PREFACE

The ecological bearing in literary studies are variously termed as eco-aesthetics, eco-criticism, environmental aesthetics and so forth. It is well known that the experimental and human-centred view of nature has been the cause of the exploitation and destruction of the earth and its environment. In the place of this predominant view, eco-aesthetics puts forward a holistic, ecological or eco-aesthetic perspective of nature. Eco-aesthetics considers that the enterprise of man's domination or conquest of nature spearheaded by modern science and technology is hazardous to the entire world. In order to curb man's destructive attitude towards nature, eco-aesthetics make use of the ideas that ecology upholds such as there is a rhythm, harmony and order in the universe. The primacy of natural world is accepted and the truth that nature is a whole of which humans are only one part of it is admitted. It is interesting to note that some of these ideas are well represented in literature and arts all over the world from the ancient times onwards.

This thesis titled ‘ECO-AESTHETIC APPROACH TO KĀLIDĀSA’S POETRY’ is an attempt to study Kālidāsa’s works from an eco-aesthetic point of view. The first chapter ‘Ecology and Eco-Aesthetic Criticism: an Introduction’ gives a general introduction to the main tenets of ecology and eco-aesthetic criticism. The second chapter ‘The Treatment of Nature in Ancient Literature’ examines the eco-aesthetic ideas scattered in the
ancient Sanskrit literature. The third chapter 'Eco-Aesthetic Elements in Kālidāsa's Kāvyas' tries to locate ecological ideas in Ṛaghuvaṃśa, Kumārasaṃbhava, Meghadūta and Ṛtusaṃhāra. The fourth chapter 'Eco-Aesthetic elements in Kālidāsa's Nāṭakas' focuses on the presence of nature in Kālidāsa's plays, his poetic description of nature and human interactions with nature. The fifth chapter 'Kālidāsa's Concept of Nature: Ecological Inclinations' discusses Kālidāsa's approach to nature within the context of relevant ecological theories and ancient concepts of nature. The last chapter sums up the discussions and highlights the major findings.

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Suprabha C. T.