Introduction:

The researcher is delightfully happy to present the synopsis of the concerned research-work. Nearly in the course of four semesters the researcher has almost accomplished the research-work with the kind support from his research-guide and he is hopefully expecting to submit his thesis in the coming Diwali vacation. Thomas Stearns Eliot who won the Nobel Prize for literature in the year 1948 was a master poet of modern English poetry, whose greatness can be measured from the very fact of the contemporary time being designated as the age of Eliot. It is also a matter of distinctive discussion that Eliot was enormously influenced by the spiritual thoughts and scriptural tradition of the Indian culture and Buddhism. In his doctoral research-work the researcher would like to analyze T.S.Eliot as the Foremost Spokesman of the Scriptural Tradition & Ideas of India in English literature. The influence can be seen from the fact that the only illustrious non-Sanskrit book in the literary world ending with ‘SHANTIH SHANTIH SHANTIH’ is none other than the magnum opus of Eliot i.e. The Waste Land. In his doctoral research-work the researcher would like investigate several poems of Eliot along with his poetic dramas to trace out the scriptural influence of India from them.

As per the requirements the researcher has decided to subdivide this synoptic chapter into seven sections. In the very first section it will be looked at in what conditions the present topic was taken up for the said research. In the second section the life and works of T.S.Eliot will be looked at. This very section will broadly discuss the social and literary background of Eliot and also manifest Eliot’s faithfulness to the zeitgeist of the contemporary society. In the third section there will be a general estimate of the Chapterization in the said thesis. The fourth section will throw light on the attitude of various critics with reference to the Indo-Buddhist scriptural influences on Eliot and their respective categories. It will talk in details how the critical evaluation of the Pro- Indo-Buddhist critics conforms to the Indo-Buddhist scriptural traditions. The sixth section will talk about the impact of the scriptural tradition of India, most obviously that of the Bhagavad Gita on the critical output of Eliot. The topic of research is the evaluation of T.S. Eliot as the foremost spokesman of the Indo-Buddhist Scriptural Tradition & Ideas in English literature. It is a well-known fact that there are a number of creative writers of the world, who were mesmerized by the Indian traditional value-system e.g. the transcendentalist group of the American writers- mostly Thoreau, Emerson and Walt Whitman. The names of Max Muller
and Hermann Hesse etc. need to be added over here. But out of all the internationally known personalities T.S. Eliot was the foremost figure in whose creative and critical works a conspicuous analogy with the thought and traditions of the indo-Buddhist scriptures is found.

Apart from the researcher’s enormous interest in the literary and critical output of T.S. Eliot there exist several factors responsible behind choosing such a complex topic for the doctoral research. Being a teacher of English literature the researcher has to teach one of Eliot’s best poems-‘Ashwednesday’ in the senior UG class. It is a poem in five parts, the final part of which shows that the penitents, in the month of Lent, are willingly ready to follow the words of the Lord exactly in the same fashion of Arjuna, the great hero of the Vedic civilization of India, who asserts in his very last verse uttered to Lord Krishna in The Bhagavad Gita:

\[ \text{Nashto moha smritirlabdha twatprasadanmayachyut,} \]

\[ \text{Sthitohsmi gatasandehah karishye vachanam tava}^{1} \]

(destroyed is my delusion, I have gained knowledge through thy grace/O Immutable One! I am firm, my doubts have fled away. I will perform according to thy word.)

This is the place from where the researcher felt like researching the tenets of the Indian scriptures in the literary works of Eliot. The researcher’s topic to be inquired about is to what extent Eliot has followed the Indian scriptures in his works and thereby to indicate the direct or indirect influence of the Vedic tradition of India on the literary output of Eliot. Here it should also be taken note that Eliot was greatly influenced by Buddhism also. As India was the land where the religious offshoots i.e. Buddhism and Jainism flourished, the researcher has not shown the Buddhist influence on Eliot quite separately. It is a well-known fact that Jainism and Buddhism are the two inseparable organs of the Indian epistemological as well as ontological system. Just as Eliot was influenced by Buddhism his contemporary poet and another Nobel laureate William Butler Yeats was enormously influenced by Jainism. Having firmly decided to go for PhD in the same topic the researcher has endeavoured his utmost to read the creative and critical works of Eliot along with the scriptural classics of Hinduism and Buddhism. The following is the total summary of what the researcher has reviewed the concerned literature:

\* 1.2 Life & Works of T.S. Eliot:
In this section the researcher wishes to make his readers aware about Eliot’s birth, parentage, certain significant details about his parents and grandpa, his education and his literary output of abundance.

**Individual Information about Eliot:**

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on September 26, 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri that was an industrial city in the very heart of the USA. Here the researcher wishes to highlight that the year 1888 was incidentally the year in which a conspicuously notable man of criticism Matthew Arnold passed away. In this very natural coincidence also the researcher wishes to indicate that the demise of Arnold was balanced by the laws of nature with the birth of an equally prophetic critic of the future. It is also a well-pondered Indian scriptural notion that nothing remains credited or debited with the Nature with a single birth or death. The researcher fondly surmises that the Nature itself gave a red-carpet welcome to Eliot by showing the prominent Indian scriptural tenet for the birth of the one who was to be the prophet of the Indo-Buddhist tradition in English literature and that, too without any obvious attempt on the part of Eliot. Thomas was the seventh and the youngest child of Henry Ware Eliot and Charlotte Chauncy Stearns. The Eliots was of the Devonshire origin. They descended from a reputable man of the seventeenth century namely Andrew Eliot, who had migrated from East Cocker, Somersethshire to New England. The Eliots preferred to live in Boston for a number of generations and carried on trade over there. However, one of Thomas’s ancestors namely Reverend Andrew Eliot (1718-78) took to the service of the Church. There he worked as the minister of the North Church and subsequently elected the President of Harvard. T.S.Eliot’s grand father namely William Greenleaf Eliot left Boston and got settled in St.Louis. He enjoyed the reputable distinction of having established the first Unitarian Church over there and he attained wide popularity for playing the instrumental role in establishing the Washington University of which he became the Chancellor in 1872. As a renowned American educator, Unitarian minister and a civic leader in Missouri he contributed to the establishment of numerous civic institutes and the public school system as well as the various charitable institutes over there. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the soul and spirit of the American transcendentalism referred to him as ‘the saint of the west’. Although he had passed away a year before the birth of T.S.Eliot, the latter later on publicly acknowledged the enormous influence of the former in the constitution of his literary sensibility. Apart from this he wrote a number of religious books and essays, having the recurrent theme of the nature
and meaning of martyrdom, which his grandson was to get pre-occupied with later on. Although the two uncles of T.S.Eliot had dedicated their lives to the church services, his father Henry Ware Eliot preferred to become a businessman in the flourishing brick trade after getting his graduation from the Washington University. In 1668 he married Charlotte Chauncy Stearns, a daughter of a Boston businessman and commission agent. Being a woman of fine literary and creative disposition, she composed such writings as the biography of her father-in-law and a poetic play on the life of one of the earliest martyrs of the European Reformation i.e. Savonarola. This play was published by her famous son T.S.Eliot in 1926, the year in which he himself made a first bold experiment in this literary genre with *Sweeney Agonistes*. In this way two conspicuously dominant features in the personality of T.S.Eliot, his literary sensibility along with his comprehension of and grasp on the practical affairs of life seem to have been acceded to from his parents. During his childhood he was brought up in an almost non-Christian family ambiance. It is because even if Henry Ware Eliot didn’t go into the creed of Unitarianism like two of his brothers, the parental religious creed of T.S.Eliot was none other than Unitarianism. Yet the creed of Unitarianism could scarcely be considered a sect of Christianity because of its not believing in the Trinity. In this fashion T.S.Eliot’s infidelity in the traditional revelation of religion in his early days couldn’t be said to be a sharp break from his family traditions. As the Eliots had shown their faith conforming to a non-Christian sect Unitarianism and Henry Ware Eliot was not the least attracted to it also, the researcher does not find anything surprising in T.S.Eliot embracing the creed of Anglo-Catholicism in 1927. The researcher also wishes to point out that the familial non-Christian tradition that ultimately resulted in the conversion of T.S.Eliot might have induced Eliot to take refuge in the Indo-Buddhist scriptural heritage. Being a firm non-believer even in their familial creed of Unitarianism H.W.Eliot got his son trained so as to make him choose his profession of business. Living up to the anticipation of his father, T.S.Eliot began as a bank-official and ended up as a resplendently rich managing Director of the publishing house, Faber and Faber, London.