Acknowledgement

In the course of doing the research reported in this thesis and also in preparing the manuscript I have received invaluable help and cooperation from several individuals and institutions. I must put on record my debt to them.

First, I would like to express gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Professor Sarmila Banerjee. Without her constant cooperation and encouragement it would have been impossible for me to complete the work. She not only provided guidance in academic matters at every stage of the work, but helped me sort out my extra-academic problems as well. She helped me formulate the problem and identify data sources, and set a time frame to get the job done. Without her disciplined and rigorous supervision, this dissertation wouldn't have seen the light of the day. She has left her mark in every page of the dissertation.

I received insightful comments on the work from Professor Rabindrnath Bhattacharyya and Soumyen Sikdar. With his expertise, Dr. Saikat Sinha Roy provided crucial help in deciphering some of the data.

Mr Anup Chatterjee, ex-chairman, CLE, eastern region, guided me into the real world of leather, and made available to me important information on leather production and export. He organized a visit to the Bantola Leather Complex in the early phase of its construction and took me around to show what was going on. I remain grateful to him.

The staff of the Council for Leather Export office in Duckback House, Kolkata, extended a helping hand and allowed access to important publications and documents related to the leather sector. I benefited from the long discussions I had with Dr. S.K. Sarkar, the Director Grade Scientist & Head, Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), Kolkata, and Dr. D. Chaudhury, Scientist in the same institute on the problems and prospects of the leather industry. The librarian of the CLRI generously helped me with books, journals and documents on various aspects of the leather industry. Very useful help was received from Mr Nilachal Roy, Director General of DGCI&S, and Saikat Sarkar, Director, DGCI&S, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India. The library of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute, Calcutta, helped me by making available different issues of Indian Leather.

Professor Ranajoy Bhattacharyya of the IIFT has been an important source of data. Without his help and also the help from Kasturi Das of IIFT’s WTO Cell, I wouldn't have been able to access the relevant data. Shahid Ahmed, Chief Economist, UNCTAD, India, provided the otherwise unavailable database regarding non-tariff barriers facing the leather industry. Dr. Mahua Hom Chaudhuri of Patent Information Centre, West Bengal State Council of Science
and Technology provided detailed information on patenting of leather industry in India and abroad. I wish to extend my thanks to her centre.

Professor Rajat Acharyya of Jadavpur University along with Dr. Saikat Sinha Ray organized a research training program with collaboration with the UNCTAD in which I had the opportunity to participate. The Research methodology Workshop in the Department of Economics of University of Calcutta provided hand-on training on statistical software and recent developments in Econometrics. I immensely benefited in relation to my work from these programs.

In the DRS of the Department of Economics, University of Calcutta, Subrata Mazumder showed unbelievable patience in guiding a computer semi-literate like me through the software packages used in this work, and also with the typing of the final manuscript. Durba Chakraborty, Jayita Bit and Montu Bose helped in the painstaking process of preparing the bibliography. I owe a debt of very special kind to all of them. I must also mention Subhra Bagchi of Vidyasagar College for Women, who provided me with important books that I couldn’t otherwise access.

Rammohan College, where I have taught for last twenty two years, extended all possible supports and happily agreed to grant me leave under the Faculty Improvement Program. My colleagues in the college have been the source of invaluable mental support and I thank them all. It has also been a privilege to be housed in the Economics Department of University of Calcutta during the two years tenure of the FIP. The Director and Staffs of the Eastern Regional Office of the UGC also extended their full cooperation in carrying out all formalities for FIP in a short period of time.

I must also mention the encouragement I received from Professor Arup Mallik and Ajit Chaudhury.

Finally, my family. My mother-in-law, my husband and two sons have cheerfully done household chores and run errands while I was tied to my work. I don’t know what I would have done without their whole hearted support. My mother who lives far away has ceaselessly sent me her best wishes and I know this dissertation will give her a tremendous sense of fulfillment. I will be true to the oriental tradition of refraining from the formality of thanking those who are so near.

I remember how excited my father-in-law was when I got the FIP for doing Ph.D. He inspired me all along. He is not with us today, but wherever he is I am sure he is happy to know that I have finally reached the destination.