PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The issue of gender is one of the most intently discussed and debated problems of our times. All over the world it is being felt that the traditional notions of gender have not only been the source of harassment, subjugation, segregation, isolation, and exploitation of a major part of humanity but also the seedbed of the most ugly practices and inhuman cruelties done against women in particular, and against those too who found themselves differing from the stereotypes structured on the patriarchal concepts of sex and sexuality. And therefore, it is being felt very deeply that the nebula, which has hitherto kept man and woman wrapped in the abysmal dark, must be jerked off for the greater common good of human world.

Writers, being God-gifted persons, possess a highly insightful apprehension of the world they live in, and of the people and the society they write about. Indian women writers in English, like women writers around continents, are committed to root out the biased perceptions of men regarding woman and womanhood, and their writings reflect highly realistic shades of the Indian society where men are still insistence on following the codes of Manu in case of women and untouchables.

The novelists and the novels selected for this study cover the transitional phase of the last millenium. I was eager to explore the sensibilities of the globally applauded writers of the nation at the turn of the century, and to be a fellow observer of things surrounding my world and me. The study provided me the desired
opportunity and I am glad to contribute my modest share of observations with all those who believe in the force of literature and beauty of life.

Now, when the work is completed, I feel it very essential to acknowledge a few persons who have been with me consistently throughout my endeavour.

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