PREFACE

Feminist Literary Criticism is an emerging discipline with universal popularity, attempting to analyse literature from a feminist perspective. Several studies on the works of Kālidāsa have already appeared, mostly based on traditional Indian literary theories by a number of authors. The present thesis is an attempt to study his works by applying feminist literary theories, much discussed in modern literary criticism.

This thesis is divided into eight chapters in addition to an introduction and the conclusion. The thesis begins with an introduction to the topic detailing the aim and scope of the work. The first chapter introduces feminism to give an awareness of the concepts of feminism and feminist literary criticism including feminism in the Indian context. To understand the treatment of woman in Sanskrit literature and the social and literary background in which he wrote, a brief survey of the position of woman in ancient and classical Sanskrit is included in the second and third chapters. Two chapters describe the female characters of Kālidāsa, classifying them as major and minor. Fourth chapter is devoted to the former and fifth to the latter. The poetic background of Kālidāsa and the thematic deviations made by him are included in the sixth chapter. Poetic world of Kālidāsa and his treatment of woman are examined in the feminist viewpoint in seventh chapter. The eighth
chapter deals with gender problems and related notions in Kālidāsa. The thesis concludes with a critical evaluation of the work.

I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. K.N. Neelakantan Elayath, Hon. Professor, Adyar Library, Chennai, for supervising my research work giving valuable suggestions. I am also extremely thankful to Dr. C. Rajendran and Dr. K. Sekharan, the Heads of the Department during my deputation period for providing me with all facilities. Thanks are also to my teachers, friends and other members of the staff of the Department for assistance they have rendered at different levels of my research.

I am grateful to the University Grants Commission for deputing me under their Faculty Improvement Programme. I also extend my thanks to the authorities of Sreekrishna College, Guruvayur for granting permission for my deputation.

C. U. Campus, October, 2006. Devaky. E. S.