Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my joy as I compile the hard work of these four years. I am glad that it has finally paid off and here I am finally submitting my PhD thesis. This would have been impossible without the help and encouragement of my learned and experienced teachers, peers, family and friends. Therefore, here comes the most important and undefined part of my thesis compilation to acknowledge and present my heartfelt gratitude to the number of people who made my journey to PhD effortless and enjoyable till the time of its submission.

I would like to start with almighty whose blessings bestowed me with power and courage to surpass the difficulties met at any part of this journey.

After the almighty, I take the opportunity to mention and present my special gratitude to my worthy supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) Indu Talwar, Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, for her able guidance, constant motivation, untiring efforts, and commitment all through this journey. She has provided me impeccable support whenever it was required. She is a person with an amicable and positive disposition. I consider it as a great opportunity to do my doctoral program under her guidance and to learn from her research expertise. She inspired me to grow not only as a keen researcher but also as an instructor and an independent thinker. She encouraged me to think out of box and get effective results that helped me a lot throughout my research work.

I would also like to thank Dr. Abhik Ghosh, Chairperson of Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh for his kind assistance in facilitating my work and constant support rendered during the period under study.

The next mention is for all the faculty members of the department whose concern and suggestions based on their experiences provided me with the unique opportunity to gain a wider breadth of experience and encouragement to effectively conduct my work.

I feel extremely delighted to especially mention the names of Priyanka Airi, Sonam Chadgal, Gagandeep Singh, Baljeet Singh Bali and Gian Negi, who not only shared the supervision under same guide with me but also acted as personal and professional supporters throughout the journey. Besides them my heartfelt thanks to my dear friends Ms. Sandeep Kaur and Mr. Jitender Bhalla, who have been there with me through thick and thin in extending their support and helping me when things seem to be difficult and relieved me off the pressure.

My special gratitude towards my senior colleagues Dr. Bhavneet Kaur and Dr. Jasbir Arora whose jolly nature, special concern and great experience in field guided my steps in field and effectively helped me in conducting my work. I would also thank all
the research scholars of Department of Anthropology in supporting and providing a healthy working environment to share each others’ experiences.

As they say, if parents are with you then nothing can stop you from achieving the hardest goals. I have been extremely lucky to have my parents besides me at every field visit. The unconditional love and support from not only my parents but also from my in-laws has privileged me. No matter, how many times I need them to support me by either helping me in research work or giving me time for myself or by just being there, I could never get less. My parents and in-laws have been pillars to help me build this thesis.

I feel extremely happy to thank my elder sister Ms. Kanika Kansal for managing little things and making it comparatively easier for me at every possible step within her approachable limits.

In the end, I would like to thank my husband Mr. Arham Gupta who has been really patient with me and has sacrificed to help me build my dream of completing doctorate. He has been there at times even when I did not ask for help to make me comfortable and complete the work. His unconditional support has been behind the outcome of this thesis.

Also my efforts will remain silent until I pay my heartfelt gratitude to all my subjects for sparing their valuable time and participation in the study. It was a great learning experience for me worth cherishing throughout the rest of my life. The support from every single subject I investigated will remain with me as sweet memories and motivate me in future endeavors.

The work would not have been possible without the financial support from University Grants Commission and instruments from the Department of Anthropology. I also thank the non-teaching staff for providing their assistance in managing the administrative work effectively and guiding me in the same.

Last but not the least, I take the opportunity to thank all the people who have been a part of my journey and whose names are not mentioned in this acknowledgement separately.

(Ankita Kansal)