The area of research project contained in the present dissertation is by no means an untrodden field of investigations particularly to those who are familiar with the philosophical and religious tradition of India. Hence, I had to proceed cautiously to touch upon the subject which has been touched by many scholars of India. Yet I must admit that I had some weakness and fascination for the subject and consequently stick to it knowing fully well the intricacy of the subject which involves risk and responsibility. As a student of Philosophy I prepared a scheme of work which would entail the philosophical and religious approach to understand the idea of religions tolerance of two great souls of India - Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi keeping in view the necessity for it under present day context.

The main emphasis on this thesis on their religious tolerance requires further interpretation and assessment. They interpreted their ideals in terms of spiritualism. They interpreted history in terms of spiritualism. Their ideal of quality stands for gradual growth and wellbeing of the individual. Their philosophical and religious views on politics, economics, culture etc. are all based on spiritualism. This is
because of the fact that both Vivekananda and Gandhi were the ardent devotees of tradition of the spirit of tolerance which is inherent in the religico-philosophical tradition of India. Being imbued with this tradition they appealed to the people of the world and particularly India to realise the true spirit of religion to rise above all kinds of religious dogmas which disturb the communal harmony. They realised well that to ensure peaceful co-existence of all living beings on earth it is necessary to cultivate the spirit of religious tolerance. They wanted to remind the people of the world that religion must be the guiding principles of lives. They believed religion is the foundation of human life and principle of growth and well-being. So the people of the world should insist on following the track of religion. Having been influenced by the Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Vedanta together with the other philosophical and religious systems of all over the world tried to realise the dream of human race - harmony of nations and ideal world. They emphasised on the point that only by establishing a spiritual bond we can dream of an ideal world where human aspirations get all round fulfilment. Referring to India they appealed to the Indian people that India being a land of religion so it is the task of Indian civilisation to overflow and flood the world with
spirituality to bring in a new life to the world with this and in view both Vivekananda and Gandhi advised the Indian people to shed fear, destroy castism and raise the down trodden so that Indian people can become the torch bearer. Hence, they delivered the message of unity and equality and spoke of dignity and supremacy of human spirit which were not confined to time and place.

Both Vivekananda and Gandhi were religious by nature and they proved this by virtue of their messages and activities. They were activists and as a result they succeeded in turning the eyes of the whole world towards the land of India for spiritual food. Among the characteristics of the Indian religio-philosophical tradition the tradition tolerance and spirit of acceptance appealed most to both of them. So according to them if religion is a binding force among mankind, each and everyone irrespective of any caste, creed or religion should pay equal respect for all other religions and should be tolerant to each other. It is religion alone which can bind together the hearts of all people and thereby prepare the ground for universal love and brotherhood.

The present day world is passing through a difficult situation arising out of materialistic civilisation leaving little scope for spirituality. The world has been leading to
soul-less society threatening the existence of human races. The ugly heads of begotism, fanaticism, racialism, provincialism, cessationism etc. are raising up their ugly heads in order to serve vested political interest and hence, tending towards the destruction of human civilisation. And hence, if human race decides itself to go on living peacefully the people of the world must have to change its way of living, thinking, feeling and behaving. And this will be possible only when mankind will learn to submit itself to the spirit and practises the true spirit of religion. People must realise the 'oneness' of humanity as Vivekananda and Gandhi realised. They must learn to respect man recognising the divinity in man.

Vivekananda and Gandhi realised that intolerance is the root of all social and political discontents. And a day is not far when the entire human race will have to face dangerous catastrophe provided their minds and hearts are not replenshed with the spirit of tolerance. And here comes the relevance of the teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi to save the present day world from all kinds of social and political discontents. Hence, the very aim of this work is to instill that spirit of tolerance cherished by Vivekananda and Gandhi in the minds of the people so that they may be able to cultivate that spirit
of tolerance for promoting better understanding and mutual respect for one another belonging to various religious faiths existing in the world. The teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi is all the more important for India which is a world in monastic inhabited by various religious groups for peaceful co-existence which I deem to be the crying need of the day to come.

The chapter scheme of the study may now be indicated.

In introductory Chapter I describes the overall situation prevailing in India as well as the world at the time of Vivekananda and Gandhi to show how they tried to solve the crisis following the ideal of tolerance inconsistency with the religio-philosophical tradition of tolerance and succeeded in their attempt.

Chapter II provides with the definition of religion in general and Hinduism in partials with it's various doctrines, the meaning of the word tolerance in Eastern and Western sense together with the role of the study of comparative religion in promoting the spirit of religious tolerance all over the world, over and above all these, the philosophical and religious background of Vivekananda and Gandhi that made them religious tolerant has been inserted.
Chapter III provides the discussion on the reformative practical and dynamic interpretation of Vivekananda's ideas of religion together with the Vedantic ideas of Brahman, Isvara, Maya, Man, universe and Moksa etc. that turned him religiously tolerant. His idea of Humanism is also touched upon for his religion was man-making religion in relation to society.

Chapter IV describes the Gandhi's idea of religion, his concept of God, world, Man, Moksa, Humanism etc. to show his creative genius for reinterpretation of certain ideas religious ideas that turned him into a practical idealist to practise religion for the wellbeing of humanity cultivating the spirit of tolerance.

Chapter V provides the topics that deal with the relation between religion and self realisation for the goal of all religions is self realisation together with the four paths recognised by Vivekananda like Jnana, Kama, Bhakti, Japa to self realisation and the interrelation of these paths and Gandhi's concept of truthfulness, Satyagraha and non-violence as the mean for self realisation and their social significance.

Chapter VI describes a brief account of the origin and development of diversity of religions for the question of religious tolerance comes owing to the existence of the diversity
of religions. Over and above this it also provides the attitude of Vivekananda and Gandhi towards other religions. The essential unity of all religions has also been dealt with in order to show that the fundamental teachings of all religions are the same though they differ in regard to certain superficial elements owing to the variation of geographical, cultural and linguistic aspects. Hence, the need for religious tolerance, for which Vivekananda and Gandhi stressed and became religious tolerant. And the importance of spirit of tolerance is all the more for the present as the world is passing under the crisis of civilisation. Therefore, a brief discussion on the need for religious tolerance has been made in order to show its practical necessity.

In Chapter VII a comparative study of both Vivekananda and Gandhi has been made in relation to their ideas of religious tolerance and its implication on social and political problems.

In concluding Chapter the various ideas of the thesis has been placed together and presented in a brief form. And the relevance of the teachings of Vivekananda and Gandhi have also been emphasised which I deem to be very important under present day world context.
In the pursuit of the present study no particular model has been adhered to. Materials have been collected mainly from the books and periodicals, newspapers etc. The approach to the study is philosophical, religious, analytical and critical in relation to man and society.

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Dates 29.3.96.

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