PREFACE

In its essential core, human life is nothing but a search for Truth and the ideal of swaraj. I have tried to explore the meaning of swaraj and sought to see how one of the most representative philosophers of Indian tradition namely Mahatma Gandhi, has conceived and analysed this concept.

Human beings, by their very nature seek freedom. Freedom is, in fact, the substantive characteristic of human nature. If man is given everything on this earth except freedom, we cannot expect him to be a happy man. Indian philosophy considers man to be a spark of the absolute. The theory of Purushartha considers 'Moksha' to be the highest goal of man's life. Moksha is the realization of absolute freedom. It means freedom, not from the external world only but freedom from the bondage of flesh also. Therefore, it is essential for a student of philosophy to enquire into the meaning of true freedom, i.e., swaraj or self rule. Mahatma Gandhi lived his life as a search for freedom, moksha or swaraj. Although much has been written on Gandhi in recent times and so much literature has appeared on his ideas and ideals, yet much more remains uncovered because of the increasing relevance and significance of his philosophy in the modern times.
During the course of my study, I was fascinated by Gandhi's deep understanding and practice of Indian tradition. He has lived Indian tradition and brought it out of the scriptures and Vedas and put it before the world as a solution to the 21st century's problems of exploitation of man, nature, environment, terrorism, globalization, consumerism and materialism. According to him, the solution lies in the practice of Vedic values in individual life as well as the social or state life. This is possible with the practice of nonviolence only.

The Vedic truth lies in the oneness of man and nature. It means all men are one and they have to learn to love each other at all levels. His is a spiritualistic philosophy of life. Its social implications are love, nonviolence, non-possession, human service and renunciation. It aims at a social order free from social evils of untouchability or social discriminations of any type, poverty, communalism, unemployment, etc.

Gandhian philosophy has given a paradigm and it is for the man to choose whether he wants a life of peace and progress towards the real ideal of human endeavour, i.e., moksha or he has to end his life at the level of senses and alienation. Man can find peace by following the Gandhian paradigm, as the principles on which his thought stands, are the perennial Indian values. He maintains that the individual can
liberate oneself and attain swaraj by the practice of the values of Truth, nonviolence, nonpossession, nonstealing and brahmcharya.

The social order based on the Indian values is the ideal solution to the problems of modern life. So the Gandhian thought is all the more indispensable today, when the world is moving towards self destruction Gandhian thought is an antidote to the present day world problems.

This work is proposed to give an analysis of the concept of sovereignty of the self, i.e. swaraj, in a holistic way. Gandhi argues how the swaraj of the individual helps in liberating the society. Individual and society are not separate from one another. They are interconnected. Gandhi makes a distinction between the inner swaraj and outer swaraj. For the purpose of analysis of Gandhi’s view of Swaraj, some related concepts like truth, nonviolence, satyagraha, Focussing on Gandhi’s views on the relationship between ends and means have also been taken up for consideration. I hope that the analysis of the Gadhian concept of swaraj and other related concepts in the context of value structures conceived from the stand point of universal and humanistic ideals will be of some help in pursuing Gandhian Ideals in our social and political life.