

Ahimsa, Disarmament and Democratic Culture in India

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Abstract

Western scholars have always been sceptical and have had a myopic view about the genesis and fate of democracy in India. The success of Democracy in India has baffled cynics, detractors, and even genuine scholars. The parameters of democratisation also prove insufficient to explain the genesis, evolution and consolidation of democratic culture in India. The study delves into the Indic concept of Ahimsa, its role in civilian disarmament, and the evolution of democratic culture in India. Western Scholars tend to equate ahimsa with non-violence, but Ahimsa is a more complex concept encompassing elements like disarmament, Mutual coexistence, non-injury, and universal acceptance. There is a tendency among scholars to think of ahimsa as impractical as it abhors self-defence. Ahimsa does not abhor self-defence rather it advocates a strong military state and a democratised, disarmed civilian. The study explores the role of civil-military separation and the subsequent impact on the democratisation process in India.

Key Words

Ahimsa, Disarmament, Democratisation, Civil-Military Separation, Non-violence, Indic, Gun control.

Purpose and method of the study

The Paper delves into the forms of material manifestation of the ideational concept of Ahimsa, and in the process applies analytic, comparative, and historical methods. This Paper compares the age-old concept of Ahimsa with modern concepts of disarmament, peacebuilding, confidence building, conflict, non-violent, etc.. to decolonise the study of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and grassroots democratic practices. The paper implements genealogical study which is used to analyse complicated histories, origins, and evolution of timeless and/or universal concepts (like morality, sexuality, and inalienable rights), and discerns the genesis and growth of these abstract timeless concepts through specific cultural, social and political circumstances, to study the timeless abstract concept of Ahimsa. This paper analyses the historical role of Ahimsa in the political and democratic evolution of India. Ahimsa has been generally deemed to be equivalent to the modern concepts of pacifism and non-violence. The paper studies the epochs/crests of social transformation in Indian history and how the idea of Ahimsa shaped the consciousness, conduct as well as psyche of the individuals and how socio-religious movements, as well as leaders from time to time, emphasised the significance of ahimsa. Since the structural evolution of Indian society is clouded in time fog, some continuities can describe the particularities of contemporary India (Kothari, 1970):

“The precise steps by which Hindu society acquired its character are not known. Spread over a large and sprawling territory, lacking in antecedent political units and traditions, and generally remote from centres of military and political power. (p. 23)”

The obvious fact that India is blessed with diverse cultures, traditions, and institutions not only fills an observer with a certain wonder but also presents a Sisyphean task to detect unifying processes, it becomes like finding a certain needle in the husk; The phenomenon of

Ahimsa emerges to be one of the most visible unifying characteristics of Indian society, likewise Lord Sri Krishna in shloka 7.7 of the Shrimad Bhagwad Gita affirms himself to be the ultimate unifying entity:

“protam sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva
mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñchid asti dhanañjaya mayi sarvam idam” (There is nothing higher than Myself, O Arjun
Everything rests in Me, as beads strung on a thread.)

Likewise, Ahimsa can also be deemed to be the ultimate unifying concept of the Indian code of ethics, duty, dharma, Morality, virtue, and etiquette both at individual and socio-political levels. The temporal and territorial pervasiveness of this idea can be fathomed by the fact that socio-religious movements during every era have affected the social, religious, and political movements be it the Upanishadic philosophical movement during the Vedic period or Shramnic movement during the Mahajanpad era or the Advait movement by Adi-guru Shankaracharya during the medieval era or the bhakti movement during the later medieval period and our national movement during the colonial period, all resonate with the profound thought of Ahimsa, this necessitates the study of this ancient but modern concept.

India, democratic exceptionalism or orientalisation

Eurocentric Colonial Britishers weaponised their self-perceived, self-righteous, self-serving and falsely propagated the phantasmagorical dehumanising theory of a chaotically divided, dehumanely inegalitarian, hierarchically unequal, primitive, tribal, savage, barbaric, uncivilised, hero-worshipping socio-political milieu of India, to justify their oppressive and tyrannical regime. Winston Churchill the former British Prime Minister had once said that if India ever gets freedom, it would be run by goons, they misused the logic that if people of a nation are of undemocratic character then they are not apt for self-rule, to imply that without the assistance of the colonial masters India would crumble, as the Indian mind is inherently undemocratic so it cannot self-administer because Even after Independence a section of academia was sceptical about the future trajectory of Indian democracy, even Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, one of the founding fathers of the Indian constitution in his famous 1955 BBC interview expressed doubt about the future trajectory of the survival of the Indian democratic setup. Accidentally here, Winston Churchill and Dr B.R Ambedkar can be found on the same page, but there is a difference that necessitates being highlighted, While the accusation and doubt cast upon by the British were of malicious intent, that was to justify their predatory presence on the Indian soil, Ambedkar on the other hand, due to his immense sentimental investment into the Indian state of affairs and genuine fatherly concerns about the fate of the democracy may have cautioned the future generations about the fallibility of Indian democratic project. Post Independence, despite a few minor hiccups and some major impediments, the Indian democratic project is more or less on track proceeding slowly but progressively. Indian democratic system despite some foundational, structural, and Institutional defects has managed to remain just afloat. Indian political class and establishment despite being mired by pathos like corruption, nepotism, favouritism, inefficiency, lack of political willpower, unresponsiveness, unaccountability, opaqueness, and brazen falsehood have risen to occasion whenever supposedly an existential crisis happened. Even after seven decades Western scholars and colonial apologists have always wondered about the survival of Indian democracy, cynics and detractors have decried the state of democratic affairs in India, they affirmed and reaffirmed the absence of pre-conditions for democracy in India. They deem India to be sometimes electocracy,

mobocracy, and plutocracy by citing the low ranking of India on various international indices like the democracy index, and human development index. The fact that Indian democracy has survived for such a long time has perplexed them as it has defied their formulaic logic of preconditions for democracy. The doomsayers argued at the time of Independence that socioeconomic conditions like acute poverty, illiteracy, and social fissures in Indian soil were not conducive for the germination of democracy and would eventually degenerate into worse forms of tyranny but contrary to that India remained more or less on a democratic trajectory.

The question arises whether Western scholars failed to detect some or any form of functionally efficient democratic process, practice, institution, or traditions in India or they overlooked vital characteristics of the Indian socio-political milieu on purpose, to suit their narratives and vested interest. The answer to the afore-posed question is a combination of a bit of both, while some politically sponsored and ideologically motivated academicians concocted a binary/dichotomy of east vs west, orient (eastern colonised world) vs occident (western imperialists) theory, others simply failed to detect vitality of Indian traditions because of their inherent subjective biases and prejudices. Benjamin Disraeli's quote "The East is a career", aptly describes the mindset of some British orient scholars whose primary business was to nurture the colonial narrative of the white man's burden. Western orientalist painted a picture of an ancient, primitive, backward, irrational, superstitious orient India to contrast it with a modern, mechanised, advanced, rational, scientific occident Europe. American decolonial thinker Edward Said talks about this labelling of certain peculiar identities by the Western world (which he referred to as orientalisation) in his work *Orientalism* (Said, 1978):

"When Disraeli said in his novel *Tancred* that the East was a career, he meant that to be interested in the East was something bright young Westerners would find to be an all-consuming passion; he should not be interpreted as saying that the East was only a career for Westerners. There were and are cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. But the phenomenon of Orientalism, as I study it here, deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and the Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient. My point is that Disraeli's statement about the East refers mainly to that created consistency, that regular constellation of ideas as the pre-eminent thing about the Orient, and not to its mere being, as Wallace Stevens's phrase has it. A second qualification is that ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created or, as I call it, "Orientalized" and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between the Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K. M. Panikkar's classic *Asia and Western Dominance*. (p.6)"

Historians like VA Smith and James Mill furthered this orientalisation of India and labelled it with a certain backward identity. They dismissed the ancient democratic practices of Vaishali and Vedic traditions as primitive and non-democratic in the modern sense. But post-independence as the Indian democratic project progressed, western scholars changed their posture from being pessimistic about the fate of Indian democracy to being filled with

wonder about Indian democracy. Till now they pose as if not being able to discern the causes of the survival of Indian democracy and attribute this survival as an exceptional phenomenon that was not meant to be given a lack of modern preconditions for democracy. Western scholars are still in denial mode and hesitant to acknowledge the role of ancient Indic traditions in the evolution of social democracy in India, they were at the beginning observing the Indian society through the Eurocentric lens, and now after seven decades, when their prediction about the failure of democracy in India proved to be false, even then they are not adopting Indic and dharmic approach to explain the success of democracy in India. Thus, the onus falls on us to study the role and Impact of Indic and Dharmic traditions in shaping Indian democracy. As in the paper, it has been discussed earlier that the Indic concept of ahimsa can be one of the democratising forces, the paper delves into the comparative study of ahimsa with modern concepts of peace, disarmament, non-violence, non-injury, and then the study of possible links between ahimsa and democracy

Peace and democracy

Western scholars have underlined the positive impact of peace on economic progress and conflict resolution, this further leads to robust political institutions, the rule of law, and peaceful coexistence further establishing an environment that is conducive to the development of democracy. After World War I if the punitive action on Germany in the form of the Treaty of Versailles had not been imposed rather a peaceful conciliatory and cooperative approach would have led to the peaceful growth of Europe (Keynes, 1919). Democratic peace theory also advocates that peaceful nations are less likely to go to war with each other. If we interpolate this logic to the individual and societal level then it can be construed that peaceful coexistence between individuals and societies leads to social cohesion, and fraternity which are preconditions for social democracy. Thus we see that a certain degree of peace, non-violence, and disarmament is a necessary precondition for the development of social democracy. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar emphasized the importance of fraternity for the consolidation of social democracy in his constituent assembly speech on 25 November 1949.

“The third thing we must do is not to be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless it lies at the base of its social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality, and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality; equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them... For fraternity can be a fact only when there is a nation. Without fraternity equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint (Ambedkar. 1946).”

From this theory of Keynes, it may be deduced that peace is a necessity to build fraternity from Ambedkar; it may be derived that for social democracy fraternity is a prerequisite, and from these two propositions it can be concluded that a certain degree of peace is a necessary condition for democracy. Peace, disarmament, non-injury, and non-harm being embedded in the more evolved and complex concept of Ahimsa Genealogical analysis of Ahimsa, and its historical role in the development of social democracy in India

First of all, the question arises: can socio-religious movements act as a democratising force or not? Ambedkar has an answer to this question according to him rather than equality or liberty, fraternity or Bandhutva forms the bedrock of a democratic society, (Ambedkar, 1987):

“This democratic attitude of mind is the result of the socialisation of the Individual in a democratic society. Democratic society is therefore a prerequisite of democratic government. Democratic governments have toppled down largely due to the fact that the society for which they were set up was not democratic. Unfortunately to what extent the task of good government depends upon the mental and moral disposition of its subjects has seldom been realised. Democracy is more than a political machine. It is even more than a social system. It is an attitude of mind or a philosophy of life. Some equate democracy with equality and liberty. Equality and liberty are no doubt the deepest concerns of democracy. But the more important question is what sustains equality and liberty. This is not a true answer. What sustains equality and liberty is fellow feeling. What the French revolutionists called fraternity. The fraternity is not an adequate expression. The proper term is what the Buddha called Maitri. Without fraternity, Liberty would destroy equality and equality would destroy liberty. Fraternity is therefore the root of democracy (p.170-71).”

Thus, we can analyse the possibility of socio-religious movements based on Ahimsa as a democratising force as its primary aim is to forge fraternity among individuals of a society. In the above quote, Ambedkar emphasises that the fellow-feeling or French concept of the fraternity or Buddhist concept of Maitri is essential in the formation of a social democracy. We can conclude that democracy is based on Maitri which is the core of Ahimsa socio-religious movements thus we can further conclude that Ahimsa socio-religious movements were indeed democratising in nature. After establishing the possibility of a relationship between ahimsa and the development of a democratic attitude, the paper will delve deeply into the concept of Ahimsa socio-religious movements and their impact on democratisation. There is a common misconception that Ahimsa originated with the rise of Jaina and the Buddhist traditions but the concept of ahimsa has antecedents in the Pre Mahajanapada period, if it hadn't been so, then the rise of the Buddha and Mahavira on such a colossal scale wouldn't have happened. During the pre-Vedic era, the priest class used to perform sacrifice rituals but there was a parallel stream that advocated for non-injury and non-harm to the people (Dinkar, 1946):

“Jain aur baudh mato ki utpati ke prakaran me yah kahna avshyak ho jata hai ki in dono mato ka janm isliye hua ki inke purv ke vaidik dharm me hinsapurna yago ka prabalya tha. Kintu, itihaskar ne yeh baat itni jor se kahi ki sarva sadharan me ek pravasa sa fail gaya ki buddh se pahle Ahimsa is desh me thi hi nahi. Yah nitant galat dharna hai. Vedo me nischal bhogvaad ki pravritti avashya hai, kintu, ved keval Himsa hi nahi sikhate hai. Bharat me Ahimsa ke parampara praagvaidic thi aur uske beej vedo me bhi the. Yah thik hai ki purohit-varg yagno ka prabal samarthak tha aur pasuon ki hatya ko wah rokna nahi chahta tha, kintu samaj me tab bhi aise log maujood the, jo is kroor karm se ghrina karte the aur chahte the ki koi aisa dharm samaj me parvartit kiya jaye jo Ahimsa ke anukool ho. Jain tirthkaaron aur Buddhdev ka janm bhi nahi hota agar bhartiya parampara se Ahimsa, bilkul, anupasthit rahi hoti. Brahman grantho me keval “sarvamedh sarva hanyat” (sarvamedh-yagn me sab kuch mara ja sakta hai) hi nahi, “ma hinsyat sarva bhutani” (kisi bhi jeev ko maat maro) ka bhi adesh tha. (p. 125).”

(In the context of the genesis of Jaina and the Buddhist sect, it becomes inevitable to say that these two sects were born because of the prevalence of violent sacrificial yagnas in

the vaidik dharma. However, historians asserted this so emphatically that it became a common notion that Ahimsa didn't exist in this country before Buddha. This is an incorrect notion. It is correct that there is a presence of unbridled consumerism, but Vedas promote only Himsa. The Bharata tradition of Ahimsa flourished before the Vedas and its seeds were there in the Vedas also. It is correct that the priest class were supporters of animal sacrifice and they did not want that to stop, but even at that time, there were individuals in the society, who hated sacrifices and longed for an Ahimsa Dharma. Jain Tirthankaras and the Buddha wouldn't have flourished if Indian tradition didn't have Ahimsa in it. Brahmana texts not only promote that everything can be annihilated but also proclaim, one should not kill. (p. 125))

Thus, we see that Ahimsa as tradition and feeling was present among all the traditions, but only with the advent of the Buddha and Mahavira did the thought of Ahimsa become the fulcrum of Indian social and individual life. Now the paper will study the four epochs of social awakenings where the concept of Ahimsa played a pivotal role in building social cohesion, and fraternity and instilling social democratic behaviour among Individuals: a) Role of Shramnic Ahimsa in the rise of Magadha b) Advait movement by Adi-guru Shankaracharya c) Bhakti Movement d) National freedom movement of India. As we know societies and Nations undergo phases of rise and decline, the rise happens due to some fundamental transformations in the society and due course these positive features become rigid and stagnate (Bose, 1934). After the crest of the Vaidic period, Indian society started to show features of fatigue at the beginning of the Mahajanapada period, social institutions like Varna, yagna, and social practice which proved to be positive, now due to stagnation and fatigue burdened the Indian society and many social evils paralysed the society. At that time Shramnic movements of Jainism and Buddhism challenged the old orthodoxy, institutions, and practices. The movement weaponised noble Ahimsa to build trust, brotherhood, and cohesion and tried to inculcate fundamental democratic practices in Indian society. Buddha was perhaps the first one to weaponize Ahimsa to weed out social evils and civil strife. Before Buddha Ahimsa was a narrow concept generally used against the practice of animal sacrifice. Buddha added new dimensions to Ahimsa like Maitri (fraternity) and Shastra Tyaga, which meant renouncement of any form of weapon and taking a vow to never bear arms. The famous story of Angulimala in the Pali canon of Theragatha shows The Buddha reforming and rehabilitating a serial killer named Angulimala transforming his heart (Hriday Parivartan), through his Ahimsak behaviour. The story of Angulimala shows how Buddha expanded the meaning of Ahimsa to include shastra Tyaga, Maitri, transformation, and rehabilitation of even criminal elements of society, thus Buddha gave profound meaning to Ahimsa. The concept of shastra tyaga and hriday Parivartan had a profound effect on the people of Magadha, it helped to establish a culture of mutual respect, non-aggression, and peaceful coexistence. Shastra Tyaga motivated the civilians of Magadha to give up arms and take up agriculture. Thus, the increased labour force and food production supported a large number of bhikshus, sangha, and viharas came into being. The viharas and sangha contributed to the genesis of civic culture, fundamental grassroots democratic practices originated in the sanghas percolated in the Magadhan society, and civilised and partially democratised masses helped the Magadha to maintain a monopoly over arms and could sustain a large army. It was now easy for the Samrat Ajatshatru to control an Ahimsak democratised civilian and capitulating on that he maintained a large army and started the Magadhan conquest. Thus, we can say Ahimsa played a major role in the development of democratic consciousness and behaviour at that time. As we have mentioned before nations

and societies undergo cyclical phases of growth and stagnation, Buddhism which contributed to the social awakening at that time gradually started to decay and degenerate. Ahimsa was appropriated by the sahayani monks to support their inactive behaviour, the Vajrayana and sahayana killed the missionary spirit of Buddhism, and Ahimsa was used as camouflage to shield against cowardice and inactivity. The advent of foreign invaders generated a necessity for a more particularistic religion than a universalistic religion, so during the medieval period, Bhagwat Dharma gained prominence and Buddhism lost ground. The weakening of the centralist forces gave rise to the feudatories and the economy incentivised the feudal system during the medieval period, Jati vyavastha became rigid and society became fragmented many social evils percolated in the Indian society, Progress of Knowledge, science and society stagnated (Tsang, 600-700). After the downfall of Harsha during 600-700 AD, the situation worsened because of the total collapse of a central force as well as Indian society degraded further (Mazumdar,1977). At that time of crisis, Adi-guru Shankaracharya emphasised the ultimate identity of the individual soul (atman) with the universal Brahman. His views on ahimsa (non-violence) were deeply rooted in his understanding of the nature of reality and the human soul. Shankara believed that ahimsa is a crucial step on the spiritual path towards liberation (moksha). By practising non-violence, one can purify the mind and develop qualities such as compassion, self-control, and equanimity. Ahimsa was seen as a way to avoid negative karma and prevent future suffering through rebirth. Shankara's Advaita philosophy emphasises the unity of all existence in Brahman, the ultimate reality. Since all beings are ultimately manifestations of Brahman, harming another is essentially harming oneself. This understanding of the oneness of existence naturally leads to compassion and non-violence towards all beings. Shankara provided practical guidelines for living a life of ahimsa, including avoiding violence in thought, word, and deed. He emphasized the importance of balance and practicality in applying the principle of ahimsa. While the ideal is to avoid all harm, he recognized that in certain situations, violence may be unavoidable or necessary for self-defence or the protection of others. Shankara's views on ahimsa are deeply intertwined with his Advaita philosophy. He saw non-violence as a fundamental principle for spiritual growth, a reflection of the unity of all existence, and a practical guide for ethical living. However, the question arises of how the Advaita movement of Shankaracharya can be linked with the social democratisation of India.

According to Ambedkar advait or Brahmaism (Brahmvaad) has great egalitarian and democratic potential,(Ambedkar, 1987).

“The Hindu religious and philosophic thought gave rise to an idea that had greater potentialities for producing social democracy than the idea of fraternity. It is the doctrine of Brahmaism. The essence of Brahmaism is summed up in a dogma which is stated in three different forms. They are: a) Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (All this is Brahma) b) Aham Brahmasmi (Atmana is the same as Brahma. Therefore, I am Brahma) c) Tattvamasi (Thou art also Brahma). It may well be that Brahma is unknowable. But all the same, this theory of Brahma has certain social implications which have tremendous value as a foundation for democracy. If all persons are part of Brahma, then all are equal and all must enjoy the same liberty, which is what democracy means. Looked at from this point of view, Brahma may be Unknowable. But there cannot be the slightest doubt that no doctrine could furnish a stronger foundation of democracy than the doctrine of Brahma. To support democracy because we are all children of God is a very weak foundation for democracy to rest on. That is why

democracy is so shaky wherever it is made to rest on such a foundation. But to recognise and realise that you and I are parts of the same cosmic principle leaves room for no other theory of associated life except democracy. It does not merely preach democracy. It makes democracy an obligation of one and all. (p. 172-77)”

Thus, the egalitarian zeal of the Advaita philosophy furthered social cohesion, and Ahimsa which had suffered after the decline of Buddhism re-entered the minds of Indians. The Advaita movement laid the groundwork for a continuous democratising movement called the bhakti movement which played a major role in promoting fraternity. Ahimsa, or non-violence, is a principle that aligns closely with the movement’s emphasis on love, compassion, and devotion. The saints like Mirabai, and Kabir Das used universal love and Ahimsa to build trust between various sects of the society and to disseminate a feeling of brotherhood. Gandhiji capitulated on the works of previous leaders and used Ahimsa as a tool for the freedom struggle. He emphasised that non-violence was not just a passive state but an active force. Gandhi's use of Ahimsa was central to his approach to the Indian independence movement. Gandhi used Ahimsa to formulate the strategies of a) Satyagraha, (which meant "truth-force" or "soul-force." It was a method of non-violent resistance against injustice b) non-cooperation with the unjust force, and civil disobedience. Thus, Gandhiji used a wider concept of ahimsa to mobilise and democratise the illiterate masses of India. Gandhiji included the elimination of poverty as part of his ahimsa philosophy as he used to say that poverty is the worst form of violence.

Dimensions of Ahimsa and its Comparison with Modern Concepts of Peace, disarmament, and Non-Violence

The philosophy of Ahimsa started with vegetarianism and travelled a long way to become one of the most potent weapons against tyranny in the modern world. Scholars simply equate Ahimsa with non-violence which is somewhat a reductionist view of Ahimsa. Other than non-violence a broader definition of Ahimsa would include a) Shatru Tyag, which is similar to the modern concept of disarmament and gun control b) Maitreya, which is similar to the concept of fraternity

c) Asahyog Non-cooperation with the unjust e) Elimination of poverty, which is can also be construed as structural deprivation f) Satyagraha which is peaceful demonstration g) Hriday parivartan which is similar to the modern concept of reformation and rehabilitation. At the end of the research paper, one of the most fundamental critiques of Ahimsa which remained unanswered is Militarisation and Ahimsa. Can a state be Ahimsa and maintain a military at the same time wouldn't that be duplicitous (Savarkar, 2016)?

A possible way out of this dilemma can be found in the two incidents of two of the central figures of Ahimsa, Buddha, and Gandhi. There is this story that when Ajatshatru king of Magadha invaded Vaishali he sent one of his ministers Vassakara to Lord Buddha to ask for some advice on how to conquer Vaishali, the Buddha suggested Vassakara to first break the unity of oligarchs (Vaishali was an oligarchic republic) from within and then attack, Vassakara acted accordingly and Magadha conquered Vaishali. This example suggests that Buddha was not against military action by the state, some stories suggest that Buddha himself was one of the counsels of the Magadha King Ajatshatru. Gandhi during World War I helped Britishers in military recruitment but protested the violent acts of Chauri-Chaura. From the above incidents we can conclude that Buddha and Gandhi were not against a regular military, they may have set different standards for military conditions and civilian conditions. One of the most fundamental differences between the approach of Buddha and Gandhi was that While Buddha supported a militarized state which was occupied by the

Magadhans i.e the local population, Gandhi supported the militarization of an occupier state i.e the Britishers during the world wars, meanwhile, Savarkar advocated for armed struggle against the occupier British state but he never advocated any armed resistance against the Indian state post-Independence, so despite being his misinterpretation of Buddhist View on militarisation and disarmament, his stand is more similar to Buddha than Gandhi. In conclusion, we can say that rather than advocating a military-less state Ahimsak society calls for civilian-military differentiation where civilians do labour and the military defends the state in contrast with a barbaric society where every civilian is armed. In the modern context, it can be understood in this way that the philosophy of Ahimsa forbids a civilian to bear arms but allows a military man to bear arms.

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