PREFACE

The educational background in history shaped my attraction to India and fervent desire to comprehend this civilization. My early articles, published in the Armenian press, were aimed at presenting to the public at large certain concepts of Indian philosophical and political thought. Upon assumption of duties of the first Armenian ambassador in India, I was given opportunity to conduct research within the country, having gained access to numerous sources. More importantly, through living and working in India I started gradually to understand individual and collective mindset of people, their appreciation of historical heritage and vision for the future. Learning Indian culture opened up entirely new horizons in the process of my comprehension. In addition, my diplomatic responsibilities and direct interaction with the government and civil society, the wide spectrum of political, economic, cultural and academic circles not only enriched my perception but also enabled to gain in-depth knowledge about their essence.

As far as the Armenian-Indian relations are concerned, I was privileged to find myself at the roots of their formation in the contemporary period. At some point I realized that I need to conduct a scholarly study on this topic, unavoidably going into the depth of history and on the background of their evolution addressing current state of the affairs. The fact of lacking comprehensive research on the topic but few exceptions that mostly leave it open, further motivated the already ripe decision.

The desire turned into practical work. The scrupulous process of collecting primary sources and relevant literature has been launched. My frequent visits to Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai produced numerous documents on the history of the Armenian communities in India. The Armenian Church archives and still available old-print books and press represent a vast source for the topic. Tombstone scripts and other factual material came to supplement written literary sources. JNU and Calcutta University libraries provided Indian literature. My search at Matenadaran, the depositary of manuscripts in Yerevan, brought to light very many pages of Indo-Armenian cooperation. The work at Armenian National Library and Library of the Armenian Academy of Sciences was also rewarding. The accounts of travelers, business journals of merchants, writings of scribes came to spread light on new pages of history. Documents from the British Library and Iranian-Armenian library of New Julfa in Isfahan were helpful. In regard of the contemporary period, the diplomatic and general governmental correspondence, originating at the embassies and ministries of foreign affairs, intergovernmental documents served as valuable sources for the study. The last but not least, personal participation in very many of reflected events and bilateral negotiations enabled to present them in a manner, not enduring any deviations.