(1) Preface :-

Indian culture and man’s philosophy, religious, social, political as well as individual aspects all those interesting information is well preserved in Purāṇa literature. And so in ‘Chāndogya Upaniṣad’ it is said that- “[it has pūa : p’c mo v’danta v’d: ]” It for this reason that in our Indian culture, Purāṇa holds an important place next to Vedas. It is though Purāṇa that economics, politics, ethics, religion, logical, geography, astrology, literature, figures of speech grammar, justice, criticism, all these subjects are discussed in this sense in Purāṇa the concept of incarnation is also discussed.

“The doctrine of incarnation is a nice expression of the law of spiritual world. If God is a savior of man, than he must take birth when the strength of evil elements destroy human values. In this sense incarnation is a descendant of God in the form of Man. In fact free soul of Man ascend to God. All creature is a descendant of God. However, they all are controlled by nature and God is the final controlled of nature.”

- Dr. Rādhākriśṇan.

In Sanskrit the word ‘Avtar’ is derived by adding ‘Av’ prefix to ‘t ‘Dhātu. It is a tradition Indian theory that when God takes birth as a man or other then is called ‘Avtar’.

The traditional opinion regarding the theory of ‘Avtar’ is to give up one’s Divine form and take a new birth another traditional belief regarding the theory of ‘Avtar’. Is that ‘Avtar’ means descendant of only some particles of God on the earth.

A human being who by giving up his human traits reaches to the Divine stage is considered ‘Avtar’ by some scholars. But the difference between an usual birth of man and the ‘Avtar’ of God is that the usual man has to born following the Nature and as per his own Karma, where as God is born ‘p’it . Svanit2#ay” God, remaining the supreme authority of Nature, uses Nature as a for the purpose of his birth. The accepted binding of Nature by God is a voluntary binding.
Śri Aravind says that there are two side of Divine birth means ‘Avtar’. One is the descend of God in the form of man. And God’s descend in to humanity. This birth of God in to humanity is like the descend in the form of human and in the form of human is the immortal ‘Avtar’. Second side is the changing of man(Nar) in to God(Nārāyaṇ). The ascend of man towards God like being is a Divine birth of man. This is also an ‘Avtar’. The main aim behind the birth of God (‘Avtar’) and the religion He protects is to help to ascend from man towards God.

In Śṛti also it is said – ‘t²vmis’ (that is you), ‘Ah. bjh aSm’ (I am the Brahmā). Thus the soul of all of us which is without physical body is God.

Gāndhijī writes –“ ‘Avtar’ means a special being in physical body.” All creature is an incarnation of God, But in an ardent sense we do not consider all creature as an ‘Avtar’. A man who is the supreme being in religion in his age, the people of next generation worship him as an ‘Avtar’, and he in whom there is a great consciousness of religion in his age is called a special ‘Avtar’.

This talk was about the ‘Avtar’ of human being. Besides this there is a reference in Purāṇa’s about non-human ‘Avtar’ in the form of animals, bird and beast residing on earth, water or in the air. What is an object of these ‘Avtar’? What can be the analysis of these form the point of view of social, ethical, logical, philosophical, classical and religion sense? In English the word ‘mythology’ is used for Purāṇa’s. By this reference what ‘myth’ do the Purāṇa’s give about ‘Avtar’? Consider such thoughts and questions, an idea occurred to study the beliefs and ideas regarding the ‘Avtar’ of ‘Brahmā’ at center in ‘Mahā-Puarāṇa’. Prof. Dr. Ambālāl M. Prajāpati Sir agreed with this proposal and shown his readiness for guidance. In this context, the present dissertation is a humble attempt by my own sense.

(2) Specialties of the dissertation:-

There is an attempt that present that dissertation will impart a new dimension to the references regarding ‘Avtar’ in Purāṇas (myths). There is an
attempt to cover up all the concepts of ‘Avtār’, which are discussed Sanskrit Literature. The compact of ‘Daśāvatār’ with picture is also given in the appendix.

(3) The objective of the deserter :-

The main objective of this dissertation is to given a special attitude of thinking and analyzing the ‘Avatāra’ explained in Indian tradition. It will provide a new attitude to the people of different religion, cult and area who are curious with this objective in mind, here is a humble attempt to present this dissertation.

(4) Chapter wise out line summary of dissertation.

The present dissertation has total six chapter. Chapter wise out line summary is as under.

Chapter :- 1 General introduction of Purāṇas.

Traditions bears an important place in the life of any country. Tradition is the chief soul of cultural and social life. It is the main pillar of the life of country. And as a legacy India as well as Sanskrit language is rich. It is a total presentation of complete knowledge quantity. And in all these Purāṇas catch a special attention.

There are many analysis of the word ‘Purāṇa’. In this reference, different opinions given by philosophy and scholars as well as of treatises. Besides there is a discussion of the word Purāṇa nearest to the English mythology as per modern scholars. From the ancient time there is a belief that there are total 18 numbers of Purāṇas. But the question is that why 18 numbers of Purāṇa? In this reference the opinion of different Purāṇas and treatise are mentioned. Here with an attempt is made to decide the order of these Purāṇas. According to it, it is consider that first Purāṇa is the Brahma-Purāṇa and the last is the Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa. Besides these, the names of ‘UpaPurāṇas’ and their introduction such as Devibhāgavat-Purāṇa, Harivanś-Purāṇa, Jain-Purāṇas, Baudhādh-Purāṇas is given related to the subject. From the point of view of criticism the Purāṇas can be
divided into two categories. In the same way, there is a discussion regarding the variety of subject matter.

Here the general aim of Purāṇas which is to pray Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Surya, Ganeśa and Śakti, And particularly to pray a dev(God) is also discussed. As per the dictum ‘प्राण अन्धन’ in Indian tradition influenced by Purāṇas than any other literature. In this respect the usefulness of Purāṇas is also noted.

The existence of Purāṇa literature is believed since from the time of ‘Rigaveda’. Then in ‘Brahmin’ treatise also there is a reference of the word ‘Purāṇa’. In the same way, in ‘Āraṇyaka’ and ‘Upaniṣada’ also the Purāṇas literature is available. As time passed, Ved vyāṣ edited it is also discussed here.

**Chapter :- 2 The meaning of the word ‘Avtar’ and its criticism referred in other than Purāṇas.**

In Indian culture and literature the word ‘Avtar’ holds an importance place. The word ‘Avtar’ is derived by adding the suffix ‘2’ to the Dhātu अवतर ‘Avtar’ means to descend from some high place to downward action or place. In Śrimad Bhāgavata Gītā, there is a doctrine discussion of ‘Avtar’. Here with the various opinion regarding ‘Avtar’ in different religion, different cult and by different philosophy are also mentioned. The concept of ‘Avtar’ is there in Indian tradition from the ancient time. The concept of ‘Avtar’ mention in, beginning from the ‘Vaidik’ time to all the treatises other than Purāṇas is also discussed here. In this respect of ‘Avtar’ in Veda, Brāhmin, Āraṇyaka, Upaniṣada, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Indian philosophy etc, is made here.

**Chapter – 3 The ‘Avtar’ of Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇa.**

As Śrimad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, is the most famous as well as popular among all the Purāṇas, catches our attention. It is for this reason that the total subject matter and the reference of the concept of ‘Avtar’ in it is separately discussed in this chapter. As Śrimad Bhāgavata Purāṇa is well known and popular, it bears various names such as ‘Bhāgavatai sanhita’, ‘Paramhansi
sanhita’ ‘Satvati shruti’ etc. All this information is given here. The discussion is made by giving the theological meaning of ‘&Imd\ wavgv’ and discussing it with reference. Here, Śrimade Bhāgavata Purāṇa is proved as one Maha-Purāṇa, and the summary of its subject matters is also presented.

In accordance with the subject of the present dissertation, an attempt to clarify the criticism on ‘Avt ā’ is made. Famous ancient beliefs in its presentation criticism methods with the truths of existing ‘Bhāgavata’ cults are also included. In Śrimada Bhāgavata Purāṇa, there is a reference of total twenty-two ‘Avt ā’. The reference of twenty four as well as nine is also available. But among all these ‘Avt ā’, the most famous ‘Avt ā’ which is the twenty four ‘Avt ā’ discussed by Brahma the seventh Adhyaya of second ‘Skandh’ of Śrimade Bhāgavata Purāṇa, is here explained in detail.

**Chapter :- 4 Criticism on ‘Avt ā’ in other Vaiśṇav Purāṇa.**

The Purāṇas such as Śrimade Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Padma Purāṇa, Narad Purāṇa, Garud Purāṇa, and Varaha Purāṇa are all considered as Vaiśṇav Purāṇa from time immortarl. After discussing the subject ‘Avt ā’ and other talks in Śrimade Bhagvata Purāṇa, here in this Chapter there is a criticism of ‘Avt ā’ keeping in view the other Purāṇas. Here is discussed by keeping in view the various opinions of twenty , twenty-two, twenty-four, and thirty nine Purāṇas.

Besides this, other ‘Avt ā’ as explained in Vaiśṇav Purāṇa such as Balaram, Sankarsha, Annant, Naag, ShriDhar, Trailokya-Mohan and other animal-bird ‘Avt ā’, etc, are also discussed in detail. In Vaiśṇav Purāṇa, along with the discussion on Avatars, the celestial form of ‘Avatari Viṣṇu’ is presented in one way or other from the Vedic time. By keeping in view it, here the information is given. As per the reference of Śrimade Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Vaiśṇav Purāṇa, the form of Viṣṇu seems quite remarkable. It is for this reason that in ‘Vaiśṇava’ religion and philosophy, it (the form of Viṣṇu) is discussed . In relation to the subject, it is also discussed here. In this context, Brahavdevatavada, A kesharvada etc points all also discussed here.
Any ‘Avtar’ comes into existence in particular form, at particular place and time and for particular action. On basis of this particular characteristic of ‘Avtar’ the classification of it can be done. It is for this reason, an attempt is made to classify and clarify the place related, time related and action related form of ‘Avtar’.

Chapter :- 5 Criticism on ‘Avtar’ in Purânas other then Vaiśṇav Purâna.

Out of eighteen ‘Maha-Purâna Matsya, Markendeya, Bhaviṣya, Brahmavaivarta, Brahma, Brahmanda, Vâmana, Vâyu, Agni, Linga, Kurma and Skanda Purâna are not included in Vaiṣṇava Purâna. A detailed description of ‘Nṛsinha’ and ‘Vâmana’ ‘Avtar’ along with the other the other ‘Avtar’ is found in ‘Matsya Purâna. In chapter 161- 163, there is a description of ‘Nṛsinha Avatar’, and in chapter 248 the description of ‘Varâha Avatâr’. In the first chapter there is a detailed story of the ‘Matsya Avatar’ which is narrated here. If examine with various references, this incident of ‘j l p t y’ along with ‘Matsaya Avatâr’ is an incident accepted by all at universal level. In this reference the presented here. By giving the introduction of ‘Vâmana Purâna’ the study of the ‘Vâmana Avatâr’ is also described here. There is a story of king ‘Bali’ in it.

Chapter :- 6 Conclusion.

Here is an attempt to present the various concepts of ‘Avtar’ as described in Purâñas along with ‘Vedas’, ‘Brâhminas’ ‘Áranyakas’ ‘Upaniṣadas’, ‘epics’ and ‘Smṛti Granthas’. It becomes clear, at the end of the study of all ‘Avtar’ of ‘Viṣṇu’ and other extra ordinary beings. His various forms and actions, that every forms of Him is not only beautiful and memorable but also all his strength, patient, compilation- evaluation are described her with.

Appendix – 1 Images of Ten Incarnations.
Appendix – 2 The table of Sanskrit sounds.
Appendix – 3 A list of reference books.