

Acknowledgements

It is insufficient on my part to thank with mere words, to all the people whom I have depended directly or indirectly in bringing out this thesis. It is gratification for me to express my sincere thanks to those who helped this research work come in to reality.

Firstly, it is my privilege to mention my sincerest and deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor P. C. Joshi for his valuable advice, continuous guidance, careful attention and spending his valuable time throughout the whole process of this research.

I am very thankful to the former and present head of the Department of Anthropology for providing me the necessary support and help for conducting my research work.

I am also indebted to University Grant Commission (UGC), for providing me financial assistance for this research.

Rahul, Nistha, Mercian Daniel, Sonia di, Victoria di and many other seniors and friends also deserve a debt of gratitude. Their lively intellects and generous engagement with my thesis were truly wonderful.

The opportunity for me to conduct the fieldwork was made possible by the generous support from Dr. Arun Kr. Singh, Dr. Naushad Alam and Mr. Arif Hussain to whom I would like to express my thanks.

Special thanks to the hospitality of the many individuals including the respondents in the field sites who helped me to conduct the research, and taught me so much by sharing their knowledge, experiences and stories with me.

Last but not the least, I thank my parents and family members who supported me throughout my research work and without them this work would not have been possible.

Minakshi