Acknowledgement

I would like to express hearty gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy without his scholarly guidance, utmost patience and unstinting support, this work would not have been possible. His strict yet affectionate guidance made this journey of knowledge less strenuous. The weekly discussions helped me develop a perspective and devise a rigorous methodology for this thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge the able scholars for their help and encouragement in my research. I must express gratitude to Associate Prof. Rajan (SIS/JNU), Prof. Farooqui and Prof. Rahman (SL/ Arabic Centre/JNU) for extended discussions. Let me place on record my gratitude to Associate Prof. Krishna Dara Swamy (Jamia Millia Islamia/Political Science Department) for his resourceful instructions and necessary corrections. I would like to thank all the persons who have reviewed the various chapters in this research. Thanks are also due to the contributors who took time off from busy schedules to prepare the chapters. The Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) New Delhi provided support services for which I am thankful.

I am very much obliged to the staff of the librarians and staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi, Institute of Social Sciences New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library New Delhi, Haryana Institute of Public Administration, Gurgaon. I am much obliged to the staff of the district headquarters and various panchayat offices in the Mewat district.

Last but not least, let me express my gratitude to my sisters, Dr. Shaheen Fatima Shaikh, Mrs. Shahnaz Fatima and my brother Anwar Sadat whose blessings have always been with me to make this attempt a reality.

One person whose cooperation, care, and support have always been invaluable in my research is my husband, Dr. Leyaqat Ali Aafaqui. He reviewed almost all of the chapters and made excellent suggestions for improving their quality for which I am deeply grateful to him. I pray that more Mewati men recognize the rights of Muslim women to opportunities. Without such a change in the attitudes of Mewati Muslim men, it will be very hard, if not impossible, to improve the status of rural Muslim women.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother Zarina Wali and my father Chowdhary Wali Mohammed.

Date: 6 November 2009

Sara Wali