CHAPTER I

Introduction

Introduction

Political philosophy is the reflection our collective life, our political institutions and our pattern of family life. It is the study of the issues such as liberty, justice, property, rights, law and the enforcement of a legal code by authority: what they are, why (or even if) they are needed and also what makes a Government, legitimate, what rights and freedom should be protected and in what form it should take and why, what the law is and what are the duties of the citizens that owe to a legitimate Government. Political philosophers always interested to establish the basic principles such as justifying and revealing particular form of the state and try to establish that the individuals have certain inalienable rights or guide us how the society’s material resources should be shared among its members. Political philosophy usually deals with analyzing and interpreting ideas like freedom, justice, authority and democracy. It tries to apply them in a critical way to the contemporary social and political institutions.

The topic selection of the research is not simply rests on the fact that the researcher should be acquainted with the thinker or the subject based matter on which he is going to work. I perceive it as far more than that. One has to be academically and personally oriented to do research on a particular topic. I have selected the topic by considering both these factors. On academic grounds there are two ways for topic selection: first one is thinker based, the second is concept based. I am more interested in thinker-based topics. In fact one can do justice to a
thinker-based topic by dealing with the perspective of the thinker. That’s why I have selected thinker-based topic for my research. By choosing this topic, I strive to enlighten Gandhiji as the political philosopher, various issues involved in politics and try to establish that Political decentralization is the only alternative to the contemporary political problems of the world.

To understand the philosophy of Gandhi, it is necessary to understand the conditions of the country that are prevailed during that period and also the background of the family in which he has born. Gandhi was the Indian political and spiritual leader called mahatma (The Great Soul). In his time India was ruled by the British government as one of the colonies. The Indians were suffering from the British coercion power and exploited by that government. When Gandhi returned from South Africa to India, the people were struggling for the freedom. Thereafter he involved in India’s struggle for independence from British through the campaign based on non-violence and civil disobedience. His doctrine of non-violent action left profound influence on Martin Luther King, the leader of civil rights movement in the United States of America and Nelson Mandela, the most prominent figure of the black opposition to apartheid in South Africa. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Poorbandar, Kathiawal, on the western coast of India. For several generations, the Gandhi's had been Prime Ministers in several Kathiawal States. Karamchand Gandhi, his father was the chief minister of Porbandar and also a member of the Rajasthanik Court. Putlibai, Gandhi's mother was a deeply religious Hindu. When Gandhi was sixteen, his father died - four years later he lost his mother. Gandhiji used to say that, the outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. Gandhi was married at the age of thirteen, which was not an unusual custom. His bride, Kasturba, also was thirteen. She was the only daughter of rich merchants. She influenced Gandhi’s thought, speech and actions. Gandhi went to London to study law in 1888. There he began to experiment with
diet and other things that are continued throughout his lifetime. Then he returned India and practiced as a barrister in Bombay. After sometime, Gandhi had moved to South Africa in 1893. There he became a tenacious political activist and got recognition by the Indian settlers. Gandhi courageously opposed the Transvaal government's inequitable legislation against Indian settlers. Gandhi remained in South Africa for twenty years and developed a system of non-violent disobedience. For his services during the Boer War (1899-1902) Gandhi was awarded the War Medal. Gandhi returned permanently to India in 1914 and he became a highly influential figure in the National Congress and also he transformed it into an instrument of change. To secure Swaraj (independence) from British he lunched the policy of non-violence and non-co-operation. This process made Gandhi a guru like figure. He adapted the resistance methods of strikes, refusal to pay taxes, abandonment of western dress and refusal to respect colonial law. Gandhi himself too adopted a simple and ascetic way of life, dressing in a loincloth of hand-woven and sandals. He was imprisoned several times and went on hunger strikes to focus attention on his cause. When communal riots started on India's northwest frontier in 1924, Gandhi undertook a twenty one-day purificatory fast. In an another occasion he had walked some 200 miles on foot to collect salt illegally, the Viceroy started to relieve the punitive salt taxes and the government monopoly.

His ideological foundation was derived from the liberal-humanist values that he had engaged in England, exemplified in the works of Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson. Gandhi's political thoughts stems from different traditions of both Eastern and Western ideologies. Though he had inherited many traditions, he did not agree with anyone of them. He had picked up many traditional concepts from his immediate predecessors as well as from ancient texts. Gandhi never claimed to be an original thinker. But when we look into his sayings, we can find a
common conceptual framework like a philosopher. "Gandhi accepted idealism and hence he
believed in the supremacy of ethical absolutism and the sociology of Sarvodaya (the good of
all)."¹ Gandhian ideal society is described in frankly in anarchist terms: political power means
capacity to regulate national life through the national representatives. If national life becomes so
perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of
enlightened anarchy. Moreover, when we find his theoretical formulations and practical pursuits
they are identical, there is every reason to accept him as a philosopher in the Indian sense. Unlike
other philosophers and political scientists of both the East and the West, he emerged not only as
the man of destiny of the nation but also as the man of the millennium. Many political thinkers
said that, Gandhi was combination of a spiritualist and a politician of the maximum competence.
He combined the aspects of the Philosopher and politician within himself. Netaji Subhas
Chandra Bose, a great admirer and critic of Gandhi once said that Gandhiji was playing the roles
of a supreme leader of the Indian National Liberation Movement as well as the world teacher. In
a tone of criticism he further said, often his later role is the role of a world teacher, became so
prominent that he had to compromise with his other role. Somebody may or may not agree with
Netaji Bose but it appears that in the context of national liberation movement it is proved. When
we took into the in depth study of Gandhi's teachings and his Philosophy, we can realize that
there is no dichotomy in Gandhi's insight. That is to say, for Gandhi politics is the best
instrument to strengthen the mankind in social, economic, moral and spiritual fields. Gandhi
himself has admitted this with his South African friend, that his bent of mind was religious and
not political. Romain Rolland in his biography of Gandhi written in 1924 and remarked that if
Tilak would not have died Gandhi might have chosen a religious life rather than a political. To

Gandhi politics was his religion. He opposed politicizing the religion instead. He spiritualizes it. He was essentially a worldly man and never sought his own salvation secluded from the world. For him politics encircled like the coil of a snake. After that there is no respite for him. He could have avoided politics, if food and work are provided to the hungry unemployed people of India. He consciously felt that it is not possible to eradicate socio-economic exploitation and political suppression without involving in politics. Because it leads to moral degradation of the people.

**Indian Political Tradition**

The Indian tradition of political thoughts began with the Vedas and Upanishads. The historical development of political ideas found that the concept of Swaraj, self-government, constantly inspired the people. From the Vedas and Upanishads and also through the writings of Thiruvalluvar (the Tamil saint and poet), Jnaneshwara and Shivaji, the political ideas of Tilak, Aurobindo and Gandhi, Swaraj has been continuously discussed. Indian political thought cannot be isolated from Hindu philosophy. Gandhi said that “I claim that human mind or human society is not divided into watertight compartments called social, political, and religious. All act and react upon one another.”

2. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.03.1922, p.131.

The Hindu political system is the oldest among the world. It is contained in the Rig-Veda and continued in other vedic Samhitas and also in the Brahamanas. They deal with the basic principles of the origin of social order and the position of the ruler in relation to the ruled. Subsequently, a number of works on law called Dharmashastras or treatises on Dharma of Manu appeared on the scene. They not only analyze every detail of the conduct of administration and Government but also discussed about the functioning of the household.
In early stages, there are many visionaries like the cosmic visionary of Manu, the heroic visionaries of Valmiki and Vyasa, the moral visionary of Sukra and Brihaspati, the Sramanic visionary of Buddha and Mahavira and the Imperial visionary of Barni and Fazal etc. The ancient Indian states practiced seven constituents as “(1)Svamin (King), (2)amatyas (ministers), (3) janapada or rastra (territory and the people), (4) durgas (forts) or pura (nagara or capital city), (5) kosha (treasury), (6) danda or bala (army), mitra (allies).” These seven were called as saptanga Rajya in ancient time. They conceived state as an organic unity like the human body. These seven parts of the state has been considered equally important and complementary to each other.

It is a fact that, the co-ordination and integration of these constituent parts of the state is a necessary factor to the existence, growth and proper functioning of the state.

According to Manu, politics is integral to the society. It is a basic factor without which the society cannot function. The basic governing principle dharma, strives for the welfare of others. He talked about the four types of structural arrangements of the state. They are:

(1) Organization of the state- suggested the ascending cycles of village, districts and province.

(2) Taxation- it would help to development of the national wealth.

(3) Wages- it was fixed on the basis of earners merits.

(4) Public opinion- this was the assembly of the learned as well as the officers of the state.

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This was one kind of arrangement to decide the issue on the basis of dharma. Another important thing in Manu’s political thoughts is the decentralization and welfare activity. “The village and district authorities have been given sufficient autonomy to control their affairs as it is supposed that the king shall not interfere in their affairs until he discovers that they are unable to solve their problems at their own level.”^4 The state is described as “a good kingdom is that in which many saintly people live, there is no disease, fruits and vegetables are grown in plenty, people are polite and fearless and there are good crops and easy commerce.”^5 Kautilya, was the first one who makes Political Economy as an independent discipline. He wrote Arthasastra and emphasized the need for a strong political centre in India. He preached the necessity of order of the society and state he opposed against anarchy because, he thought that the society can never be peace for without a strong state. According to him, the king must ensure the four caste people and four orders of life. The king required to construct dams, rivers, roads and maintains forests. Kautilya divided the ministers according to their qualities. “The king must appoint amatyas after taking into consideration their knowledge, wisdom, courage, virtues and vices, etc.”^6 The Territory (janapada) is another important thing in ancient political thought and it has been called as rajyabhumi or rastra. This includes the rural areas as well as the territory of a state having both cities and villages. In the Buddhist text’s janapadah appeared as inhabitants of the territory. Somadeva was a jain saint and also the most important political thinker during the beginning of the middle ages in India. He said that, the science of politics deals with the protection of the good and control of the wicked. To him the state should be the welfare state. The rulers are more akin to the constitutional monarch than to a typical despot and the king must have a council of ministers to advise to the king.

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^5 ibid. p. 35
The Indian political tradition has been continued by Raja Rammohan Ray (1772-1833), Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Sri Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950), M.N. Roy (1886-1954), Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) and Jaya Prakash Narayan (1902-1979) etc. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the father of constitutional agitation in India and was the first campaigner of social reconstruction. He protested against the female depression by male in Hindu society. He was one of the earliest exponents of freedom of the press and also the pioneer of religious reform. He introduced western education in modern India, “Rammohan Roy always championed the causes of liberty, constitutionalism, democratic rights and parliamentary democracy for every country of the world.” To him liberty is an invaluable tenure of people.

Swamy Dayanand Saraswati and his Arya Smaj has very much influenced the Indian political tradition, his concepts of education, nationalism, theory of state and government and his teachings of religion, culture, women’s empowerment and social reforms led to the political extremism towards the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. “Swami Dayanand was the first Indian who declared: ‘Swaraj is our birthright’. He held that India should belong to Indians and she ought to be made free and independent” He was the exponent of the concept of Swadesi, at the later stages became a powerful tool in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi. As an ardent patriot, Vivekananda established the sense of identity-consciousness with the country. He gave spiritual approach to the democracy. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the Guru and political mentor of Gandhi; he was devoted to the cause of nation building and committed to the

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8. ipid. p. 78
path of truth and non-violence. Lokmanya Tilak popularized four concepts: Swaraj, Swadeshi, national education and boycott. Swaraj for him was self-government. He claimed that with Swaraj, everybody would be free and have a right to participate in the government of the country. He demanded national self-determination for all colonized countries and argued that India’s freedom would usher in the freedom of other countries. He declared that Swaraj was his birthright and he would secure it. To him Swaraj as the necessary foundation of social and political freedom and he realized that the achievement of Swaraj was a moral and national necessity.

Sri Aurobindo also contributed to Indian political thinking. He opposed the fundamental principles of Western political thought, which were based on cleavage and conflict. He held that the primary aim of a state was to unite different sections of society into a living whole, pulsating with new ideas. He put forward the concept of Mother India who represented all individual souls living in India. He wanted Indians to develop their own philosophy of life as well as their own model of political development. He did not want them to be docile pupils of the Occident. It was the bounded duty of all citizens to oppose an unjust government, because injustice breeds further injustice. In his important work The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity, published in 1947, he discussed the essence of ancient Indian polity in detail. It was his contention that the Indian model of state building was far superior to the Western because it was a bottom up structure, a complex union of self-governing communal bodies which enjoyed complete autonomy. Secondly, Indians did not impose change from above, as they aspired for change from within. Because of this reason there was little opposition to change. A proper balance between continuity and change was established and the Indian politics retained its capacity of self-renewal. Other civilizations, perhaps the Chinese, lacked this capacity. According to Sri Aurobindo nationalism
based on spiritualism laid stress on moral and mental improvement. He said that democracy and socialism as the byproducts of humanism. “According to him the state is not an organism; it is machinery and it works like a machine, without tact, taste, delicacy or intention. He was opposed to the interference of the state in the sphere of education, culture and religion.”

He was against the centralization of political power in the hands of government. As mentioned above, the Indian political tradition followed by Nehru. He said that, democracy means tolerance. Nehru has talking about nationalism, secularism and internationalism. He believed in the theory and practice of parliamentary democracy and said that democracy is the best form of Government as it preserves the highest human values.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was one of the most stupendous men in the twentieth century. He regarded himself as the first and foremost active theoretician, where action and theory entangled to produce a theoretical construct that defies strict categorization. He considered himself to be a philosophical anarchist or a minimalist but there are aspects that make Gandhi a conservative, a liberal and a socialist. Gandhian philosophical aspects of politics, social, economic, religious and moral are inter-related with one another. Especially the socio-economic and political philosophy of Gandhi is mainly ethical based. All these concepts practiced by him in his life time, so he was not only a theorist but also a perfect practical philosopher. “Gandhi was a political actionist and a practical philosopher; he was not a theorist, his writings were bound with inconsistencies—one result of his persistent habit of thinking in public. Whatever philosophical formulations he made where inspired by and directed towards solving of immediate problems.”

Gandhian philosophy is the repository of ancient Indian philosophical thoughts. He made the teachings of the Isopanisad, the Bhagavad Gita and the

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Yoga Sutras as the chief foundations of his practical philosophy. There is nothing unique or original about his philosophy. Gandhi confirms this in his own words as “I do not claim to have originated any principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems.”

Gandhi was not a professional philosopher, he never attempted to construct a system of philosophy. He was mainly concerned with applying the ideals and principles that had unflinching faith. However, this does not imply that his thoughts were not systematic. One can argue that, his thoughts form a coherent whole, when his ideas are pierced together with the background of Hindu philosophy. One can find that his activities follow very closely to his view of life.

Gandhi said that the social, economic, political and religious actions cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. He unconsciously constructed an integrated system. Indeed Gandhi’s thoughts are the crystallized implications of Hindu philosophical tradition. The hard core Vedantic tradition made Gandhi to call himself a vedantin. The essence of Indian Philosophical tradition, which was practiced for the whole of his life, affirmed briefly in terms of the purusarthas and also in the goals of dharma, artha, kama and moksa. Gandhian ideas are very much relevant in metaphysical, political, social, economic and ecological spheres. Gandhi was a philosopher on one hand and a karmayogi on the other. He preached non-violence on one hand and not ready to accept cowardice on the other. Mahatma Gandhi was an outstanding personality of the world in general and India in particular. He has various identifications as a freedom fighter, philosopher, a political thinker, a social reformer, a spiritualist, a moralist, an economist and also as an educationalist. He is a cosmopolitan. He is universally known as a socio-economic and political genius and religious leader. He occupied an unique place in Indian history as a free

and frank interpreter of Hinduism. He has shown his greatness in constantly testing and verifying the truth which he practiced and preached in his daily life. Though he never claimed himself as a philosopher, a kind of philosophy is clearly traceable in his writings, speeches, plans and schemes. All of them consist of an underlying unity. According to Kripalani, in Gandhian thought the unity that runs through his concrete schemes and plans made his programmes a single whole. It makes a complete system of philosophy with its distinct ideology. Gandhi is a single word that echoed the dreams of millions of people. A single entity beared the burden of a whole nation. He became the hope to millions of Indians who bowed under the weight of years of slavery. A person who was in the forefront of India’s freedom struggle was a mystery that still fails not to wonder was he a man, who could talk with crowds and still keep his virtue or walk with kings and not lose the common feel. Gandhi was one of the greatest revolutionaries of the world. He can be considered as an anti-colonial revolutionary through the soul-force (satyagraha). This kind of revolution gave new confidence and strength to the oppressed minorities and downtrodden people all over the world. Gandhian philosophy has always been a topic of discussion especially in the contemporary world where his ideas appear redundant amidst the pragmatism and materialism.

Generally Politics is regarded as a game to attain power, to regain power and to maintain power. In the western concept, politics has been viewed as power, where morality or value had no place. But now this concept has almost been abandoned. The western thinkers have started talking about the moral values in politics. From the very beginning, for Gandhi, politics was all pervading and hence his war of Indian Independence had to be fought with the twin weapons of Truth and Non-violence, which ultimately became a movement and he called it Satyagraha. For him, politics opens the door of ‘service’ and not for misusing power. The main aim of the
constructive work is to eradicate the disabilities of the people at the socio-economic, political and spiritual levels. Wars and conflicts arise quite often from the problems all around. The constructive work goes to the roots of wars and is needed to set right things everywhere. For taking any movement to the ‘grass root’ level constructive work is needed. Gandhian constructive work has various items in itself. According to Gandhi, politics is a moral problem of value. The political theorist, Arnold Brecht has been beautifully defined this as “Scientific Value Relativism”\textsuperscript{12}. To him the justification of politics is an expression of moral life. So the state is judged by the qualities of its individuals, whose moral development can help or hinder. It is necessary to revolutionize politics by ethics. “Unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of political system and constitutions will not work.”\textsuperscript{13} If we are going to analyze the relationship between the morality and politics: we can realize one thing, without moral or ethical concepts, politics cannot sustain and it should be inconsistent with people’s welfare in a natural way. In Prof. A. Shishkin’s words, Morals serve the cause of progress. Morality serves the great task of the social revolutions of our times.

In our day today life we see that, politics is rooted in the deception and untruthfulness. It is bound to create greater deceit and greater dishonesty. It is an eternal fact that, the concept of hate must generate hate and violence leads to the greater violence. “Moral development takes place in the individual and this makes the individual the one supreme consideration. But man is a social animal – Religion as ethics can not avoid politics.”\textsuperscript{14} Thus the need of the hour is to moralize politics. Gandhi’s predictive emphasis is: there is no politics devoid of religion. It was Gandhi and Gandhi alone who was in reality, experienced politics on religious foundations in the

\textsuperscript{12} Brecht, A, \textit{Political Theory: The Foundation of Twentieth Century Political Thought}, Princeton University Press, 1959, Chapter-XI.
\textsuperscript{13} Narayan, J. P., \textit{A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity}, Rajghat: Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, 1959, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{14} Subrata Mukherjee and Susila Ramaswamy (eds.), op. cit., p. 4
Indian Freedom Movement. He always highlighted that politics bereft of religion is a death trap. So far, the world has seen only the use of corporeal power and the power of law but Gandhi had carved out the third force or the self-reliant moral power of the people. Gandhi emphasized the people’s politics against the party Politics. He thought that, the authority must be equally shared into the hands of the people at all levels. Gandhi had suggested the party less democracy. The surfacing of people’s democracy will be the bearer of new era of democratic decentralization i.e. the Swaraj (Self-Rule) is needed from below. Swaraj means positive freedom used by Gandhi, participating in the process of politics in every possible way, rather than conceiving the state as a negative institution by restricting its activities to the bare minimum. It did not mean that the state was all powerful, rather an intimate relationship should exist between the state and all its citizens. To him, swaraj implied participatory democracy. In Gandhian Politics, democracy developed into the rule of the populace and depends ultimately upon the power of the people and not upon the power of the police or military. Therefore the functioning of democracy and violence is not possible in the system of politics. So Gandhi implores for the moralization of needs and voluntary action as the basis of democratic life and culture. The significance of diminishing coercion entails the closest possible estimate to a decentralized polity. Voluntary cooperation demanded a federation of village communities.

In the 20th century Gandhi was the only person who offered the reforms without destruction, unlike Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Mao. Gandhi out of the other dominated political revolutionaries of the world, holds the non-violent satyagraha as a means to achieve the political as well as social ends, where as other world countries opt for violent military force. Satyagraha is the moral instrument used by Gandhi against the political and social evils. He chose this either for the remedy of particular grievances or for the wide purpose of achieving
independence. Gandhi opposed injustice and exploitation through satyagraha and tried to purify the politics by incorporating the moral and spiritual ideals in politics. To Gandhi this is an alternative to the violent army force. Against the totalitarian government, in USA Dr. Martin Luther King II and the Norwegians school teachers in 1942-43 against quisling government demonstrates the power and strength of the non-violent resistance (Satyagraha). Consequently Gandhian Politics has a dominant and constructive role played in Indian national movement. He was against utter patriotism, at the same time he suggested internationalism through nationalism. Liberty and autonomy of the individual as well as the nation was the higher values of his concept of politics. Through deliverance of India, he said, “I seek to deliver the so called weaker races of the earth from the crushing wheels of western exploitation.”15 It is a fact that after India attains independence most of the weaker nations of the world become known as free nations. That means under the leadership of Gandhi and his ideals, we fought not only for our own independence but also others Independence and the latest in the series is the war of Bangladesh’s freedom in 1971. Now, we cannot say the politics of exploitation has been eradicated but it is controlled or minimized through democratic ideals. According to Gandhi party politics should be substituted by people’s power. Service to the people and their better life is progressively becoming the ultimate aim of the states all over the world and hence application of Gandhian Politics cannot be diminished.

**Philosophical Background of Gandhi’s Thoughts**

The fundamental metaphysical notion of Gandhism is an omnipresent spiritual reality. “An all embracing living light, it can be called sachchidhananda or Brahman.”16 Gandhi accepts

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Sachchidananda as the highest conceptual formulation of reality. According to Gandhi, wherever there is truth there is knowledge, wherever there is knowledge there is bliss. To him truth is eternal, non-contradictory, all pervading principle; it is the basic tenet in Gandhism. Gandhi is the traditional Hindu and a true Vedandian. He was very much influenced by Hindu philosophy. It is a fact that “Gandhi was a metaphysical idealist but not exactly of the Sankarite School. His views are more akin to these of the theistic interpreters of Vedanta like Ramanuja and Madva.”17 To Gandhi, ‘God is Truth’ and it is the indweller, all powerful, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Gandhi accepted world as the real or existent. The Parabramha ‘sat’ is the supreme essence and the primordial being. Gandhi conceived sat or Truth not only as an ethical category but as an ontological being of the highest realm. To him truth is not merely a theoretical value or intrinsic moral ideal but is the highest reality. He did not reject the cosmos as Maya or indescribable illusion but felt that the absolute majesty of God is expressed in the realm of cosmic phenomena. Since beginning the human thought is in quest of ‘truth’ both spiritual and material, both transcendent and immanent. But the most important aspect of Gandhian thought was the means of quest of truth, without exception, non-violent in thought, word, deed and full of love. Every great life is a commendable resist of man’s truth against deprivation and denaturing which results from colonial status on one hand and from the industrial civilization on the other. In both cases, the method of preservation and liberation is the same; that is non-violence or ahimsa. The life of Gandhi was a life of constant action and experimentation, to know the truth and to live in it. He considered this as light and this light never ceased to illuminate his awareness and spread its luminosity among those people with whom he worked. They shared his efforts and followed his discipline and millions of people touched by the strength of his faith, the loftiness, aims and principles. He is a superb politician who led the masses of India towards

17. ibid, p.10.
freedom and self-confidence; a constant seeker of truth who followed the path of saintliness; a teacher in the lager sense, who keenly felt the call for instructing and uplifting his follow beings; these were the roles of politician, saint and teacher. All these are joined together in his life. Gandhi’s life and work were based on the principles like humanism which is expressed in non-violence and truth, the exaltation of means over end and the stress on duty rather than rights. Justice to him was devotion to the cause of the oppressed and liberty connoted duty more than rights. These principles provided the key to his conception of the art of life. These are derived from a strong moral foundation.

**Nationalism and Internationalism**

India as a multi diversified country has been committed with universalism or internationalism since thousands of years. It can be well acknowledged and understood through India’s ancient slogan of ‘Vasudhaika Kutumbakam’. Beyond this, thousands of years old harmonious and evolutionary Indian Culture, through the practices of its up bringers, Indians have also been categorically reiterating their commitment towards internationalism. Nationalism is not narrow-minded or exclusive to Mahatma Gandhi, but it is the part of his search for truth through unity in diversity and through selfless service. Gandhi said that, the Nationalism is not the highest concept; the highest concept is world community. These were the expressions of his swadeshi spirit, as a part of the global good, which seeks food for the nearer society. “I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England and Germany to serve India.”

18 Gandhi always hate hurting anyone by word, deed and action. According to Gandhi nationalism is an antecedent and Internationalism is a consequent. Internationalism

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derived from the well developed nationalism. To him this is also the developing process of world community. He says about nationalism: “Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact….It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil.” 19 This is the earlier and later stages of the same process. To him nationalism is a step towards internationalism. Gandhi’s nationalism, “fierce though it is, is not exclusive, not designed to harm any nation or individual.” 20 He says nationalism should be indispensable precondition of sound internationalism. “Through Swaraj, we would serve the whole world.” 21 Indian nationalism is inclusive not exclusive, it is non-violent not aggressive or destructive. It is health giving, spiritual and which is, humanitarian, “India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity.” 22 Mahatma Gandhi, who was a firm believer of Ahimsa and a forebear of Indian culture in his period said, If I would like liberty for my country I do not want that liberty in order that I belong to a country which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other group or sect upon the earth, or any single individual. If I would like that liberty for my nation, I would not be deserving of that liberty if I did not cherish and treasure of equal right of every other group or sect, weak or strong, to the same liberty. This is the statement that has full capability for expounding the fact of India’s commitment on internationalism. Concurrently, his subsequent statement is also similarly appropriate and significant in this regard: in the course of the liberation of India, I seek to liberate the so-called weaker races of the earth from crushing heels of Western exploitation. India coming to her own will mean that every nation doing likewise. Mahatma Gandhi’s principle of Sarvodaya, is the consequent of Indian tradition and values is influenced by Ruskin’s

19. ibid, Vol. 27, op.cit, p.255.
20. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 26.03.1931, p. 51.
theory of ‘Unto This Last’, can be considered to be the best way to human equality. This is the principle that endorses equal value for the labour of an intellectual as well as the manual without any caste, class, gender, community or territory-based discrimination. Instead of the utilitarian theory of greatest happiness of the greatest number it talks about greatest happiness to all. This concept always give full scope for equality in distribution of opportunities. This firmly expose that the greatest happiness to greatest number is ever inclusive in greatest happiness to all. Internationalism reveals in a beautiful manner in Gandhi’s philosophy of Sarvodaya through bringing the whole humanity in to its fold. And also he said that, “I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and a pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world.” Gandhi expressed as follows “My idea of nationalism is that my country may die so that the human race may live.” Gandhi always preaching the individual freedom, meantime he asses the friendly relationship with one another. He suggested the federal system of Government for the welfare of the world. The theory of Trusteeship, of Gandhi is alternative to the violence-based institution like the State, which clearly reflects the insight of internationalism. Gandhi as one of the great anarchists is in favour of abolishing the institution of the State gradually. In place of the State he stresses upon the establishment of a worldly order based on equality. It is in fact a step beyond internationalism. It includes the whole humanity without any disparities and territorial frontier that comes together and becomes identical. Gandhi said that, “The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent states warning one against another but a federation of friendly interdependent states.” He is a cosmopolitan, the universal being; He said that, “The only condition on which the world can live is being united under one central

governing body composed of representatives of the component parts.” 26 Therefore, Gandhi tried to build up the moral based world Government because it would have heralded an era of peace. The representative of the people for the world Government should be morally developed because, they play the important role in the peace making process. However, Gandhi’s moralized and decentralized the political system and Vishwa Shanti Sena (International Peace Force) is very much ensuring the peace of the world. In the present day situation and Globalization Gandhiji’s self-governing nationalism and co-operative federal internationalism are more relevant and necessary to take practice to make the peace in world.

Centralization

The Centralized Government shares power to the lower units of Government only as it sees fit, maintaining supreme authority. That means the centralized Government can change the authority of local Governments or abolish or even abolish them if it desired to do so. Some political theorists think that in the centralized Government there is an intimidate individual freedom. The rationale of decentralized governance is also derived from the known drawbacks of centralized decision-making process in the governing system. Being away from the basic spatial units such as rural communities, villages and with power centralization at the top in a pyramidal power base, the union and the state Government power organization draw representatives from the well-endowed sub-regions and sections of the community, at the same time it leaves the backward regions and weaker sections from the representation. This gives rise to the emergence of enclave-type power bases and disproportionate allocation of power among people. The interests, needs and ambition of some sections and of the people living in the backward and interior regions are

thus likely to be ignored in the decision-making process in centralized manner. Where there is centralized system of Government, there is hardly much scope for people’s participation in governance process, the implementation of decision taken at the top Government levels becomes weak as it does not inspire or motivate people to extend their cooperation.

The political power and the Government tasks concentrate in the hands of a single authority in the forms of centralized Government. All the governmental powers are exercised by the central authority and the units of local Government such as cities and countries that are subjected to exercise those powers. In a uniform, "one-size-fits-all" approach to Government policies and programs is the result of the centralized Government. Besides this, in centralized Government the national interest takes priority over local interests. This contrasts with a decentralized federal system, such as the Government system of U.S.A., where the local interests and local resistance sometimes slow or block national actions. Some degree of centralization has been operating all most all Governments of the world. Centralized Government exists in degrees, from weak to strong centralization. For example in North Korea, the totalitarian Government ruled by a dictator, has an extremely centralized system of Government. In contrast, the United States and Canada, there is a practice of federal systems of Government with much less centralization. In United States, after American Revolution, a confederation of states with a weak national Government is established. However, the weaknesses of this arrangement led to the drafting of the U.S. Constitution and created a stronger national Government with limited powers. In drafting the Constitution, the framers wanted a strong national Government, but not one that retained many powers and threaten the liberties. As a result, they created a federal system in which the national Government has certain powers, while states retain the others. Centralized power is incapable of providing stability to the Government but, being colonial and
bureaucratic, it may give rise to the religious, ethnic and minority upsurges. It is admitted that monolithic states and progressive socialist states in power have vested interests in a central Government. They are more enlightened than the local Governments in protecting the larger interests of the poor and minorities. The centralized Government structures are successful to a larger extent in removing disparities. At the same time it has also been observed that under centralized governance, it is not possible to have a stable political system. Further centralized power is opposed to democratic values and approaches. This is mainly due to the nature of the state in colonization and also the position of the poor who are largely located in the rural areas in such a type of environment. There the real power is concentrated in urban and metropolitan cities, it is very hard to make any change in the rural poor and to share the benefits of development. Due to this situation migration has taken place and the trend is towards degeneration of rural assets and ecological imbalances. As a result of this centralization, local Governments with decentralization of political and economic power will emerge.

By nature human beings are the seekers of better life than the present. If we go back to history, we can realize this fact. In primitive stages people were lived with ignorance. After that, they became civilized. In this civilized state, there are many divisions and many groups emerged due to various reasons. Increasing vital wants and demands made people to exploit neighbors or other groups. People were enjoying some benefits and better life than others through this exploitation. The mental exploitative attitude created in the hierarchical structure of society. Those people hate hard work. The hierarchical society has lot of scope to exploit others through power centralization. The political power centralization focuses power at one particular point. By this power centralization, the top group of this hierarchy kept more power in its hand. Those using this power exploits lower group of this hierarchy. The first exploitative group create power
centralization. This well developed political power centralization encourages exploitation, social disparities, caste clashes, economic inequalities, sexual domination and poverty. To resolve these problems of centralization, we must seek an alternative method of political decentralization. At this juncture, Gandhi suggested political decentralization. By nature, it shares equal power with all. A politically decentralized society works against exploitation, social disparities, economic inequalities, sexual domination and poverty. Here there is no scope to hierarchy. Decentralization of political power is originated from the drawbacks of the political power centralization. Decentralization distributes equal power to all. So there is no possibility to exploitation, domination, hierarchy and inequalities. All these issues can be handled by political decentralization. In a politically decentralized society, there is no place to them. Because all people are enjoy equal opportunities. If any problems arise, they will be handled through the political powers. Here we can reduce army force; we can ensure individual freedom and empowerment. People have equal duties and responsibilities.

**Political Ideas of Gandhi**

The rationale of decentralized governance is derived from the drawbacks of centralized decision making of the macro Governmental levels. Being away from the basic spatial units such as hamlets and villages end with power concentrated at the top of the space in a pyramidal power base, the state and the union Government power structures draw representatives from the well-endowed sub-regions and also from the sections of the community, leaving the backward regions and weaker sections of unrepresented. This gives rise to the emergence of enclave-type power bases and imbalanced distribution of power among people. The interests, basic needs and aspirations of some sections of the people living in backward and interior regions are disregarded.
under the centralized decision-making system. In the centralized system, there is no scope for people’s participation, the implementation of decision taken at the top governmental levels becomes weak as it does not motivate people to extend their cooperation.

The Disadvantages of Centralization are;

A) It dries up the springs of Patriotism in particular localities, it impairs the powers which may renew them,

B) It fosters conspiracy while repressing the faction,

C) And looses the assistance of society in the coercion of crime.

The factor of decentralization cropped up from the realm of constitutionalism, feudalism, public policies and machine management. These dimensions are poignant in the thought structure of Mahatma Gandhi. For him, decentralization is a by-product of the integration. It is based upon the human nature as well as on the ethical grounds. The entire spectrum of decentralization is articulated under the three hypotheses like:

A) Sovereignty of the individual

B) Village republic

C) Philosophical anarchism.

All these aspects are clubbed under the ideal of Sarvodaya.
In the present globalized world, capitalism is gradually becoming strong. This leads to the number of political, economical and social problems of the individual as well as the society. The centralization of both political and economic power is the basic tenet to the concept of globalization. Politically it is very much supporting to the power centralization in hands of few or in one central point and encourages the exploitation, hierarchy, variations among the people, individual or certain group domination and always disturb the natural empowerment of the people and ruined the individual freedom, rural development, public participation in decision making process etc. Economically the globalization promotes the economic concentration, increase capital in few hands, generates the variation based on haves and have nots or rich and poor, destroyed the local industries (small industries) through the open market beyond the border etc. In addition to these, socially and morally also it supports the cultural domination, demolishes their own identity, machinery life style, immoral actions and unemployment etc. The Centralization of power which is based on globalization generates the problematic life. Above all the centralization of the political power has the most important role in the challenging life of the world. The political power is the regulative and generative authority of the national life. This political power centralization leads to the economic centralization and demolishes the values of freedom, equality and fraternity. Therefore the political power centralization is the basic cause to the worldly problems due to various bases. Because of its conceptual nature, the centralization of political power creates the pre-condition of emerging concept of political decentralization. By nature political decentralization is the process of power distribution to all. There is no such kind of variation in this process. In politically decentralized society there won’t be any exploitative action and all are enjoying equal freedom and rights. It is always supporting to economic equality and giving equal opportunity.
Gandhi also talked about globalization in a positive manner. His uniqueness did not lie in the fact that he was extraordinary but lies on the simplicity of his reflective thoughts also. His idea of swadeshi talks of “production for neighbors” if applied to the world at large with his theory of “antyodaya” or “the last man” which speaks about providing the basic necessities can negate the effects of globalization by ensuring everyone the fruits of developmental process. His philosophy of “satyagraha” which means “the force which is born out of truth or violence” is required more in the contemporary world scenario where accumulation of nuclear weapons has become the means to attain the supremacy. Despite the efforts of various peace keeping forces, the threat of nuclear war persists sub-consciously in the contemporary world and the only method which has the potential to remove this “ever lingering fear” is satyagraha. In this regard there is enormous need for working on Gandhian political ideas. Because India and many other world countries are named as democratic but the power is concentrated in few hands. There are political parties, periodic elections and adult endorsement. But the power is in the hands of a few governing elites. About forty percent of the voters do not have time, energy and means to reach the polling booths. In the remaining sixty percent, hardly twenty to twenty five percent of them cast votes on their own. Every citizen has fundamental rights and courts are there to hear them in case of violation of these rights. But most of them owing to poverty and illiteracy unable to reach. Bureaucracy, police and other dictatorial organizations care very little for the woes of the common man. All these factors compel the masses to pin their hopes on some Gandhi-like leader who lead them and fight for their cause by various means and methods. There must be someone to show the path amidst the murky darkness of privatization and globalization in the right direction. Other acute crisis related to the pollution, lethal and nuclear weapons lead to the
extinction of the earth. Therefore, it is necessary to know about the ideological claims of the Gandhi, its ways and means.

I have followed the logical and analytical methods in the execution of thesis. The concepts of Gandhi and various political theories are well explained and logically evaluated on par with the world affairs. There are some misunderstandings about Gandhi that he was not a philosopher in the academic sense. His speeches, writings and actions consist of philosophical concepts and theories. He analyzed the drawbacks of the centralized political power and its effects of exploitation, hierarchy, corruption, inequalities and domination over the individuals, nations, war and terrorism which lead to the disturbed life of the world. This kind of power centralization issues prompted me to work in the above area with special reference to Gandhian perspective. His concern towards non-violent and moralized or self-evaluated way of the revolution and also the participation in the decision making process for the welfare of all people are also the reasons. They give scope for this thesis.

The present research mainly concerned with Gandhi’s views on politics and decentralization basing on the philosophical ground. It also deals with the economic, social, religious and ethics. Because politics, economics, society, religion, ethics are closely connected with one another. It can be said that one concept leads to another. It is also difficult to separate and study them independently. Each chapter starts with a short chronological and theoretical introduction of the subject under study. This serves as a basis to understand the philosophical issues through the Gandhian perspective.

As per the chapterization: The first chapter gives brief Introduction about Gandhi and his philosophical thinking. It also expresses various influences on Gandhi. These influences have
significant role in shaping Gandhi’s moral, political, economical and social philosophy. Here, I have explained the Indian political tradition, the philosophical background of Gandhian thought, his broad vision of internationalism through nationalism, the concept of centralization and its natures and features, the brief sketch about Gandhi’s political ideas, the preconditions of the political decentralization, causes of its emergence and brief description of cauterization. Gandhism is a prominent means to solve the worldly problems and I clearly mentioned here about the need to study and its significance. Political traditions of India, Gandhi’s philosophical background are also explained in the first chapter.

The introduction is followed by the second chapter which deals with the political conditions of Gandhi’s time and its nature, the factors that moulded Gandhi as a political reformer such as the vegetarian society, the racial discriminations: the incidents of his own life and others life and also the civil rights movements, various influences on Gandhi from both the sides of west and east and from his family and religious influences etc. The political reforms such as nature, basis and scope of the Indian politics that are radically transformed by Gandhi. He incorporated the political techniques with moral and spiritual adaptation, religious harmony along with constructive programmes.

The third chapter explains about Gandhi’s political philosophy. This part deals with the nature and features of the Gandhi’s concepts of power, politics and state, his individual opinion on the concepts of man and his role in society, means and ends, non-violent state and its features, democracy within democracy and self-rule (Swaraj). Gandhi gave more importance to means than ends, he describes the means of Truth, Ahimsa, Satyagraha and the ends of the Swaraj, Ramarajya and Sarvodaya etc. The spiritual and moral politics of Gandhi is considered as the special futures of Gandhian philosophy.
The fourth chapter analyzes the concept of political decentralization basing on the philosophical ground of Gandhi. Primarily it evaluates Gandhi as a political philosopher. His political philosophy is a decentralized democracy. It is a contribution to democratic development. In this chapter I tried to highlighten Gandhian political decentralization as one of the techniques to create the new world order with equality in all aspects of life. It is possible through the individual freedom and empowerment and also through the people’s participation in all kinds of Government decision making process. It would be the ongoing process of the world Government to build up self-rulled and self-reliant village panchayats. The Panchayat Raj system is known as the decentralized form of local Government. In addition to these philosophical explanations of the greatest good for all, equality and fraternity and his soundness on Indian philosophical tradition, all are critically examined here.

Finally the fifth chapter is a sort of conclusion: I summarized the philosophically evaluated Gandhi’s political reforms and their relevance to the contemporary conditions. A politically decentralized governmental structure should be developed with moral and religious foundation. A critical analysis on Gandhi’s concepts like village panchayats, federal Government, enlightend anarchy, sarvodaya was also done. At the end the possibilities of world government by applying the self-rule of the individual, village Panchayat, state or nation and their process of implementation are examined.