ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of working on and writing this thesis, I have got support and encouragement from a large number of people. It is difficult for me to put on record the debt I owe to my supervisor, Prof. Jayati Ghosh. Her guidance has been invaluable at all stages in my work – in narrowing down on the specific area of enquiry, in formulating the main questions being enquired into and in helping to clarify the analytical issues involved. While being incisive and critical through several drafts, she has also been immensely warm and shown great patience at my erratic behaviour and disappearances. I am deeply grateful to her.

During the course of working on this thesis I have benefited greatly from analytical discussions with several friends. Gautam Mody provided crucial insights into the nature of small-firm organisation in Italy and issues related to the labour process. Mritunjay Mohanty and Surajit Mazumdar helped me sharpen the analytical arguments that have been made in the thesis. Jaivir Singh was of crucial help in understanding industrial organisation literature. Alok Dash, Debkusum Das and Arup Mitra extended generous help in understanding and analysing data.

I would like to thank people from different institutions in different parts of the country for help provided in the collection of secondary data and in fieldwork. The Central Leather Research Institute in Madras let me have access to whatever information I needed from the institute. The Director, Dr. Ramasami, arranged for me to use their library, go through their laboratories and spend long hours in discussion with his colleagues. He also arranged interviews with entrepreneurs and managers of various firms in Madras and Chromepet-Pallavaram, with various experts on the industry and with office bearers of UNDP and UNIDO projects involved in the leather industry. Dr. Chandramouli, Dr. Krishnama Naidu and their colleagues in the Economics Research Division of the CLRI provided me with a good idea of the organisation of the leather industry in Tamil Nadu and Madras in particular and also provided me with various published sources of information. The Council for Leather Exports provided me with firm-level data on exports for several years and also information on policy pronouncements for the leather industry. Mr. Raghavan of the India Trade Promotion Organisation arranged for
interviews with owners and managers of firms from different parts of the country participating in various international fairs held in Delhi.

In Calcutta, I was greatly aided by the help extended to me by Mr. Chittabrata Mazumbar, Mr. Mrinal Chakravarty, Mr. Arnab Jha and Mr. S.S. Kumar. They provided crucial information on the industry that helped in the drawing up of questionnaires and also made arrangements for visits to various firms in the Calcutta cluster.

Leaders of prominent trade unions were of great help in both Madras and Calcutta. I would like to record my gratitude to Prof. Kamalendu Ganguli of the AITUC in Calcutta for providing several occasions to discuss details of the labour process in the Calcutta tanneries and also for arranging meetings and interviews with workers in the Calcutta cluster. Mr. Dinamani of the CITU in Madras provided access to documents on wage agreements that gave me very good idea of the nature of collective bargaining and the labour market in Madras and also arranged for interviews with workers in several enterprises.

Two people who helped me understand the links between the leather industry and its raw material sources are Dr. D. Raghunandan and Mr. Joginder Walia of the Centre for Technology and Development. They organised a visit to the site of a very successful experiment in decentralised tanning and leather product making in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh which enabled me to arrive at a detailed understanding of methods of raw material procurement and the way in which social institutions operate in the leather industry. My interaction with them has greatly influenced the arguments made in this thesis.

Sandra Rothboeck at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Delhi gave me the opportunity to present some preliminary findings at an international workshop on the informal sector held in Delhi in 2001.

A two year stint as Research Fellow at the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi, exposed me to databases on foreign trade and the small scale sector and the experience has been very helpful in the formulation of my area of research. I am thankful to Prof. S.K. Goyal, Dr. K.S. Chalapathi Rao and others at the ISID for all the help provided while I was there and also subsequently.

I was able to do the bulk of my work due to the study leave that my college, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, granted to me. I am thankful to the Principal,
Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, my colleagues in the Economics Department and all my friends in the college for their support in a variety of ways.

I would also like to mention how enriching and enjoyable being a student at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, JNU has been and what contribution the Centre has made to the shaping of my personality and ideas. I am thankful to all my teachers at the Centre. I would also like to place on record the help that I have received from Mr. Bhupal Singh Bisht, Mr. P.S. Rajagopalan and Mr. Bacche Singh in the CESP office over the years in a variety of ways.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the staff of the libraries of JNU, the Central Statistical Organisation, the Institute of Economic Growth and the Ratan Tata Library which I used extensively for collecting literature and data.

It is very difficult for me to acknowledge what my family has had to put up with in the course of my work on this thesis. My late father-in-law, my mother-in-law and my parents have been extremely patient with my numerous episodes of cancelled trips and have been a great source of encouragement and support at critical times. My daughter Neelambari has been amazing in understanding why I could not give her much time and finding ways to keep herself busy while I was working.

And finally, to Saumyajit I owe the completion of this thesis. He has probably had the most to contribute in helping me formulate the major questions, sharpen the arguments and place them in a wider context of developmental issues. Having gone through several drafts of the thesis, he has also been my harshest critic and helped bring a set of disorganised thoughts and arguments into concrete shape. He has also possibly had to bear the brunt of my whims the most.

I, of course, take full responsibility for all the lacunae and errors that remain.

Sumangala Damodaran