ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have never failed to read the acknowledgement of any book, dissertation or thesis that I have come across. And I always wondered... is it a tradition that one has to follow? No it is not a tradition but a genuine desire from within a person who has undergone the experience of ‘writing’ (a book, dissertation or thesis). The process of writing is not an individual effort but a joint endeavor of few people around you for whom you are special and to whom you want to tell, with few words, that how special they are!

In the first place, I would mention my supervisor, Dr. Amit Prakash. To put it in a conventional way, his supervision, advice, encouragement and guidance have certainly helped me grow as a student. To put it in my way, sir you are the best supervisor that a student can have. Erudite, cool, approachable, understanding, supportive ..... I wish I could describe you better!

I would also take the opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat. He has worked extensively worked on issues of discrimination and every interaction with him enabled me to view my work with an in depth analysis. I must also thank him for providing me with the opportunity to avail IFPRI Doctoral Fellowship and work in Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) at the same time towards the completion of my thesis.

As a Ph.D student I was a part of IFPRI’s (International Food Policy Research Institute) study on “The Role of Local Public Administration in Implementing Rural Development Programs with a focus on Affirmative Policies, Decentralization and other Reform Strategies: A Comparison of Three Indian States.” A study of 36 villages across three states Karnataka, Kerala and Bihar, could possibly be undertaken and successfully completed with the financial support of IFPRI which bore the expenses of field work, travel etc. As a student and as a researcher, I am sincerely thankful to Dr. Regina Birner, Senior Research Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI for selecting me for the scholarship. It’s not only that for which I express my gratitude. I must avail this opportunity to convey that Dr. Birner is an institution in herself when it comes to conducting field research. The opportunity to work with her in Bihar has definitely enhanced my capabilities as a researcher.

IIDS provided me with all the necessary support for my research. First of all I would thank my friend and colleague Ms. Poonam Mehra for helping me arrange most of the readings related to Dalit issues. I am also thankful to Umashankar, Pramod,
Narendra, Raj Kishor Kampa and Dr. Sobin George for providing all the support in IIDS. A very special thanks to David for assisting me in the field work in Kerala.

While continuing my research I also got an opportunity to teach in Kirorimal College, Delhi University. I remember my parents saying, 'you'll understand us better when you have your children'. I positively feel that I can understand my teachers much better now when I myself have started teaching. I thank the principal of the college, Dr. Bhim Sen Singh, for selecting me and providing me flexibility to do my research work along with the teaching responsibility. I'm thankful to my colleagues in the college, Dr. Uma Gupta, Dr. Rupak Datta Gupta and Dr. Roopinder Oberoi for supporting me through out.

I gratefully acknowledge the staff members of JNU library, Nehru Memorial Library and the Library of Indian Institute of Public Administration for helping me find all the material that I needed for my topic. It is also an opportunity to thank Sanjay Printing and Photostat for typing and printing the thesis.

I was extraordinarily fortunate in having my father Prof. G.P Thakur, at my side, throughout the period of study. Other than helping me with my field work in Bihar, he being a psychologist, took care of all my emotional oscillation that a student goes through during her thesis writing. A word of heartfelt appreciation is must for my sister Dr Archana Thakur for her loving support and my brother Amitabh Thakur for making me the person that I am today. A very special thanks to my friend, bhabhi, Shuchi Yadav for going through my drafts and providing valuable suggestions.

Where would I be without my family? My parents- in- law deserve special mention for their immense support and prayers. My father- in-law Shri S.L Dabral has been a pillar of support and encouragement for me. My mother- in-law, Smt Kusum Lata, has supported me with all the love and care in this world. She has been mother to me as well as to my son throughout the period of my work. My sisters-in- law, Preeti and Deepali, have been equally encouraging.

Last but not the least, I genuinely want to thank my husband, Pradeep Dabral for showing relentless faith and confidence in me and standing by me in every situation. As for my son, Vibhu, he is the most patient, understanding and adorable child anyone can be blessed with.