PREFACE

The creative output of each country tries to project a specific culture as each writer has a perception of his/her own society or culture’s distinctive features. Due to this, literature has become vibrant with new concepts, narrative techniques and historical accounts. The emergence of woman writers in the post-colonial period has actually heralded a new epoch in Commonwealth literature, where the pen becomes the eloquent weapon to question the so called holistic tradition. So, patriarchal structures are questioned and female stereotypes are replaced by ‘real’ women.

As Frye says ‘the book is the most efficient technological instrument for learning that has ever been devised by the human mind. It stays around and always says the same thing no matter how often you consult it’. True to this statement most of the female writers of the post-colonial era have chosen to garb their female predicaments in totally new and exciting models and genres with peculiarly new and challenging insights. The ‘female predicament’ has been the main focus of study of many a male and a female writer. The female predicament actually includes the problems related to gender, conjugal conflicts leading, to segregation and fragmentation. It includes the depiction of the lives of the oppressed and suppressed women tormented consistently by inner turmoils. It also includes predicaments like the females fighting against the society-stipulated female norms of life and also describes the writer’s concern for the downtrodden and the victimized women.

Wherever women are, the predicaments are more or less the same. The Canadian novels Moral Disorder and Surfacing written by Margaret Atwood and the Indian novels A Matter of Time and That Long Silence written by Shashi Deshpande inspired me to focus on the problems faced by the heroines in the concerned novels. I deliberately chose two novels from each writer irrespective of their chronological
sequences because the four novels in totality had the material and themes vast enough for a doctoral dissertation. Both the writers, though seemingly simple, are highly complex in their approaches, in their structures, in their narratives and in their patterns of behavior. The women in Atwood make very good comparison with the women of Shashi Deshpande.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I acknowledge the gracious blessings of the Almighty who had led me to take up this venture which is the preoccupation of every woman for, every woman has a predicament of some sort which she tries to overcome and conquer.

Dr.(Mrs). Premakumari Marshal, M.A., Ph.D., Retd. Professor, Department of English, Bharathidasan University under whose valuable guidance the present investigation has been carried out is a true intellectual, whose scholarly acumen is beyond mention. My gratitude knows no bounds for her stupendous suggestions, scintillating advice, remarkable guidance and copious encouragement rendered at every stage of this investigation. But for her, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. M. Kalaamani, M.A., Ph.D., Professor and Head, Department English, Bharathidasan University. I express my sincere thanks for her kind help and encouragement.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Isaac Jebastine, M.A., Ph.D., Reader, Department of English, Bharathidasan University, Trichy and Dr. T.S. Ramesh, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of English, National College, Trichy for having served on the Doctoral Committee as members and for having given valuable suggestions and salient points helping me in my doctoral engagement.
I express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. R. Selvaraj, M.A., D.Litt, Correspondent cum Secretary, Vallalar Arts and Science College, Vadalur, who motivated me to complete the research work in order to enhance my intellectual caliber.

I take this opportunity very sincerely to thank my colleagues Mr. Sundaramoorthy, M.A.(English), M.A.(History), M.Ed., M.Phil., Mr. M. Manickam, M.A.(English), M.A.(History), M.A.(Tamil), M.Ed., M.Phil.(English) and Mrs. Susi Anusuya, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil who cooperated with me to take care of my students whenever I took leave for this investigation.

I thank my spouse Mr. K. Chakkaravathy, M.E., General Manager/T.A., Neyveli Township who supported me in various aspects to complete my thesis. My sincere thanks to my beloved father Mr. W.R. Narasimhan (Retd. Executive Engineer (Electrical), NLC Ltd.) who has immense pleasure in my educational progress.

I extend my gratitude to my sons Mr. C. Muthukumaran, B.E., M.A.C.S (Canada), Technical Systems Analyst, Royal Bank of Canada and Mr. K.C. Vishal, M.E., M.B.A., Senior Lecturer, Prathyusha Engineering College, Chennai, who encouraged and helped me in the process of this investigation.

I acknowledge with sincere thanks, the Librarians of Bishop Heber College, ASRC, Hyderabad, British Council, Connemara, Chennai and Annamalai University, Chidambaram for their unstinted co-operation in lending books and enabling me to get material for my doctoral thesis.

I also thank the University authorities for helping me with constant guidance regarding procedures in the process and completion of my thesis.

Mrs. N. PREMA