Acknowledgement

Towards the later half of my teaching career, I came to realize that my training as a student of history would be incomplete if I do not fulfill the requirements of formal research. I pursued my goal, however belatedly, and here I am writing the acknowledgement of my thesis. I was lucky to have Dr. Dilip Kumar Kalita, Director, ABILAC, Guwahati, as my Supervisor after I cleared the entrance test for the Ph.D programme. I feel fortunate that my Supervisor in the very first meeting gave me a sense of confidence and reassurance for which I am grateful to him.

The topic of research that I was allowed to choose relates to oral history. This was also a source of delight for me. I have been a student of history for a long period of time, and the opportunity to look at history from a new perspective was an added advantage. Oral history methods and approaches have not received much attention in our academic circles unlike in many Western centres of knowledge. My interest in common, ordinary people and their histories got concretized into a full-length investigation which for me is a rewarding experience. It is for others to judge what I have done in my studies, but for me, a close relationship with the Tiwa people has given me lot of insights into their customs, manners, behavior and way of life and I have identified many sources of Tiwa oral history from my endeavour.
I must appreciate the fact that my Supervisor for the programme, Dr. Kalita was extremely forthcoming in offering his guidance and help whenever I needed it the most. I must mention here that right after my registration into my programme, as I was getting down to the serious work of field study, a series of personal misfortunes struck me. Although it is a personal matter, I must put on record here that my wife was diagnosed with carcinoma which came as a rude shock to me and my family. Let alone my studies, my whole life was in disarray. It was at moments like this that my Supervisor gave me the strength to continue. As I write these lines, I can say that my wife is recovering from the illness. The Ph.D dissertation that I am presenting has been prepared under extreme stress and hard work. I am happy to report that I managed to come face to face with over 150 informants with whom I have conducted prolonged interviews. Oral history discipline demands more and more field work and less desk work. When I look back on the years that I managed to take both my studies and my family responsibilities, I can only be grateful to God and to my Supervisor for the support that I got. Kalita Sir has been a great source of inspiration for me and without his warmth and sympathy I would not have been writing this page.

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