Acknowledgement

I want to start by expressing my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Doctor Shefali Jha, for her generous advice and for her friendship. She was always reading innumerable drafts and giving me invaluable suggestions. Many thanks to Prof Pralay Kanugo for his important advice and for being a great co-worker. I am also very grateful to Professor Valerian Rodrigues, Chairperson (Center for Political Studies).

My grateful thanks and gratitude are due to Prof Gurpreet Mahajan, Prof. Sudha Pai and Prof. Zoya Hasan.

I want to thank Dr Elaheh Hejazi for her great help with entering survey data and transcribing interviews. I also would like to thank Dr Nasrin Mosaffa, and Prof. Shokoh Navabinejad, for interesting discussions about women's NGOs in Iran. Thank you to Devika Sethi for her support and friendship throughout the three years. This experience could not have been the same without her. Special thanks to Tahmine Shaverdi, Shohila Ghorbai and Fatemeh Radan.

Many thanks to my parents for being there for me and always believing in me. I am very grateful to my brothers and sisters, for their support and sense of humour, which have kept me going through ups and downs of research and life.

My thanks to Dr Monir Sadat Madarshahi and Dr Mohamad Hossin Hafeziyan. I also would like to thank Mrs. Mahmoudi, Mrs. Nasiri, Mrs. Naghs.

I would like to thank my colleagues and friends in National Research Institute for Science Policy My thanks also go to all my colleagues and friends in Ministry of Science, Research and Technology.

My greatest thanks go to all of women's NGOs in Iran and India for their cooperation with me.