ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Prof. K. N. Panikkar under whose generous and invaluable guidance I have been able to complete this work. His experience coupled with his knowledge has been reflecting all along the suggestions and remarks he made during the course of this study. In spite of his busy schedule, he never hesitated in sparing time to discuss the questions that were thrown up during the course of my research and provided valuable insights into the problem areas of the research work. But for his constant help and moral encouragement, it would not have been possible to complete this work.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my co-supervisor Dr. Indivar Kamtekar for having supervised this work at a crucial stage and for extending all necessary help towards completion of this work.

I am also grateful to Prof. Neeladri Bhattacharya who was kind enough to read the draft of the thesis and critically evaluate my arguments and gave invaluable suggestions in the course of discussion on the draft.

I must extend my sincere thanks to Dr. R. P. Bahuguna for having taken deep interest in the subject and his profound knowledge was of immense help in finding answers to my problems. He has been incredibly generous with his time and was always forthcoming with his insightful suggestions.

I acknowledge my deep gratitude to my husband Dr. Bhupinder Kumar Chaudhry for extending moral support and constant encouragement during the course of completing this study. I am particularly indebted Dr. D. S. Clair, Principal, S. G. T. B. Khalsa College, University of Delhi for going out of the way to grant me the study leave without which completion of the thesis would have been an extremely difficult task. I am also thankful to all my friends and relatives, who have been the source of constant encouragement and motivation throughout.

My sincere thanks are due to the library staff of S. G. T. B. Khalsa College, National Archives, Delhi and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and Archeological Survey of India for extending their cooperation during the course of material collection for this research. I am deeply indebted to the staff of Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner and particularly P. C. Joeeya and Gopi. Not only they provided the requisitioned documents promptly but also made themselves available to help me in reading the Marwari language documents and took interest in searching
archival material pertaining to my research work. My thanks are also due to the priests of various temples of the local deities, which I visited during the course of my fieldwork and devotees of their cults for interacting with me on issues related to their faith.

RAJSHREE DHALI