Acknowledgement

I would like to express profound sense of gratitude and indebtedness to my revered teacher late Dr. S. B. Sawant, for having given me an opportunity to work under his guidance. I have no words to express his involvement and dedication throughout this work.

I am grateful to the Honourable Vice - Chancellor Prof. Ashok S. Kolaskar of the University of Pune for the encouragement given by him to me to complete this work after the sad demise of Dr. S. B. Sawant. It is only because of the encouragement given by him and the permission granted by him to me to submit the thesis in the odd circumstances that I could complete and submit this work.

I am thankful to Prof. Emeritus Dr. S. C. Gupte for the encouragement given by him to me for carrying out this work after the sad demise of my guide late Dr. S. B. Sawant and for some valuable suggestions made by him on the earlier draft of the thesis. I am grateful to Dr. V.N. Mishra, former director of Deccan College P.G. R. I. Pune for his valuable suggestions on the draft of the thesis.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Jaymala Diddee, Head, Department of Geography, University of Pune, for providing me all the necessary facilities during the course of this work. I am also grateful to my colleagues, Dr. Kale, Dr. Gadgil, Dr. Datye, Dr. Jog, Dr. Devsthali, Dr. Vaidya, Ms. C.J. Patil, Mr. Pardeshi, Mr. Dhorde, and Ms. Wakhare, for encouraging me to complete this research work. I am also grateful to the administrative staff of the Department of Geography, University of Pune, for the co-
operation and help that I always received from them. I am thankful to Mr. Kurkute, Mr. Shejwalkar, Mr. Khandage and Mr. Ganesh for assisting in computerized maps.

The author is thankful to many other persons, whom it is not possible to thank individually, and who proved very helpful in the data collection and fieldwork. I particularly wish to mention the cooperation and valuable suggestions made by many scholars and researchers from Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Maharatta Chamber of Commerce, office of the directorate of Census operations, Mumbai Maharashtra, the staff of Jayakar library, University of Pune.

Finally, to my parents and parent-in-laws I owe the entire credit of this work, for giving me the greatest gift of all the right to choose my own path.

Last but not least, I shall remain indebted to my husband Pradip, my daughter Manasi and all other members of my family, who were a perennial source of encouragement and motivation during the entire course of my research work.

Mrs. Vijaya Pradip Khairkar