ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to place on regard my thanks to all those persons who have been of some help to me during the course of this research. First of all, it was my privilege to have conducted this study under the guidance of Prof. (Mrs.) Raj Mohini Sethi, Department of Sociology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and an eminent scholar in her field. I am sincerely grateful to her for assistance, guidance and critical evaluation throughout the period of this study. Indeed she has been more than a teacher to me while guiding me in my research work.

I am highly obliged to Prof. P.N. Pimpley, Department of Sociology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, who spent a lot of his valuable time in meticulously scrutinizing the manuscript, offering constructive suggestions and showing keen interest in the progress of my work.

I am also deeply grateful to Prof. (Mrs.) K.P. Singh, Chairperson, Department of Sociology, Panjab University, Chandigarh for providing me with all possible help during the course of my work.

The co-operation and constant encouragement extended to me by my former teacher, Prof. Bhupinder Singh, Head of the Department of Sociology, Punjabi University, Patiala, has been of immense help to me in completing this thesis. I am extremely thankful to him.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Indian Council of Social Sciences and Research (ICSSR) for awarding me a research fellowship for the year 1993. Without this assistance it would have been difficult to complete this work.

I am deeply indebted to the respondents of Kotla and Takhatgarh and the people of these two villages in general who helped me in collecting the data which forms the basis of this study. I am also thankful to Mr. Chander Mohan and Mr. Ram Sarup of M/s SHAGUL GRAPHICS for very diligently typing the manuscript.

Above all I am deeply indebted to my family who gave me constant support in every way. Indeed it is because of their inestimable assistance, support and sacrifice that I have been able to complete this work. It is with immense pleasure that I take this opportunity to acknowledge with appreciation the moral support and active cooperation of all my friends.

[PRIT PAUL KAUR]