The word 'Asura' used throughout the entire range of Vedic literature, offers an interesting material for study from the semantical, mythological, historical and sociological points of view. In the early portion of the र्गवेद, it is mostly used in the sense of 'living', 'vigorouss', 'powerful', 'vital' and occurs as an epithet for different Vedic gods - the singular form occurs as the epithet for individual god like अग्नि, इंद्र, वरुण, सवित्र, फुषान, द्यौस, etc., the dual form for the dual deity like मित्र-वरुण and plural form for the नरुस and विज्येदास or for gods in general. In this capacity, the word 'Asura' is equivalent to the Ἀσωρ, the designation of the highest God in Ἀσώρ. But at a certain stage of its history the term 'Asura' acquired the sense of beings hostile or inimical to the gods and the genes of this idea are laid down, however, in a few passages of the र्गवेद itself. In the other साहित्यas, the sense of 'Asura' as a demon, the base spirit hostile to the gods, is dominating. In the ब्राह्मण म and other later Vedic texts it signifies a race of beings inimical to the gods.

In Vedic mythology 'Asuras' play a very important role. Most of the myths of the र्गवेद, by some way or other, are related to the Asuras. In the ब्राह्मण म, Asuras are mentioned as to have performed many sacrifices like Devas but they are said to have failed to achieve the desired fruit, because their method of performing sacrifice was quite different from that of the gods. Many लज्जास and rituals have been prescribed in the ब्राह्मण म to overcome the Asuras and drive away their evil-doings.
Now, the question is who are these Asuras? Scholars have taken a lot of pains to ascertain the real nature of the Asuras. Various theories have been proposed in this regard. However, they are in the form of papers and due to their limitations they do not cover the topic in its entirety. No systematic and comprehensive research has been done on this important topic so far. The present thesis entitled 'Asuras in the Vedic Literature' aims at presenting a systematic and comprehensive study of the subject and unveiling the mystery of our Indian Culture.

The present work 'Asuras in Vedic Literature' consists of eight chapters. Chapter first deals with the concepts of 'Asuras', its various meanings, different myths relating to birth and creation of the Asuras, their physical features and dwelling places. The second chapter fully discusses the relation of the Asuras with the Devas. The third Chapter mainly deals with the great battle fought between the Asuras and the Devas. In the fourth chapter, various theories proposed by oriental as well as occidental scholars to explain the myths connected with the Devas and Asuras have been detailed and examined. In the conclusion of the chapter, I have expressed my definite view that all the myths relating to various Devas and Asuras can best be explained and understood, merely in the light of the theory proposed by the Nairuktas. The fifth chapter deals with the sacrifices performed by the Asuras and the Iṣṭis and rituals to draw away their evil-doings. The sixth chapter deals with their 'māyā' and the seventh chapter deals with their customs, food, language, religion, philosophy etc., the eighth chapter forms the conclusion of the thesis.