**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Completion of this doctoral dissertation was possible with the support of several people. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of them. First of all, I am extremely grateful to my research guide, Dr. S. Siva Raju, Professor and Chairperson, Centre for Development Studies, School of Social Sciences, for his valuable guidance, scholarly inputs and consistent encouragement I received throughout the research work. This feat was possible only because of the unconditional support provided by Sir. A person with an amicable and positive disposition, Sir has always made himself available to clarify my doubts despite his busy schedules and I consider it as a great opportunity to do my doctoral programme under his guidance and to learn from his research expertise. Thank you Sir, for all your help and support. I thank Dr. S. Parasuraman, Director, for the academic support and the facilities provided to carry out the research work at the Institute. Dr. Lakshmi Lingam, Professor and Dean, Research and Development, has been very encouraging and supportive, and I express my gratitude to her. The Board of Research Studies for their support at various phases of the programme.

Some faculty members of the Institute have been very kind enough to extend their help at various phases of this research, whenever I approached them, and I do hereby acknowledge all of them. I thank Dr. N. Jayaram, Professor and Dean, School of Social Sciences, for his valuable suggestions and concise comments on some of the research papers of the thesis. Prof. D.P. Singh and Prof. Rajaretam, have extended their support in statistical data analysis and I thank them for their contributions. I also thank Dr. Anil Kumar, and Mr. Dwivedi, for their help. I am grateful to Prof. C.P. Prakasam of International Institute for Population Sciences, for his suggestions in regression analysis. I was very much privileged to learn from my aunt, Prof. Grace Mathew, who consistently extended her research expertise throughout my work and I owe a lot to her for this achievement. I acknowledge Ms. Rosamma Veedon, for being the discussant for the doctoral research proposal. Thank you Dr. Sandhya Rani for your concern and good wishes.

The thesis would not have come to a successful completion, without the help I received from the staff of the Computer Centre. I would like to thank V. Sivakumar and his colleagues, for their services in connection with analysis of data. Ashish Govekar, has
meticulously carried out the analysis of data, despite his busy schedules. He has been very kind and patient and always willing to lend his service whenever I approached him and I acknowledge and appreciate him for all his efforts. I remember, Sudhir Kale and Purindar for their help.

Dr. Sudha Raghavendran was kind enough to undertake the editing work and I acknowledge the meticulous work she has done. Gandharva, had finely sketched out the map of the study area, and I thank and appreciate his efforts.

No research is possible without the Library, the centre of learning resources. I take this time to express my gratitude to all the library staff for their services. Dr. Muttayya, the Librarian, Shyamala, Kiran, Vishakha, Jasmine, Dr. Satish, Chandrakant, Prabhu, R. Pothare, Ravi.S, Harish, Yogita have been very helpful. Dr. Mallikarjun, Devyani, Putteraj, and other staff of Inflibnet Centre, have been very informative regarding the e-resources. I appreciate the interest shown by Putteraj, in updating me with the latest publications on Gender Studies. Rohini, Supriya, and Uttam, were available to do their bit, whenever I required some help. I thank Singh, Sawant, Kale, Kadu, Digambar, pawar and all other service staff attached to the library. I acknowledge Anitha of documentation cell, Health Studies and Lakshmi of WSU unit for their help.

Balaksrishnan, Manju and Seethalakshmi of Meetings section, have always done their best to render whatever service they could and thank them for that. Janaki.V, of Research Methodology has been a good friend and I thank her for her services all these years and also Medha and. Lissa for their administrative help. I acknowledge Susheela, Lency for their help and good wishes. I appreciate binding work and finishing touch on the dissertation by Santharamji.

My colleagues, Lata Shenava, Susamma, Rincy, Hemalatha, Anirban, Kamlesh Kumar, Mamtha, Nandita, and Kamlesh, have all extended their support in a very special way, and I gained a lot from them, through their personal and scholarly interactions, their suggestions at various points of my research programme. I also acknowledge my old pals, Bali and Leena Emmatty for their well wishes.

I owe a lot to my parents, who encouraged and helped me at every stage of my personal and academic life, and longed to see this achievement come true. I deeply miss
my mother Angy Iype, who is not with me to share this joy. My father, V. G. Iype, being a lawyer by profession, has been a resource person for legal matters and has also put me across to legal professionals to obtain necessary information required for the research. He has been my legal advisor and a great support during the field study.

I am very much indebted to my family, my husband Prof. Mathew Samuel, sons Johann and Jordan and late mother-in-law (mummy), who supported me in every possible way to see the completion of this work.

I thank my uncle, Prof. V. G.Varghese, (ex TISS) and his family, for their wonderful services all these years. Uncle Varghese, aunty Elizabeth Varghese, and late aunt and my godmother, Ms. Mariam Varghese, have been a great support ever since I came to Mumbai, and I owe them so much for their care and hospitality. I also thank my brothers-in-law and their families, sisters- in- law and their families, my brothers and their families for their good wishes.

My field study was made less obstacle ridden because of the presence of a few individuals, Mariamma, my cousins Prasad, Prasanna and her husband Abby and Ramani Iype, of CSI Church, Kollam and I extend my gratitude to all of them and their families. Priests of concerned Churches of the study have been very cooperative and provided me with the Parish Directories, to select the respondents and other related information. I would like to thank all of them for their services. I remember the lawyers, who helped me to identify the cases for case studies and each and every respondent of this study, their cooperation and inputs enabled me to complete this work.

Above all, I owe it all to Almighty God for granting me the wisdom, health and strength to undertake this research task and enabling me to its completion.