ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study of the Scheduled Caste leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions is very significant in understanding the development of democratic political process in Rural India, in general and that of Maharashtra State and Latur district in particular. So far, the Mahar, one of the important Scheduled Caste in Maharashtra has remained a focus of attention of political researchers, because the Mahars have always shown greater influence in the rural political leadership in P.R.Is. The non-Mahar Scheduled Caste are not as influential and vocal in political leadership as the Mahars are. However, non-Mahars have remained neglected in the leadership studies of the Scheduled Caste conducted so far. It is precisely for this reason the focus of attention was concentrated on the non-Mahar Scheduled Caste in this study.

Though the Scheduled Castes have emerged as a force in the rural politics of Maharashtra, some problems pertaining to this phenomenon have not attracted the attention of the researcher in Social Sciences. The question such as: why Mahar emerged to a dominant
position in the leadership of P.R.Is? Why other sub-
castes such as Mang, Chambhar and Dhor failed to arti-
culate their interest? remained unanswered.

This study, therefore, tries to understand the factors that have promoted participation of relatively less disadvantaged sections like the Mang, Chambhar and Dhor in leadership in P.R.Is.

This study is an attempt to know and analyse why non-Mahar leadership is lagging behind their Mahar counterparts in the advancement and influence in the leadership in P.R.Is. It also inquire into the conflict between the Mahar and non-Mahar groups in the context of leadership in P.R.Is.

In short, the central theme of the study is the differentiation in the untouchable community and their interaction between its various section over a time as well as its response to stimuli from outside. The role of the leadership, ideology as well as socio-economic factors are taken into consideration while analysing these variables.
in the completion of this study, several individuals and institutions have helped me. First and foremost is my honourable research guide, Dr. A.Y. Darshankar, Reader, Department of Public Administration, Marathwada University, Aurangabad. I am fortunate to have worked under his guidance. I am grateful to him for the guidance and encouragement he gave to me in completing this study.

I owe gratitude to those members of Village Panchayat who co-operated with me by giving long interviews inspite of their day-to-day work.

I am thankful to the University Grants Commission for sanctioning me Teacher Fellowship for a period of three years. I am also thankful to the President and Secretary of Vichar Vikas Mandal of Ahmedpur for sanctioning me three years duty leave for completing my research work. I am also thankful to the Principal Shri V.V. Dholle, who always encouraged me in my research work. In fact he was source of inspiration for my studies. I am also thankful to Dr. B.P. Panpatte and my Head Shri U.E. Bhikane who co-operated to their full extent in my studies.
I am highly obliged to Dr. P. M. Bora, Dr. J. R. Shinde, Dr. R. S. Morkhandikar, Dr. H. A. Gani, Dr. S. N. Datye, Dr. B. S. Waghmare and Dr. M. A. Khan, for their constant encouragement.

I am deeply indebted to my parents. I would like to express my deep sense of appreciation for my wife and children who have quite put up with my lack of attention to many of their needs during the preparation of this work.

I am much thankful to authority and staff of the Library of Marathwada University, Aurangabad.

I am also thankful to Shri U. E. Pechfule and Shri Khan M. A., who helped me at the time of official work.

Finally thanks are also to Shri Barwal P. L. for having typed the final scripts so neatly.

11th August, 1993. (Gaikwad T. N. )