Man as we know, is a social being who needs society and company of others to live a proper and meaningful life. This very aspect of human nature has made him to live in groups and has been responsible for the evolution of civilization. Civilization as we know needs certain essential moral values and a sense of spirituality for its survival. With the coming of industrial revolution; materialism, race for arms, soul-destroying frustration and bestial competition between man and man and nation and nation have become the marked feature of modern human civilization. Today’s civilization with its spiritual and moral void is in dire need for change lest the lust and love for power and wealth would ultimately lead to the destruction of man. The struggle for power and wealth has become the marked feature of modern civilization. The same lust for power and material possessions has resulted in innumerable wars and large-scale bloodshed.

History has proved it time and again that the result to resolve conflicts through violence has been the death of thousands leaving millions homeless and orphan. In recent times it has been proved to us by the use of atom bombs on Hiroshima and the Nagasaki, the use of coerosive methods to establish peace in Iraq, to curbing of terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir to mention a few.

There is no doubt that conflict is and will remain a part of human civilization owing to differences in faith, status and points of view but the need is to resolve these differences through non-violent methods if human
civilization needs to progress and prosper. The use of non-violent action not only puts an end to the endless cycle of violence and counter violence but also brings an end to an atmosphere of distrust and hatred. Suffering which forms a vital part of non-violent action not only curbs violence but also plays a pivotal role in transforming the opponent. Love and tolerance, the defining features of non-violence help to knit the entire humanity with the inviolable thread of love, building an atmosphere of trust, brotherhood and respect for life. In today’s world violence has become the norm causing the very degeneration and ripping apart of social fabric and security provided by society. Non-violence, as an effective alternative to resolve conflict has again surfaced as an indispensable need to meet out the challenges posed by modern civilization. It serves as an important invaluable weapon to meet tyranny, aggression, injustice and oppression. Thus, it will not be wrong to say that violence can be reduced if non-violence is given an important place in acute conflicts.

My research project is based on Six Chapters and a section of appended Bibliography. Chapter First, ‘General Introduction’ tries to argue that non-violence is a viable alternative to violence and to bring out this viewpoint the politics of non-violent action has been sketched out in this work. This project isolates for philosophical study the use of non-violent action to bring about social and political change. To achieve this very goal the politics of non-violent action, its basic features and elements have been discussed. Further, the political philosophy paradigms of liberty, democracy and sovereignty in terms of politics of non-violent action have been dealt upon. The paper accordingly consists of five chapters namely Non-violence, Democracy, Sovereignty and Gandhian Politics of Non-violent Action along with an initial Introduction and Concluding Remarks.
Working with this very aim the **Second Chapter** of this research paper deals with Non-violence where the superiority of non-violent action over violent action has been justified through a debate giving important rational considerations. It has been proved that human society needs non-violence and its important values in every sphere of life, especially in politics to survive and prosper. The idea of non-violent action has been explored giving an elaborate historical background comprising of the concept of non-violence in Indian Thought, In Islamic World, in Chinese Thought and finally in the West. This section shows that throughout history the emphasis on non-violence has been found in different scriptures, philosophies of different leaders and visionaries. All major religions believe in the sanctity of life and therefore, denounce violence. The Holy Scriptures are the veritable treasure houses to gain knowledge about non-violence wherein non-violence is advocated not only in action but also in thoughts and words.

The section dealing with the development of non-violence discusses the different Holy Scriptures; ideologies and principles of different rulers, philosophers and leaders where the doctrine of non-violence has been advocated. Non-violence finds an important place in the *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and *Bhagavad-Gita*. In *Ramayana* Rama is the personification of *Ahimsa*, and *Mahabharata* beautifully portrays to us that violence can never lead to good of anybody and where the victor and the vanquished equally suffer. The concept of *Anasakti* or selflessness in *Gita*, Jaina philosophy or *Artha Darshan*, Middle Path of Buddhism, Christ’s Sermon on the Mount and the Qur’anic values of tolerance and love, all advocate the inculcation of the value of non-violence and its use to resolve conflicts. Islam terms violence as something *haram*
and wherein killing somebody has been made synonymous with killing of
the entire mankind. Thus, though all religions vary in outer mode of
worship, all of them embody the same message of peace, love and
brotherhood. Asoka’s Dhamma, Akbar’s Din-e- Ilahi, Rumi’s Masnavis and
Sufi philosophy of the oneness of creation (since God the creator is one),
Tolstoy’s Christian Anarchism, Iqbal’s Naya Shivala are all but about the
very virtue of love, non-violence and its practical significance. Non-violence
finds a prominent place in the teachings of some of the great leaders and
philosophers like Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, M.N. Roy, Maulana Azad,
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Dara Shikoh, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Lao Tse,
Confuscius, Ruskin, and others. Their ideas of love, mutual respect and
understanding had its very significance in the past and will bear the same in
the future in a world facing terrorism and lack of spirituality.

Further the methods of non-violent action which includes protest and
persuasion, non-cooperation and civil disobedience have been discussed. All
these methods aim at bring positive change without causing the least harm to
the adversary. The idea of civil disobedience which was propounded by
Henry David Thoreau is based on the notion that there should be maximum
cooperation between people and institutions when it leads to good and non-
cooperation when it causes evil. This section further, elaborates upon the
methods of protest and persuasion which includes parades, public meetings,
open discussions etc. which aim at bringing about a positive transformation
and inducing in the oppressed masses the feeling to get justice for
themselves. Apart the methods of non-violent action, strategy is the next
object of prime importance in non-violence. Strategy plays a very pivotal
role for a non-violent action to be successful. For the real success of non-
violent action a proper strategy or planning needs to be worked out giving a
lot of care in choosing the issues, plans, time, and methods of action. The absence of this very strategy may result in a complete failure of non-violent action apart from inducing more suffering on the part of non-violent actionist.

The **Third Chapter** of the paper is devoted to analyze and understand the concept of democracy. The idea of non-violent action is closely bound up with the concept of democracy and sovereignty, which are also the two important concepts of political philosophy. Democracy and non-violence are indeed like the two sides of the same coin, which are inseparable and inseverable from one another. True democracy can be achieved only through the method of non-violent action. This is because a State whose means are tainted with violence can never remain democratic in nature. Both non-violence and democracy share the essential values of love, brotherhood, tolerance, forbearance, mutual understanding, respect, compassion, equality etc.

This chapter further tries to explore that man being born free and created equal by God should not be under control of laws that are not in accordance with his content, choice of freedom. This philosophy forms the basis of modern democracy. Democracy is further based on the notion that the State has a human origin and is created to serve for the betterment of human beings. kings and monarchs do not possess any divine rights and people’s consent is of vital importance in running a government. However, the will of the people in democracy should be the ‘General Will’ given by Rousseau, which represents the higher self of individual. Such a democracy based on General Will would work for public welfare and common good. Under democracy people follow laws which they themselves have made and this makes democracy very distinct from other forms of government. In this
chapter I have discussed different forms of government wherein it can be concluded that democracy is superior to other forms. Democracy is the one form of government which is free from the flaws of tyranny and exploitation which are the marked features of both monarchy and aristocracy.

To arrive at a proper concept of democracy, the rise and growth of this political concept in both the West and the East has been discussed. Its gradual development in the West from the time of Homer to the present concept of liberal democracy has been traced. In the West the concept of democracy was opposed in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The concept of mixed democracy that is a combination of aristocracy and democracy emerged with support of philosophers like Aristotle, Polybius and others. With the passage of time, Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke’s social contract theory emerged which advocated that the consent of the people was of paramount significance in any form of rule. This laid the foundation of modern democratic States. In the eighteenth century with American and French revolution democracy got a written form and by twentieth century the notion of democracy in West got fully evolved.

In the Eastern evolution of democracy its development in India and Islamic world, both have been traced out. Democracy and its compatibility with Islam has been a topic of debate for quite a long time. The Islamic philosophers have discussed upon the concept of democracy against the backdrop of Islamic laws. Some feel that the concept of Tawhid, the most important concept of Islam goes against majority rule while others consider that Tawhid needs a democratic system because all people are equal in front of God and democracy too supports this notion of equality. Thus, among
Islamic philosophers a wide range of opinions exists with some denouncing this Western notion while others advocating for its adaptation for progress in the Muslims nations. This difference in perspective among the Islamic scholars owes to the different conditions of their times, of the way they interpret Islam and understand its essence.

In India, the concept of democracy did exist in the remote past in the concept of sabha, samiti etc., though it was in a nascent state. With coming of different dynasties which were basically monarchial in this functioning, the notion of democracy got curbed. It once again gained grounds with the coming of East Indian Company in India in 1612. India now a colonized nation began to be influenced by Western philosophers and thinkers and finally with its independence India became a democratic nation. The Indian concept of democracy further consists of the discussions on the different dimensions of democracy given by various Indian scholars. This includes divine democracy of Bipin Chandra Pal, spiritual democracy of Gandhi, organized democracy of M.N. Roy and notions of democracy as held by Maulana Azad and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Further, in this chapter, democracy is dealt both as a form of government and a way of life. Democracy as a form of government includes the nature of franchise, the character of electoral system and the relation between government and the people existing in a nation. Democracy to be successful as a form of government needs a sense of public responsibility, education, a sound public opinion. Democracy in the words of Radha krishnan is not only a form of government but also a way of life. It is interpreted in terms of a kind of faith, on humanistic and philanthropic aspects. Owing to the differences in society due difference in points of view,
status and faith, democracy stresses upon the values of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding for survival human race and peaceful co-existence in society.

The concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity which are the intrinsic values of democratic faith have been discussed and its essential place has been highlighted. It has been shown that all the three need to be completely interweaved together for the establishment of true democracy. One thing that is worth noting is that though democracy has got fully evolved with time many nations in the world are still facing democratic crises. The reason that becomes obvious after an analysis of this concept is that democracy is still being treated as a mere political term. However, with passage of time, accelerating changes are being registered in our social and political institutions. The mindset of man is ever-changing. A revival of essential values of religion, the principles of morality and a firm faith in non-violence and its concomitant and cognate values seems to be the need of the hour.

The **Fourth Chapter** is based on Sovereignty, which is integrally bound up with the fundamental concepts of modern politics. The concept of sovereignty, especially popular sovereignty is closely related with the notion of democracy both being important concepts of political philosophy and both considering the will of the people to be very important. Sovereignty is an important aspect of the state which implies supreme power over its citizens. Sovereignty, being a concept of political philosophy, has been discussed in detail. The features, attributes and distinctions like *De jure* and *De facto* sovereignty have been taken up for analysis as well. Like other political terms, sovereignty has evolved with time since Aristotle, Romans, through Middle Ages to modern times. Before medieval times political
organization was more based on religious order but with the Peace of Westphalia the state got its legal authority. The concept of sovereignty as an unlimited, supreme and absolute power of the state spread from the West to the East through colonization. With American and French revolutions popular sovereignty emerged which is closely related to the notion of democracy.

In discussing the development of this political concept a careful examination of various theories of sovereignty needs attention. Under this section, the different theories of sovereignty which have been discussed include monistic theory, pluralistic theory, popular sovereignty, sovereignty of reason, theory of Auto-limitation and views of philosophers like Grotuis, Bentham and others have been discussed. This section of my discussion gives both the legal view of sovereignty as found in writings of Hobbes and Bentham and philosophical views as expressed by Rousseau and other thinkers.

As we analyzed this important political concept we came to an understanding that pure absolute sovereignty never existed in the past nor can have a place in the future. Any ruler, even a monarch has his power limited by divine laws, culture and popular will of the masses. He cannot out-rightly go against the will of the masses and customs of society lest his rule is Jeopardised. Among the various theories of sovereignty from Monistic, Pluralistic, Sovereignty of reason and the like, Sovereignty of the people or popular Sovereignty is the best suited to contemporary world and its need. This concept of popular Sovereignty gives ultimate authority to people and considers the rulers or representatives as the mere agents of people carrying out their assigned duties. It is a worth noting fact that
Sovereignty in its absolute form whether given to a monarch or people has very negative consequences and often ends up in tyranny either of an individual or of the majority. Therefore, a constant need of vigilance and check is of utmost importance.

After analyzing the development of Sovereignty in West, the concept has been traced out in Islamic world as well. Islam as a religion considers that God is the real sovereign whose authority is channalized through the agency of man. These representatives, who are bestowed with the right to carry on the authority, are bound up by a number of responsibilities and duties. The presence of morality in Islamic concept of Sovereignty is found lacking in its western notion and needs to be essentially inculcated so that the use of power may not curb others right or lead to their oppression.

This chapter concludes with an important discussion on ‘politics of Sovereignty’ where Sovereignty is viewed against the backdrop of globalization, humanitarian interventions etc. Sovereignty provides us with a stable society, one where we have a recognized source of power which can be held responsible for an action. The basic principles on which sovereignty is based aims at establishing peace and providing security to the people. Democracy as we know needs accountability and representation which is hampered by external intervention which curbs the external Sovereignty of a nation. So, for democracy to prevail some basic attributes of Sovereignty such as internal and external sovereignty need to be firmly established.

The Fifth Chapter, ‘Gandhian Politics of Non-Violent Action’ discusses the contributions of Gandhi in making non-violence a social and political technique. It clarifies the concept of Satyagraha, given by Gandhi in detail. All that Gandhi achieved was through the politics of non-violent action which continues to inspire our admiration till date.
Gandhi was the first to use non-violence as a political weapon. Among his various contributions as a philosopher and leader in Indian struggle for freedom, *Satyagraha* is the greatest gift to humankind. He used the technique for the first time to resist the racial discrimination in South Africa and later on at various important occasions throughout Indian struggle for freedom. Truth, non-violence and self-suffering are the important aspects of Gandhian *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* for Gandhi meant adherence to Truth and Truth to him signified God. He was opposed to use of violence in any situation and self-suffering was the means to convert the opponent by arousing in him a sense of justice. It further entails the values of openness since non-violence itself being based on truth there is no place for deception or conspiracy. Gandhian non-violence actionists not only deny to hate but go a step ahead and even love their adversaries. Every action is carried out with the least sense of malice which helps to create a positive environment.

*Satyagraha* as a weapon is aimed at fighting injustice in the society through non-violent means. It not only resolves the conflict to its’ very root but also acts as a means to achieve greater insight into truth. Gandhi used it to fight for the rights of untouchables in 1924. This *Satyagraha* was based on the truth that every human being has equal right be he from the lower strata of society or higher. The other notable examples are salt *Satyagraha*, Bardoli *Satyagraha*, *Satyagraha* against Rowlatt Bills to mention a few.

*Satyagraha* being essentially non-violent in nature has enormous power. It finds its justification not only in morals but also has an important place in Holy Scriptures. In this contemporary world with its advancement in science and technology, where use of modern weapons can destroy the entire humanity, in few minutes non-violence and its values of tolerance and
understanding is indispensable for survival. Gandhi has rightly exclaimed that the concept of an eye for an eye would end up making the whole world blind. Today’s world with its innumerable problems non-violent action serves to be a boon, one that stands out as an effective and promising weapon to fight evil and injustice and to establish an atmosphere of love and brotherhood.

In **Chapter Six**, ‘Concluding Remarks’, an attempt has been made to present a very brief survey of the research project undertaken. The project, in fact, an honest effort based on Indian, Western and Islamic world-view and value systems applicable more especially with contemporary twenty first century global socio-political order.

Thus, the undertaken piece of research work aims to pave the way for new political order and hopes that the values of non-violence will be given their due reverence and place so that a society based on love and harmony can be established. At last, with the concluding remarks, a bibliographical data has been appended.

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