraclitian vein, they assert continual and ceaseless change as an inescapable factors of all existence. They alike do not posit an eternal Being in the sense of a creator or an eternal Self. Buddhism and Dev Dharma recognise the reality of material objects without ever implying that there is any underlying substratum. They are against Materialist standpoint which upholds matter as the ultimate reality and ultimately reduces everything to such terms. They are also opposed to an Idealist standpoint as they emphasise that nothing
is immune to the laws of change. Hence their theories depict process ontology wherein the links or relations involved are of a dynamic nature and there is no underlying substratum either in matter of mind in the form of a 'substance', 'essence' or 'entity'. The major divergence is that Dev Dharma upholds persistence of being under suitable conditions while Buddhism seeks total dissolution and no further reconstitution of the skanda factors.

The doctrines of Buddhism and Dev Dharma can be characterised as empiricist doctrines and define the term 'empirical' in a radical sense as they include sensory and extrasensory perception as sources of knowledge. The differences between Dev Dharma and Buddhism is less fundamental on issues relating to basic epistemological issues. The affinities in thought highlighted in related chapters refer to the issues concerning the view of reality, knowledge, truth and falsehood, direct experience, sources of knowledge and the tests of truth as pointed out by these doctrines. Devātman and the Buddha alike seem to contend that all terms cannot be reduced to mere physicalist reductionism and neither do they uphold an Idealist standpoint which has its focus on Ultimate Being and Absolutistic conceptions.
Buddhism and Dev Dharma appear to uphold a type of correspondence theory of truth. Verification by experiential standards is the means to test the truth or falsehood of a belief. These doctrines are found to exhibit certain pragmatic associations and the analysis in this respect serves to clarify that they do not comply with the pragmatic theory or criterion of truth. The direct source of knowledge is experience and one is cautioned against subjective bias, prejudice, habitual tendencies etc., which may distort the truth of what is perceived. Any subjective attitude occasioned by the ego as the centre of observation leads to a false conception of reality. The sources of knowledge in Buddhism has been compared with the direct-knowledge-giving-consciousness as set out by Dev Dharma which has reference to the powers of perception, consciousness of ego, sensory feelings, consciousness of values, intellectual powers and higher psychic powers. Various similarities can be discerned in the comparison of the sources of knowledge. Besides the knowledge-giving-consciousness Dev Dharma refers to four kinds of emotional equipment. These refer to the necessity of sufficient love for the truth relating to the subject, the need for verification by experiment, observation and experience, logical
standards to test the validity of a proposition and the necessity for various kinds of light, that is, physical, mental, altruistic and highest psychic light. Additional criteria demanded by Dev Dharma which is considered to be essential for the demarcation of true from false beliefs refers to the conformity to what is revealed by the knowledge-affording-consciousness, conformity to the law of Nature, logical consistency and conformity to experimental methods of verification. In these aspects basic affinities between the two religions concerns the knowledge-affording sources as well as their insistence on correspondence to facts and experimental methods of verification. The logical base of Buddhism has some diversity from Dev Dharma, as it adopts the two further alternatives of 'both is and is not' and 'neither is nor is not' in its catuskoti system. The Buddha and Devatma insist on the development of intellectual, moral and psychic powers to enable one to realise the real nature of 'things as they are'. They contend that truth is verifiable by experiential standards.

The prominant feature of Dev Dharma is the importance given to the scientific attitude and the scientific form of enquiry in the determination of truth
He adheres to the theory of emergent evolution and asserts that man has evolved from the animal species. He thus refutes the theory of creation which claims that man has divine origin and also refutes the theory of self-existence of soul. He adopts such factual evidence as set out by the sciences fruitfully in setting out the theory of knowledge.

In the teachings of Buddhism and Dev Dharma, there is a similar attitude concerning the means employed towards the acquisition of knowledge. The truth about existence is to be known without bias and without conceptual precommitments of any kind.

The ethical framework as laid down in their respective doctrines emphasises the role of values, of good and evil, freedom, morality and so on as being experiential. In these (religions) there is no room for strict determinism, neither do they uphold the view that there is no relation of cause and effect, between an act and its retribution. They assert that the cause-effect relationship should not be considered as a one-to-one correspondence of act and fruit, but that the result is dependent on various circumstances. These thinkers alike seek a release from the bondage of low loves and low hates. The Buddha and Devātmā outline the prevalence
of evil.

Buddhism, unlike Dev Dharma analyses the concepts of good, evil, freedom, responsibility etc., in relation to the tenets of rebirth and points out that the karmic influence caused by acts is to be stilled. According to Dev Dharma, untruth, injustice and evil arise due to the slavery to low loves and low hates. Hence the 'good' according to his view relates to an ethical evolution and consequently strengthens the life-force while evil acts possess the power that leads to its utter destruction.

Despite differences with regard to the ultimate goal, Dev Dharma and Buddhism are akin in declaring evil to be real in the world. The conclusions reached on this issues by both thinkers show certain similarities in approach. These religions do not postulate Omnipotent God as a divine retributing authority. They eschew undue attachment to desires and clinging to various traditional beliefs as these factors tend to distort one's vision of the true nature of things 'as they are'. Intentions, motivations and dispositions behind acts are shown to have potent consequences.

They discount any view of anthropomorphism and any form of idealism. They do not entertain the notion of
an immortal soul substance. According to Dev Dharma, the life-force of man is held to be naturalistic in nature. In Buddhism one finds that certain questions relating to the nature of the soul, the world and the nature of the saint after death were left unpursued and termed the indeterminables, the pursuit of which leads to vexation and speculation and leads one away from the immediate goal of salvation. Apart from such considerations, the Buddha maintained silence on such issues. Of the nature of the arhat after death the Buddha states that the four alternatives whether he exists, does not exist, both does and does not exist, and neither exists nor does not exist do not fit the case and are inappropriate in such a context. The arhat who has attained nibbāṇa after death is like a flame of lamp being blown out due to the exhaustion of fuel and as karmic influences are exhausted, there are no more conditions for rebirth. Dev Dharma, on the other hand, claims that the life-force of the individual can under certain conditions at the death of the person, build a subtle body for itself and thus continue its existence. It has been critically observed that since Dev Dharma insists on scientific verification to test the truth of all beliefs, the 'subtle body' theory of persistence of existences goes beyond such data and still conclusive
proof is achieved, remains a mooted issue.

Neither thinker makes reference to an immortal principle of soul. An analysis of the ultimate end of life as depicted by these religions has been clearly delineated as the final aim of all ethical endeavours and such a study has served to mark the major divergence in this regard. Buddhism posits the goal of Nirvāṇa, the extinction of rebirth and suffering and Dev Dharma posits the goal of evolutionary perfectibilism leading to persistence of existence.

There are certain significant divergences between the doctrines of Dev Dharma and Buddhism. Dev Dharma does not posit any form of karmic impetus that leads to the birth of a being and contends that each life-force is an entirely new existent. He also rejects the theory of rebirth which however occupies a prominent place in Buddhism. Dev Dharma is oriented to a scientific outlook, and the results established by the sciences has had an influence on his philosophy and the theory of evolution has a central role in Dev Dharma. Dev Dharma accepts with the spirit of science that no belief is too sacred to be re-evaluated if new facts come to light that would warrant a change in its structure, whereas Buddhism claims what is set out in its
doctrine is infallible. Buddhism is a religion that is oriented to the major problem of suffering and its removal but Dev Dharma does not take this factor as being of primary importance. Buddhism posits the ultimate goal of Nirvāṇa involving the extinction of aggregates whereas Dev Dharma has the goal involving persistence of existence. In Buddhism the means to the goal are useful to reach the goal of Nirvāṇa and can then be discarded even though it does not cease to be true when it ceases to be useful. In Dev Dharma the ethical code forms part of the goal of evolutionary perfectibilism.

Despite differences, the Buddhist doctrine and Dev Dharma exhibit affinities in thought concerning the notion of soul, ontology, epistemological issues, ethical codes and altruistic ideas and these principles are highlighted in the above comparative study. The aspects of conformity between these religions is visible in the fact concerning the abandonment of metaphysical speculation about first cause or the Ultimate Being, the rejection of theistic hypothesis, in the emphasis on natural, causal explications. They admit rationalism in a qualified sense and empiricism in a radical sense. The emphasis is on direct and immediate experience.