Preface

Tradition as the corpus of essential values and attitudes form the essence of literature and life. Its capacity for growth and adjustment relates it to the phenomenon of change. Writers and thinkers have found tradition and change to be a convenient means of deciphering the truths of life and society.

India, the land of living history and tradition is also an embodiment of the enormous changes and transformation overtaking the world in recent times. Indian and Indian English literature make comprehensive references to these aspects and as such I found tradition and change a convenient backdrop to base my study on writers Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai.

The decision to take up this topic on tradition and change with reference to women characters stemmed from my interest in Indian English fiction and fascination for women studies. A discussion with my late guide Dr. Anita Baruah Sarmah encouraged me when her academically sound suggestions supplemented my fledging, tentative ones. The reading of Irawati Karve’s book *Yuganta* which is a re-reading of the *Mahabharata* and a “record of complex humanity”, served as the germ of the idea for the topic selected. I always felt a re-reading of the past could be an answer to many perplexing questions of the present and a pointer to the future.

I acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude my indebtedness to Dr. Aparna Bhattacharyya, Reader, Department of English, Gauhati University for taking up my guideship at this late juncture. Besides giving me academic guidance, she has helped me through with her practical suggestions.

I am indebted to the Head and Faculty of the Department of English, Gauhati University for allowing me the scholarly ambience of the Department and the Librarian and staff of K.K.Handiqui Library for providing me with full library facilities.
Special thanks goes to all my colleagues in the Department of English, Cotton College for their valuable assistance and suggestions.

I am specially obliged to Dr. D.D. Patgiri and my children Ritom and Esha and my niece Antara for their help with the typing and computer operations. I also thank my entire family for standing by me through this trying time.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my former guide, Dr. Anita Baruah Sarmah, late Head, Department of English, Gauhati University without whom this work would never have seen the light of day.

Abanti Barua Bharali