Acknowledgement

Most important lessons in my life have not come from the books that I have read but from the life that I have led and from the people around me who have taught me what life is all about. Contributions of these people to my present self are too numerous to mention in this section nevertheless I embark upon the most difficult task of acknowledging their contributions with the least intention of repaying them for their generosity which I know cannot be repaid in a life's time.

Prof. D.N. Rao, being my supervisor for this study has given me ample freedom to explore new ideas and was always there when his help was sought. The thesis wouldn't have taken the present shape without his unconditional support and timely advice at crucial junctures.

Much of the final work has been done during my employment as a Consultant in National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. Constant support of my team leader and my senior colleagues at NCAER has contributed to the conclusion of my thesis work. The excellent Library at NCAER has aided in enhancing the quality of the thesis.

Completion of the thesis work required long hours of staying away from home even after office hours. My daughter Jhilik is the person who has suffered the most due to my absence. The time which should have been spent with her has gone towards completion of this thesis. My wife unconditionally took the additional burden of parenting in my absence. Without their support I couldn’t have completed my work.

My father, like he has always been, was a constant source of inspiration and support during the study period. He ensured that among all the things I was engaged in, focus remains on conclusion of the thesis work.

My in-laws, at the risk of becoming un-popular with me, constantly reminded me of my un-finished work. This by no means is an easy task. I am grateful to them for their efforts in seeing me complete my thesis.

My friends especially Indranil was always there when I needed them. Secretarial help by Manoj is sincerely acknowledged. I dedicate this thesis to everyone, people who I have mentioned and also to them who doesn’t find a mention but have in some way shaped my present self.