India and Iran share close cultural and civilizational experience for almost 3,000 years. Iran, the ‘Aryana’ or the land of ‘Aira’ corresponding to ‘Arya’, share several commonalities with India which was called the ‘Arya Vartha’. Infact Indian and Iranian civilizations enjoy a very ancient co-existence. The two countries have in the past influenced each other in the fields of culture, art, architecture and language. According to Jawaharlal Nehru, “Few people have been more closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of India and the people of Iran’.

It is believed that before 2000-3000 BC, the inhabitants of modern Iraq, Iran and also the people of north and north west India came from the same region. It is believed that Indians and Iranians belonged to one single family before the beginning of the Indo-Aryan civilization and lived together with a common language for many centuries in the pasture lands of Oxus Valley in Central Asia (modern Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzistan Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan). This common habitat was either around the upper reaches of the Tigri’s where the Zob meets it or in the vast Doab of the rivers Vahvi-Datiya and Ranha (the Oxus and Jaxertes). The first Aryan migration to India and Iran took place around 2000 B.C. These people brought with them their patrilineal system, their worship of sky gods, their horses and chariots. In the second millennium B.C. there was close affinity between language, mythology and religious traditions. India is mentioned in
the Persian *Avesta*. In the *Rg Veda* there are references to Persia. The Persians were called the *Parshavas* and later *Parasikas*. The modern term Parsi is originated from *Parasika*.

Prior to the advent at British rule in India, Persian influence was predominant on the Indian scene through Persian language and literature in the wake of India attaining independence in August 1947, new opportunities awaited India to renew and revive the countries old ties with Iran. During the 1950s, Indo-Iranian relations remained cool because of Iran’s alignment with the West and India’s policy of non-alignment. Their relations however started improving during the 1960s and 1970s, except during Ayatollah Khomeini’s period.

The divergent foreign policy objectives pursued by respective regimes in New Delhi and Tehran during that period and Shah of Iran’s almost “total learning” towards the United States and India’s apprehensions about Iran’s alliance with Pakistan were some of the factors that impeded the expansion at full-fledged relationship between the two countries.

With the advent of Islamic revolution in Iran early 1979, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran underwent a thorough change. The revolutionary regime in Tehran not only severed Iran’s special relationship with the United States but also dissociated itself from the US sponsored regional alliance like CENTO. The Islamic Republic of Iran joined the non
aligned movement, promotion of better relations with the non aligned countries become the hall mark of new Islamic Government of Iran. Thus new opportunities again awaited India for forging closer relations with Iran. However, it took almost some years both for New Delhi and Tehran to bring Indo-Iranian relations on an even heel, developments like Iran-Iraq war (September 1980 – August 1988) and India’s hesitation in branding Iraq as aggressor, Iran’s “interest” in the happenings in Kashmir valley and general plight of Muslims in India especially in the aftermath of communal riots and incident of demolition of Babri Mosque etc., have been the main irritants that have obstructed the healthy growth of friendly relations between the two countries. It was only after the visit of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to Iran from 20-22 September 1993 that the cobwebs of skepticism pervading two countries have been set aside thus providing a new fillip to bilateral cooperation in almost all the spheres.

The Islamic revolution which finally led to the establishment of Islamic Republic in Iran has received various and extensive attention from political analysts and scholars in various branches of social sciences. Even though more than two a decade has passed since Islamic Republic of Iran took place, working papers, reviews and comprehensive work on the topic have continued to come, attempts have been also made to analyze. The bilateral relationship between India and Iran with the emphasis either on making a reassessment of the older views and opinions or surveying the development from new angles and trying to throw some new light.
The Indo-Iranian equation is a significant evolving factor affecting regional politics in South and West Asia. Both the countries have realized that their relations were not determined only by the issue of Islam but extend much further. The mutual desire for friendship and cooperation has lessened the misunderstandings and both the countries can now look forward to a more stable relationship.

The vital factors that governed their relations during the 1990s were: energy, where both the countries are looking for a long-term partnership; Afghanistan, where both favor a peaceful settlement through the establishment of a broad-based government with the representation of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan; and Central Asia, where both the countries are concerned for security reasons as well as for economic interaction.

Both shared the view that the wider dimensions of Indo-Iran relations were more important than the fundamental difference of views on Kashmir and emphasized on consolidating relations with each other.

In this connection the important works already available may be synoptically surveyed.

*Iranians in Mughal Politics and Society 1606-1658* by Dr. Abolghasem Dadvar (Delhi, 1999) deals with Iranian share in the
formation of the Mughal administrative and cultural apparatus. The book examines the regions of Iran, from where the migration to India had taken place. Sir John Malcom’s *The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time* 2 vols (London 1815) is a highly informative work on the history of the Persia.


*Growth of Civilizations in India and Iran*, Edited by Irfan Habib, is a collection of articles by several outstanding scholars of India. The essays are an effort to explore how much the growth of civilizations in India and Iran owes to what each of these countries has received from the other. Parpola, Asko, *“The coming of the Aryans to Iran and India and the cultural and Ethnic Identity of the Dasas”* (Article, International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics, 1988) is a significant contribution.
N.S. Gorekar, ‘Indo-Iranian Cultural Relations, F.C. Davar, Indo-Iranian Cultural Relations through Ages Chopra.R.M, Indo-Iranian Cultural Relation through the age are some of the significant works.

The emphasis on Political Relations during the period, is to be found in the writing of A.K. Pasha, Contemporary Iran and India Emerging Indo – Iranian relations and also India, Iran and the GCC States. Sushama Gupta, Pakistan as a factor in Indo –Iranian Relations 1947-87. Farah Naaz, India and west Asia. Hamid Ansari., Iran Today. Dixit.J.N, Across borders: Fifty years of India’s Foreign Policy. are very important contributions in this regard.

The present researcher took up the uphill task at academic exploration of this era but the lack of relevant literature as well as diversified and scattered source material portended serious problem. However, this task was made easy through the keen interest, meticulous supervision and scholarly guidance of, Prof. O. Anantharamaiah, Vice Chancellor of Tumkur University and former professor in department of History University of Mysore, Mysore who enabled me to sift the chaff off the grain. The resultant outcome has been in the form of present study.

The thesis deals with the issue of Indo- Iranian Cultural and Political Relations from 1947 to 2000.

The first chapter in the form is Historical background –A shared past.
Indo – Iranian relations –The Shah regime form the subject matter of analysis in the second chapter. The history of the Indo-Iranian relations during the Shah regime was a journey from the days of the military alliances to the days of detente. Iran increasingly realized the necessity of pragmatic considerations in her relations with her neighbours. Economic considerations became increasingly the first priority in Iran’s relationship with India during the last phase of the Shah regime.

India’s relations with post – Revolutionary Iran are critically examined in the third chapter.

The forth chapter deals with India, Iran and the Neighbours. The relationship between India and Iran in modern times is determined to a great extent by its relationship with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Foreign policy of India and Iran related to Afghanistan and Pakistan has been discussed in this chapter. Indo- Iranian relations on the threshold of the 21st century are examined in the fifth chapter. The chapter deals mainly with the ongoing Indo-Iranian co-operation and initiative in gas pipeline, scientific and technical co-operation, Indian assistance to Iran space and nuclear research etc and the final chapter in the form is conclusion on the basis of the present study.

The approach of this study is topical - analytical rather than historical. It takes support to material dealing with various, regional, international, cultural and economical fact. But in this regard the historical approach also
have its own advantage. For sources of evidence, the present study depends mainly on the official publication of the Government of India and Iran, the parliamentary debates, the annual report, the speeches of two governments in magazine, newspaper internet site and U.N. publications and series of archival documents particularly manuscripts have been utilized for the current study.