INTRODUCTION
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The shocking event of terrorist attack on the World Trade Center of New York on 11th September 2001 has drastically changed the way we looked at the world. Today, even five years after the tragic event, the world is still groping for answers and craving for solutions. The last few years have seen rapid changes in the world. Terrorism, ‘War on Terror’, ethnic conflicts, religious and communal/violence have increasingly characterized the present day world order. The world on one hand has come to realize the great danger of terrorism in the future and has therefore joined hands with the U.S.A. to fight this menace unitedly. But on the other hand, the existing premier world institution, the United Nations and its most vital organ Security Council, has been floundering in its response, causing the U.S.A. to take unilateral action. The United States, in its fight to make the world terror-free, has initiated action, both diplomatic and military, to crush the bastions of terrorism. Consequently, we have seen two major US led military campaigns during the last five years. The US clearly states that its actions, with or without concurrence of the UN or the Security Council, are meant to make the world a safer place to live, by pre-empting the terrorists and by denying the terrorists their havens and their weapons of terror. The main concern seems to be to prevent conflict or violence in the world, but the same is sought to be achieved through inflicting violent force. Many do not agree with the US methods and this has caused a rift in the present world order.

Two things stand out clearly in the context of the present world rift — opposition of the US (and majority of the world countries) to the so called “Islamic Terrorism” as well as willingness to combat it and opposition of the Islamic countries (and majority of the world countries) to US methodology to combat terrorism and similar other conflicting situations. This rift has been too
simplistically reduced to either 'US sponsored globalisation versus Third World resistance', or 'Hegemony of the sole Super Power', or 'Western versus Muslim countries'. The answer to the present situation is not so simple and hence presently many tools, methods, approaches and theories are used to analyse and understand the latest occurrences, events and developments, be it the rise of the so-called "Islamic Terrorism" or ascendency of sole Super Power or spread of globalisation or the enunciation of various new doctrines by US (such as Rogue States, Pre-emption, Regime Change, Axis of Evil, War on Terror) or resistance by certain countries to US.

However, many of the existing approaches have been found wanting in giving a more comprehensive and widely acceptable explanation to the present international order and conflict in it. A tool or an approach or a theory to better understand the present and evolving world scenario particularly in the post Cold War era was strongly felt right from the end of Cold War and many scholars tried to explain the presently emerging world order. Samuel Huntington, through his theory of clash of civilizations, has been one such scholar who has tried to fulfil this need to understand the complex phenomena, especially of conflict, occurring in the post Cold War world.

1.2 Importance of the study

Given the ambiguity of the international situation since the end of the Cold War and compounded further by new forms of warfare and conflicts in various parts of the world, it has become imperative for scholars and nations alike to know how best this new emerging world order could be explained. Many scholars all over the world have made attempts to explain the presently emerging world order using various theories. One of the most well known attempts at explaining the emerging world order, as already stated, has been made by Samuel Huntington, through his theory of 'clash of civilizations', first published in 1993.
Many other contending theories have also made their appearance during the same period but Huntington’s thesis, that the present and the future world order will be characterised by civilisation conflicts, attracted the most attention and his “clash of civilisations” thesis has become a focus of much discussion, debate and controversy, and continues to be so even now. Most of the opinions on Huntington’s thesis have seen either outright acceptance or outright rejection. While some laudable criticisms have been made by some scholars, very few attempts have been made to subject Huntington’s thesis to an in-depth analysis especially from a truly political point of view and it was under this background that this present study was undertaken and completed.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The present study has been an attempt to analyse and understand Samuel Huntington’s theory of ‘clash of civilizations’ so as to judge its efficacy in explaining the post Cold War conflicts in the world. The fundamental question taken up in this study was whether Samuel Huntington’s theory of clash of civilizations is an appropriate explanation for the post Cold War world events and occurrences, especially those pertaining to international conflicts.

His contention is that the present world is divided on civilisational lines, and not on ideological or economic, and that the differences among the civilizations are fundamental and are the main cause for conflict in the present world. Huntington identifies eight civilizations and argues that the differences between peoples of different civilizations are so great that they cannot be eliminated either by liberal idealism or conservative economics. He opines that the civilizations of the world are on a collision course and that the future wars and conflicts will be essentially conflicts or wars between civilizations.

The above position of Huntington merited a thorough investigation primarily because it posed serious implications to the world we live in. The important question (problem) was whether human actions, major global events,
political happenings, regional conflicts, terror strikes and other important international occurrences since the end of the Cold War could be appropriately understood and explained using Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations as a reliable approach or a tool for analysis or to see whether there are other alternative explanations to understand the current happenings in the world.

No doubt the world is at present witnessing competition, clashes and conflicts at different levels, leading to many fall-outs, but whether all this is on account of competing or clashing civilizations, as proposed by Samuel Huntington, or due to some other reasons, needed to be ascertained. Also, whether the various conflicts presently witnessed in the world such as terrorism by Islamic groups and 'War on Terror' by America is a consequence of the clash between the contending world civilizations or due to some other reasons was also needed to be probed.

The main concern of this study was to see if Huntington's contentions could be confirmed through research, (and in case of confirmation of his thesis what likely forms it would take and with what consequences to the world order) or if it could be refuted through research (which would make it imperative to find out what other alternative explanations or theories could be formulated to provide a better understanding and explanation for the current phenomena, especially of conflict in the world). The study had therefore, focused on the context and motive, if any, behind the clash of civilization thesis by Huntington.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To study the main foundations of Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations

2. To study the impact of Huntington's theory of clash of civilisation.
3. To see whether Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations can be used to analyze and understand happenings or conflicts within the Asian context.

4. To consider Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations and its validity in view of various tests conducted by scholars.

5. To ascertain whether Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations is an appropriate tool to explain the present world order and conflict within it, especially the prolonged conflicts of last half century.

6. To critically examine Huntington's thesis from scholarly and political perspectives.

7. To study the alternatives to Huntington's thesis

8. To study the impact, trends and consequences, if any, in the context of clash of civilization thesis.

1.5 Hypotheses of the study

The main hypotheses of this study were

1. Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations is not sufficient to explain the present international situation and some of the recent major world events. The conflicts being witnessed in the world at present and in the recent past cannot be appropriately explained using Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations.

2. Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations is a very simplistic theory trying to explain complex and subtle world phenomena. Samuel Huntington's theory is fundamentally flawed in its basic premise, the categorization of civilisations and civilisational differences as cause of conflicts.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the study

The present study was confined to studying and analysing Samuel Huntington's theory from various perspectives. To achieve this end, first, a thorough study of related works of Huntington was undertaken. The study then
focussed on the major writings by other scholars about Huntington’s thesis. The study was therefore largely limited to scholarly appraisals and criticisms of Huntington’s position. On account of time constraint and to avoid too much complexity, the study was primarily limited to a political critique of Huntington’s thesis and searching for other better alternatives to explain the problem of conflict in the world. In the process, a new thesis has been proposed to explain existence of conflict in the world.

1.7 Methodology

The present study being a theoretical study, primarily adopted the library method. A thorough study of the major works (articles and books) related to the topic under study was undertaken. Important and related works were read and reviewed. The study also relied on the data available on the Internet on the subject. A critical analysis of all related data and literature available with respect to the emerging new world order as well as conflict in the world and theories trying to explain the same, was done. The various reports and current events having some implications to the topic under study were also considered during the course of the study.

The study also involved testing the appropriateness of Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilisation from three perspectives about conflict, namely the intra-religious perspective, the inter-religious perspective and the ideological perspective. For testing each of these perspectives, one case study of conflict in each perspective was taken up - Iran-Iraq war for intra-religious perspective, Israeli-Palestinian conflict for inter-religious perspective and North Korea-South Korea conflict for ideological perspective.

The analysis of all the data has been done using content analysis and comparative analysis. Realist, Evolutionary, Constructionist and Knowledge/Gnosic perspectives have been used as tools to analyse and draw out conclusions of this theoretical study.
1.8 Literature Review

The study has involved extensive review of literature on 'emerging world order' and 'conflict' in the immediate aftermath of the end of Cold War. While this study has primarily focused on main works of Huntington directly linked to his thesis of clash of civilisations, many other relevant and related works by various other scholars have also been analysed to assess the validity of Huntington's thesis. Some of the important literature reviewed is as under.

In 1993, Samuel Huntington published his controversial article 'The Clash of Civilisations?' in the influential journal Foreign Affairs, which was subsequently published as a book "The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order" in 1996. Samuel Huntington has put forward the thesis that the world would be divided between various contending civilizations and future conflicts will be result out of civilisational differences. This thesis of Huntington has been examined thoroughly in this study and forms the basis for Chapters II and III. Apart from Huntington's original article “Clash of Civilisations?”(1993), and the book “The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order” (1996) some other works, particularly, Huntington's latest work Who Are We, have also been briefly examined in relation to his thesis.

Because the context for the thesis happens to be the world order and conflict in the post Cold War era, works and theories of several important scholars have been examined so as to shed light on the concerns and debates that have surfaced and raged in this period. Among those considered include Francis Fukuyama (The End of History and the Last Man), John Lewis Gaddis, Joseph S: Nye,Jr.(Changing Nature of World Power ), Stuart J. Kaufman (Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic war), Kishore Mahbubani (The West and the Rest and The Dangers of Decadence – what the rest can teach the west), Noam Chomsky (World Orders, Old and New), R.S. Yadav(International Peace and Gandhian World Order), Fouad Ajami (The Summoning), Robert Kagan (America's Crisis of Legitimacy), Liu Binyan (Civilization Grafting – No Culture
is an Island), Robert Cooper (The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century), and several others. The views and conclusions of several scholars writing about the clash of civilisations thesis have been taken up in various relevant sections of this study.