Animals have played a significant role in human society from time immemorial. They appear in myths, in the legends and other animal fables. For a large portion of the world’s inhabitants, the traditional tale is even today one of the principal forms of entertainment. Children, of course, were very fond of it, it is primarily the young child who carries on the interest in the folk tale and fables. Even today in remote corners of the world, and everywhere among primitive men, folk-tales and fables serve to give artistic expression to the imagination and to bring amusement and excitement to monotonous life.

In the animal fables their characters are exposed with full personality in the guise of stories. The aim of these tales and fables is to bestow moral education to pacify the readers belongs to the society. Varieties of animal-tales and fables are there in every part of the world. These types of stories, besides Indian literature, also found in other literature like Chinese, Russian, English, Greek, Korean, African, German and North-Sea tales and fables which are not only interesting, but also educative and treasure of moral values and store-house of practical wisoms.

It is expected that this present work would be able to make the reader acquainted with great stories which focuses attention on the representative and influential works written in the hoary past. Easy, fluent and impressive language has been applied to enhance the grace of the work. Some illustrations have also added in this study based on world’s famous works like Pañcatantra, Hitopadeśa, Jātakas, Kathāsarit sāgara and the Mahābhārata. These gems of Indian literature have never failed to bring
delight to millions of people and to awaken intelligence in the younger ones. These works belong to the age-old oral tradition of which storytelling is an important part. The accompanying illustrations are given to help our young readers visualize the entire situation. Through these illustrations, they would find the fables and stories amusing and enlightening in equal measure.

These stories and fables are alive all the time and quite relevant still today. That is why the utility of these fables have occupied an important place in modern literature. Every fable can be applied to human character, traits like love, hate, envy, jealousy and so on.

The purpose of this present dissertation is to communicate a joyful experience of the beauty of wisdom of India’s literature and share it with my readers.

I was deeply charmed at and influenced by these stories and fables since my early childhood when I heard from my parent and grand-parent. It mould in my heart, I was enthusiastic to know more about these stories.

As I got privilege for higher study that vivid reminiscence impulse me to do work on it. I determined that I will do research on this issue and try to analyze it from modern point of view under an able research guide. Accordingly, I have been proposed the present topic viz, “Animals in Sanskrit fable literature” for a Ph.D. thesis of Gauhati University under the guidance of Dr. Apurba Chandra Barthakuria, M.A., Ph. D., (Cal), veda šāstri, sāhitya šāstri, Rtd. Prof. and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University.

My present research-work “Animals in Sanskrit fable literature” is the outcome to satiate this thrust. Here, I have analyzed the animals in fables
and tales through different chapters viz – classification, distribution, behaviour, food habit, enmity with other animals, symbolic aspects, practical wisdom etc. found in Sanskrit and fable works in other literature, the utility of animal fables and its necessity in the present context.

I expect that the findings of this research work will definitely facilitate the education system to exert the moral values in the present society.

I am ever grateful to my honourable guide but for whose able guidance it would have been impossible for me to complete the present work.

(Mrs. Basanti Bordoloi)