Acknowledgement

My deepest gratitude goes to Professor Zoya Hasan, my supervisor, who has taken a keen interest in the subject and has guided me with tremendous patience. Her deep understanding of the discipline has helped me situate this interdisciplinary study in the framework of caste and gender. I sincerely thank her for the invaluable insights and suggestions.

I thank, Dr. Aditya Nigam my co-supervisor, who helped me understand the subject from a critical perspective. I am grateful to Professor Peter deSouza my previous co-supervisor, for encouraging me to work on this topic.

I am indebted to Professor Ram Bapat for his critical input in the conceptualization of this study. The breadth of his knowledge helped me formulate the proposal that involved studying the issue of Mahar and Mang women in Maharashtra. I am grateful to Professor Sharmila Rege for evincing a continued interest in my work. I acknowledge the guidance and support of the faculty of the Centre for Political Studies over these years.

I thank all of my Dalit sisters who are activists, housewives and working women engaged in different professions. I could not have understood their plight if they had not shared their day-to-day experiences of struggles both in the public and private spheres.

The University has given me the opportunity to interact with colleagues actively involved in understanding this subject. I thank Shailesh Darokar Mahiram, Milind Awad and Santosh Raut for clarifying my doubts on the various issues that are the focus of this study. They have acted as invaluable resource persons and facilitated my interaction with activists and scholars working in the area.

I thank the CSDS and Indian Council for Social Science Research for the award of the Institutional Doctoral Fellowship to undertake research relating to this thesis. I am grateful to Mr G.S. Saun, Mr V.N. Sondhi, Madam Sarah John and Mr Meshram of the Indian Council of Social Science Research for their help.

I wish to put on record the help rendered to me by the staff of the following libraries during my research: Jawaharlal Nehru University, Nehru Memorial Library (Teen Murti), CSDS Library, Ahmadnagar College Library, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
Sandesh Library, Dadar Mumbai Granthalaya, Government of Maharashtra Archives at Mumbai and also at Kolhapur. I am also grateful to Mr Riyal, Avinash Jha, Ramesh Singh Rawat, Ranjeet, Jayshree Jayantha, Jagdish and Sujit Dev of CSDS. I am grateful to Satishji of School of Social Sciences for his generosity and motivation.

Special mentions are due to Prof. Ranjit Pardeshi, Prof. Kumud Pawade, Saroj Kamble, Prof. Sharmila Rege, Prof. Jogdand, Vivik Gothale and Aarati Moon for lending me rare materials from their personal collections.

My special thanks goes to Nilima Bandhu Jadhav, Shailesh Darokar, Satish Randive, Sushil Masade, Ratanlal Sonagra and to all those who provided me accommodation facilities and helped me in the field study. Their day-to-day interaction helped me broaden my understanding of the subject. I am indebted to Peter Ki for reading the text and providing invaluable insights.

My personal debts have grown over these years. The love and encouragement of my family, Aai-Baba, Ma-Babai, and Viru-Kiran have reinforced my faith in my endeavour. My special thanks also to Somi, Shiddhu, Yaggi, Shruddhu and Sweetu who makes me comfortable with interaction in day to day discourses. They have been the greatest source of support for me and have given me the courage and conviction to continue my work. They have shared my joys and sorrows, my dreams and disappointments and have lived each day of these years with me. This work owes much to them.

Finally, I thank my friends Sanil, Anil, Chayanika, Archana Didi and Shabana for their kindness and support during my years at JNU.

Smita Patil

New Delhi