Acknowledgement

In the long and arduous journey through the completion of this thesis, I was overwhelmed by the generosity and support received from friends, family and my teachers at every stage. It is my pleasure to thank all of them who made this journey an enjoyable experience.

I am grateful to the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP) for initiating me into an alternative perspective of economic theory and analysis. In my nine years at the Centre, teachers and seniors of the Centre were always willing to challenge, nurture and guide me, with patience. I am grateful to the Centre for allowing me the privilege of being taught by Professors Amit Bhaduri, Sheila Bhalla, Prabhat Patnaik, Utsa Patnaik, Anjan Mukherjee, Jayati Ghosh and Deepak Nayyar, who in their own ways improved my understanding of the complexities of economic theory.

By far my greatest debt and gratitude is to Professor Abhijit Sen, without whose invaluable guidance and support this thesis would not have been possible. Despite his busy schedule he was always willing to give me time to discuss with me the questions I was grappling with. His knowledge and depth of understanding of the Indian economy and secondary data sources, was always an inspiration for a novice like me. My discussions with him gave me the courage to deal with large scale data sets which is central to this thesis. Most of the crucial work on this thesis was done at his home and I take this opportunity to thank Prof. Jayati Ghosh and Jahnavi for bearing with my unscheduled visits, even on weekends and holidays.

I am grateful to Dr. Praveen Jha and Dr. Vikas Rawal for being sounding boards on many occasions, especially with regard to field surveys and primary sources. These discussions helped me reconcile differences between primary and secondary sources as well as give me some insight on the processes underlying these data sources.

This thesis uses data from various sources and obtaining these was the most difficult part of the thesis. I am grateful to Prof. G.S. Bhalla who not only gave me the data from his earlier studies but was also willing to share his knowledge and wisdom. I also take this opportunity to thank staff and officials of NSSO, at all their three offices at Sardar Patel Bhavan, NSSO Library and the Computer Centre at R.K.Puram, officials and Department Librarians of CSO, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce and Planning Commission. I am particularly indebted to officials and staff of Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture who provided me with data at district level. The Library Staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University Central Library and the Exim Bank Library, were always helpful with a personal touch.

During the last three years a large part of my time was spent in Hyderabad where the facilities provided by Centre for Economics and Social Studies, M.V. Foundation were crucial to the completion of this thesis.

I am grateful to Jean Dreze, Peter Lanjouw, Mahendra Dev, C.Ravi, Sheila Bhalla for very useful discussions and comments on some parts of earlier drafts of the thesis.

I am grateful to the University Grants Commission for awarding me the JRF/SRF to support me during my M.Phil and Ph.D. I am also grateful to the Foundation for Agrarian Studies for the support provided through a fellowship in the final stages of writing the thesis. I also thank the Foundation for Agrarian Studies for giving me the opportunity to participate in a Workshop for Ph.D. students in
Bangalore. Some parts of this thesis were presented in Conferences in Barddhaman and Mumbai. I am thankful to the participants who gave valuable feedback.

I am grateful to Dr. Alakh N Sharma and all those who work at the Institute of Human Development who were always willing to welcome me as a member of their extended family. I particularly thank Anup Karan, Sandeep Sarkar and Aseem.

I had the privilege of having so many friends who stood by me in the last few years. I would like to thank Vinay, Avinash, Baba, Bobby, Deshraj, Siddarth and Arup for having faith in me in spite of us being in such different worlds. My friends in JNU and comrades from AISF, were an integral part of my life in JNU. Avinash and Alok were always there, as friends and seniors.

Finally, gratitude to family in Patna, Delhi and Hyderabad who stood by me throughout this process and can never be thanked enough. My parents, for undying patience and support. This thesis is a dedication to their unfailing belief in their children. My brothers, Rakesh and Anant, for always being there. Aparajita, always willing to feed me, sparing me the mundane hostel food. Shanthamma, Amma and everyone else at Marredpally, for so easily accepting me into the family.

Last but not the least, thanks to Dipa for everything that she has given me – at times together and at times, away from each other.