Acknowledgements

I must put it on record that it feels exhilarating to realize that I have actually completed writing the last sentence of my Ph.D. thesis (and have made the final corrections too!). Although the passage to this stage was long and involved considerable stress, both physiological and psychological, I must say that the end is truly gratifying.

I do not think that I would have even thought of registering for a Ph.D. degree had my family members, particularly my mother, not been so persuasive about it! To be sure, I would have never reached the stage of writing this note, had my family members not been supporting me all along. I feel indebted to all my immediate family members – Baba, Maa, Dada, Boudi – and other relatives for whatever they have done for me. A special acknowledgement goes to my five-year-old nephew Ruku and ten-month-old niece Rumi. I fondly recollect how refreshing it was to have them around while writing the thesis.

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