Acknowledgement

In writing this thesis, I have received extensive help and cooperation from various institutions, teachers, colleagues, friends and of course, my family to whom I owe deep gratitude.

I am particularly grateful to the authorities of the Department of Business Administration, The University of Burdwan, for providing me all requisite facilities to carry out this study. I also acknowledge the assistance I received from the library of Dr. B. C. Roy Engineering College, Durgapur; The West Bengal University of Technology; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Kolkata, National Institute of Technology, Durgapur.

I express my deepest sense of gratitude to my colleagues Prof. Sandip Mukherjee, Dr. Goutam Saha and Mr. Suman Das (Office Assistant) who had assisted me in different stages of my research work. I am also thankful to my friend Mr. Hridayesh Choubey for his help in writing my thesis.

I consider myself fortunate indeed to have had the opportunity to pursue research work toward PhD under the guidance of Dr. Dilip Roy, Professor, Department of Business Administration, The University of Burdwan. It is his strong statistical as well as management foundation that has guided me smoothly in my research activity. I am convinced that I could not have maintained interest in the work without being profoundly impressed by his inherent elegance and clarity of the underlying methods. His continuous guidance, encouragement, wholehearted support and untiringly monitoring of my research work at regular intervals goes beyond any appreciation and fall short of words.

This academic exercise would again never have been possible without the education, and motivation of my parents, Mr. R. N. Tiwari and Mrs. Shanti Devi Tiwari. I am also thankful to my brother (Sandip Tiwari), sister (Rupam Tiwari) and Sister-in law (Priyanka Tiwari) for their support in completing this thesis. Moreover, I am also thankful to my little niece (Aindree Tiwari) for not doing any menace with my study materials or the laptop. I attribute my last but not the least thanks to her.