ABSTRACT

The thesis entitled *An Exploration of Identity Quest* showcases in detail the theme of quest in Arun Joshi and Shashi Deshpande’s select novels.

Chapter I defines the terms ‘Identity’ and ‘Existentialism’ and traces the history of the genre ‘novel’ and Indian English Literature. It also covers the life and works of the authors Arun Joshi and Shashi Deshpande and also identifies the theme of quest in their works.

Chapter II highlights the theme of quest in the novels *The Last Labyrinth* and *The Dark Holds No Terror*. It also brings out the theme of hunger and the theme of selflessness.

Chapter III reflects the idea of primitivism in the novel *The Strange Case Of Billy Biswas* and also explores the contradiction between tradition and modernity in the novel *Roots And Shadows*.

Chapter IV illustrates the sense of alienation and meaningful detachment in the novels *The Foreigner* and *That Long Silence*.

Chapter V underlines the concept of realization of the self through time and highlights the impact of human predicament through the characters of the novel *The Apprentice* and *A Matter of Time*.

Chapter VI is a summary of the points discussed in the previous chapters, justifying the central theme of quest through sacrifice and selfless service to humanity.