Acknowledgements

In the process of completing the thesis, there had been people who inspired, encouraged, shared the agony, and also there were those who discouraged me. I am indebted to everyone for supporting me in this long process of writing my thesis.

First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Kumkum Roy. Her unending support and encouragement helped me to maintain my tempo to work and finish it finally. She always paid attention and was ready to help and read whatever I wrote even after huge intervals. Thank you mam, I could not have completed my work without your support and guidance.

I am thankful to the faculty of CHS and the Office staff for this long association. I would take this opportunity to thank the JNU library, Centre for Advanced Study, JNU, ASI library, National Museum library and ICHR library for their support and help in locating and lending books and also for the encouraging words. I want to especially thank Mr. Naradev Sharma of ICHR library for his support during this long period.

I am indebted to ICHR for the scholarship I received from them for the thesis. Financial support was very important especially in the initial period of the work and ICHR's scholarship was like a boon from gods.

I am equally indebted to all my colleagues and students at the various colleges where I taught during this period. I would like to acknowledge Dr. S.K. Srivastava, Hansraj College for his constant support and encouragement. All my colleagues and friends at Gargi College Dr. Renu Maira, Dr. Ishrat Haque, Dr Manjushree Singh and Dr. Meenakshi Jain, with whom I have shared and discussed the work were helpful. Dr. M. Jain not only discussed but also helped me with books and reference which helped me a lot in my work. I am thankful to the Gargi College library for their support.

I was lucky to have friends who shared my anxiety and always stood by my side in the times of crisis. I would like to mention specially Dr. Vandana and Santosh Singh, Natasha Nongbri, Shashi and Dr. Krishna Dev, K.M. Ziauddin, Malvika and Manish Mehta, Nishtha Srivastav, Vidya Ratna Kishore, Anand Shukla apart from others. These are people who struggled with me and shared the problems of choices between doing a PhD and other innumerable options. Many friends who were there at the beginning but got lost by the end, I am thankful to them also for their support.

I don’t have words to express my gratitude to my family who believed in me and waited patiently till I finished the work. It will be too little to say thanks to my parents. I would have been non existent without them. My sister Shonali and brother in law Kaushik were by my side and were always ready to help me in all possible ways. Deepali and brother in law Sanjay always supported me and believed in me. Sharbani helped me to carry on despite all odds. Kids- Minalini, Tathagat, and Mrittika helped in their own ways. Minalini would do anything to help me: that included trying astrology of which she had no knowledge!

I thank everyone for their patience and support.

Shatarupa