PREFACE

The first chapter, *Introduction*, deals with how Rabindranath Tagore's nine social novels dealing with the theme of love are reflective of his contemporary Bengal under the throes of the birth of the new order of the society. It is due to the forces of the Renaissance, working for reformative changes in social practices, and Bengali literary taste for the new genre, novel. Tagore is the pioneer in writing social novels involving the psychological study of characters. As a novelist of modern outlook Tagore has a balanced view on the East-West orientation to the existing style of literary thinking. The result is that there crops up the dichotomy between modernity and tradition, an East-West synthetic approach on the one hand, and the tradition of the entrenched cultural values on the other. The present study is on this never ending dichotomy as relevant to the texture of the country's cultural values and emotional choices.

Tagore’s novels are twelve in number with nine of them translated into English. The translated pieces have been taken up for present study. His nine novels are to be surveyed in the chronological order of their appearance.
The second chapter *Feminine Compromise* deals with the women of Tagore’s time reaching out to the spirit of Renaissance in terms of women’s empowerment. Decisively Tagore’s favour is for women and not for men. He portrays them with unqualified sympathy. He finds dignity in their suffering. The ‘bhadralok’ women, particularly those belonging to the Brahmin stock are born with a cultural consciousness. Although only a few have the privilege of Western education, all of them get into the spirit of self-realisation. Tagore portrays these women characters as a new class born of the new social consciousness of the new world.

There are twenty-four women characters in his nine novels who fall into three major different categories namely traditional lovers, modern lovers and the widows both young and old, some of whom are elderly mothers. The category of modern women is divided into the sub categories devotional lovers, eligible lovers, and lovers, who come under ‘mother-kind’ and ‘beloved-kind’ at once. The modern lovers are further classified into the group of patriots and the group of sophisticated women. Elderly widows and elderly mothers form a separate group. The last part of this chapter deals with the young rebel widows.

An elaborate study is made on how each woman character’s emotional responses have already been chiselled out inside her. It is in her
grain. It is but natural that their emotional responses should draw rival impulses from across their social hedges. This leads to the dichotomy of values as crystallized into emotions. This emotional being of each character is decisive in formulating a new system of relationships that is to follow the confrontation. It is an ongoing process bringing in the dichotomy of modernity and tradition.

The third chapter *Male Obduracy* deals with the male characters of Bengali ‘bhadrolok’ of upper middle-class status. These men of high calibre particularly the heroes of the novels put forward their claims towards establishing their identity under the changed social circumstances. In this process of self-realisation they do get entangled into an emotional dilemma. There is a dichotomy of values in juxtaposition with the opposite pulls. The dichotomous tangle will be as of present and future, truth and untruth and love and sacrifice. The clash between modernity and tradition will be the most relevant dichotomy for these lovers. The modernity is that the lover is poised for promoting his love. It is a matter of interpersonal agreement or adjustment. It will lead to a crisis. It may be due to the operation of external forces like religion or society. Adjustment in the form of compromise is feasible. And the dilemma is solved when the tension between faith and their mindset gives place to compromise.
The fourth chapter *Technical Nuances* deals with the spirit and style of creativity of Rabindranath Tagore. He is an ever-youthful novelist as related to writing novels with progressive vision. Tagore, with his innovative fervour, uses varied techniques to suit his pioneering work of writing novels in response to the demands of the modern times.

The concluding chapter *Summation* is a presentation of the findings of the researcher.