Acknowledgements

My posting to the Institute of Wood Science and Technology, Bangalore in the year 2002 provided me an opportunity to undertake doctoral research from FRI University. I was looking for a subject in forest or wildlife management which will be helpful in providing an insight to the policy planners and my fellow forest officers for better management of forestry resources. As Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Mumbai, I had an opportunity to implement ecodevelopment programme in the western region of Maharashtra and I found it fascinating as to how this intervention has transformed the mindset of the forest officials and the rural communities.

One fine day, I had detailed discussions with Dr. N Rama Rao, Scientist-F and we selected the present topic for my thesis. As my Supervisor, he helped me in shaping my ideas into a time bound work plan. As a competent plant taxonomist and ethnobotanist, he provided valuable insight and support in conducting vegetation analysis. He has been instrumental in ensuring completion of my research work within a period of five years. I express my gratitude to him for all his support, cooperation and guidance.

Director, IWST and Nodal Officer, IWST have been supportive of my work and have provided me all the encouragement. Dr. C. N. Pandey, Director, IPIRTI and Chairman, Research Advisory Committee (RAC); Dr. D. S. Ravindran, RAC member and Dr. Yoganarsimhan, RAC member have provided me with useful suggestions for improving the quality of my research work. I am grateful to all of them.

My research entailed extensive field work including laying of 216 sample plots in different parts of remote forest areas and conducting household survey for ecological and socio-economic impact assessment. It would have been impossible for me to complete this task without the active and constant support of Maharashtra forest department. I am thankful to Mr. M. G. Gogate, the then PCCF (Wildlife) and Mr. B. Majumdar, present PCCF (Wildlife) for motivating me to undertake this doctoral work, allowing me to conduct the research in the wildlife sanctuaries and providing me constant encouragement during the course of my work. No words can express my gratitude to the forest officers of Thane, Pune and Kolhapur wildlife divisions and the staff of Tansa, Phansad, Bhimashankar, Koyna, Chandoli and Radhanagri wildlife sanctuaries for the help and assistance rendered by them to me throughout the course of my work. My special thanks are due to S/Shri Sai Prakash,
Having interactions with the ecodevelopment committee members was a revelation and also a humbling experience. I sincerely thank all the villagers of the selected six study villages, including the sarpanchs and chairmen of the executive committees, who devoted their time for this study by interacting with me during household survey and provide me valuable feedback. I earnestly hope that this study will be helpful in some way in improving their livelihoods in future.

My colleagues at IWST provided me tremendous support in conceptualizing the research methodology and conducting statistical analysis. I express my gratitude to Dr. S. S. Chauhan, Shri Y. B. Srinivasa, Dr. G. R. S. Reddy and Dr. Syam Viswanath for spending long hours with me and for being absolutely wonderful. I owe my gratitude to Dr. C. Kunnikannan from IFGTB, Coimbatore for helping me with vegetation analysis. Dr. Lalith Achoth from Dairy Science College, Bangalore was ever-willing to help me understand the intricacies of various statistical tools. I am extremely thankful to him for his support. I am thankful to Mr. K. S. Sugara, CCF, Karnataka forest department and his staff for helping me with the maps.

Interpretation of satellite imageries for assessment of vegetation change was one of the important components of my study. I had to struggle a lot for conducting this task till I met Dr. M. S. R. Murthy, Head, Forestry and Ecology Division, NRSA, Hyderabad. I place on record my sincere thanks to Dr. Murthy and Ms. Shilpa Babar, Research Scholar for their generosity and assistance.

I express my gratefulness to Ms. K. Gayathri Devi for helping me in tabulating the enormous data and Ms. Hemamalini S. and Ms. P. R. Triveni in providing me secretarial assistance.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to thank my wife Vedika and my sons, Rishabh and Ritwik, for their encouragement, support and affection.

Date: 

(Suresh Chandra Gairola)