ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My field work for the M.Phil. dissertation on the condition of women workers in tea plantations of Darjeeling was a revealing experience. The deplorable condition of their work and life made me probe further, historically, into the socio-economic, political context. This would have been impossible without the series of discussions that I had with my supervisor, Dr. Rama Baru. It is to her that I owe my deepest gratitude for guiding me throughout the course of my research. Her patience and perseverance for my work has resulted in the completion of my thesis.

I would also like to thank the entire faculty of Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health (CSMCH), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for all the suggestions and in helping me through this period. To our documentation unit and office staff I thank for the assistance.

My work would have been incomplete without the help and hospitality that I received in Phuguri Tea Estate. I am deeply indebted to the workers for their cooperation and patience. My stay at Phuguri would not have been the same without the help of Phupa, Phupu, Rohsan dada, Bhowju, Reshma di and Bhena. My stay with them during the entire length of fieldwork makes me only too obliged, a debt, which I can never repay. I thank the family sincerely for their time and patience in explaining the nuances of life of workers at the tea garden. To Phupa and Dada for introducing me around to people associated with the tea garden. I thank the family for the endless discussions over meals, which further enriched my thesis.

I am equally grateful to L.B.Dewan Sir, Bairagi Kaila daju, Late B.B. Lama, staff at the Mirik Block Office and the Primary Health Centre for providing me the necessary details. To Rabi Rasaily (kaka), Deputy Labour Commissioner, Department of Labour Welfare, Jalpaiguri for giving valuable insights into the present scenario of Darjeeling tea industry.
Over the past few years, with regard to my research, I have met many people both in the academic circle and outside who have given me varied inputs and support and have helped me in consolidating my findings. During my brief work experience at Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), Delhi, I got associated with Dr. Vasanthi (di) Raman and Dr. Smita Tiwari Jassal. I sincerely thank them for the guidance and inspiration in my academic and personal life. Meeting Dr. Piya Chatterjee, made my initial trip to Calcutta fruitful, whom I thank specially for providing me a volume of references and a copy of her doctoral thesis.

Dr. Khemraj Sharma, Education Officer at Central Workers Education Board, Siliguri, being more of a sociologist, provided me with valid inputs during the initial years of my research. Dr. Kumar Pradhan and Prof. Manas Das Gupta provided me insights into the historical aspects and the present situation of Darjeeling tea industry. I would like to thank Dr. Prabhu Mahapatra for helping me in the articulation of my chapters during the last phase of my thesis, Prof. Xaxa and Prof. Bhowmik for sharing their thoughts. I thank Dr. (Mrs.) Mita Bhadra of North Bengal University for her critical comments and Prof. Bhim Narayan Pradhan, for helping me access the North Bengal University library.

I sincerely thank the library staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Teen Murti, Central Secretariat and National Archives at Delhi, to the staff at the Calcutta National Library, Tea Board, Darjeeling Planters Association, and Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta and the North Bengal University library staff. My work at Calcutta would not have been possible without the hospitality of Sachin Bara and Ratna Bari.

I have involved and dragged my friends, relatives and family in my research work. I sincerely thank all my relatives at Darjeeling, Sukna and Calcutta for their continuous support - to my Mamu, for translating and giving coherence to my chapters, to Chema-Kaka for all the help at Mirik and Darjeeling in extracting out maps and data for me. I remember
my late grandfathers, whom I wish, were with us. I thank Manbir Chettri (Uncle) and Krishna Pradhan (Uncle) for all the help.

I would not have been here without my parents’ love, concern and motivation. I have no words to express my gratitude for the hard work and sacrifices made for me. Baba’s meticulous corrections and Ama’s constant encouragement have helped me a lot especially during the last stage of my thesis. Bhai’s visits would always lighten and cheer me up. I would like to thank my friends-Diuya, Binu, Samar, Ram and Bimla for all the help and with whom I share the common concern for a better Darjeeling, Indira, for always being helpful; Gitanjali, for parting useful thoughts and ideas into my work, Shalini- for being so very encouraging. I also thank Kamala and Julie for all the help. My sincere thanks to Ranjit for the typing assistance. I thank Shinja for listening to my daily woes and being of constant help since the days when we were roommates. Lastly, I would like to thank Srikanth for being there, always.

Rinju Rasaily