Acknowledgement

I am deeply grateful to my Professor and Guide Dr. P. K. Shetty, School of Natural Sciences and Engineering, National Institute of Advanced Studies, for the unstinted support, guidance and infinite patience that he had extended throughout the entire period of my PhD. I also thank my doctoral committee members Dr. Narendra Pani, School of Social Sciences, NIAS for timely directions and challenging perspectives and Dr. Shanta Mohan, School of Social Sciences, NIAS for unconditional help and belief in me and my work. I would also like to place on record my gratitude to NIAS, its faculty and staff for the financial support, infrastructural facilities and the initial years of course work that had opened up new and exciting vistas of interdisciplinary scholarship. Dr. A.R. Vasavi and Dr. Carol Upadhye are especially thanked for introducing me to the disciplines of Sociology and Social Anthropology and for awakening me to the greater horizons of Rural and Agrarian Studies. I am happy to acknowledge the Director of NIAS, Dr. V.S. Ramamurthy for granting me the time-space needed to complete the work and our previous Director Dr. K. Kasturirangan for always taking a keen interest in my work. The library and GIS lab at NIAS had often formed sanctuaries during stressful times for which I am thankful to all concerned. Thank you Hamsa and Vijayalakshmi for making the NIAS library such a welcome space and Sandhya for all the administrative details that you so efficiently took care of. I fondly remember here the love and strength and homes generously shared of all my friends at NIAS – Anu, Indira, Rajani, Murugan, Sajini, Sowjanya, Jafar, Asha, Kishor, Rahul, Sailan, Meera, Lina, Nalini- that had gone a long way in seeing me through the highs and lows of PhD life. Thank you Manju for the music, laughter and the peaceful space at Sayah...

I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to Dr. T.I Eldho, Civil Engineering Department, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay for kindly providing me with space and support during the tumultuous phase of analysis and writing. Sri. Sunil T.T. and others are particularly thanked for unconditionally opening up their homes and all other friends and well-wishers at IITB specially Edna for being there during the most crucial times.

I also place on record my thankfulness to NRSC, Hyderabad for initiating me to the possibilities of GIS, Dr. K. M. Nair at NBSS& LUP for assistance with agro-ecological zoning, KSLUB and Rugmini chechi in particular for panchayath level data and maps shared, various data procurement agencies who had willingly and not so willingly imparted data, a trusted friend who gave access to the topographic sheets for the study region, and finally RTI Act for getting rid of data related despondency and despair. All the libraries, electronic and otherwise and co-researchers who had shared their resources and the peer reviewers who had meticulously gone through various parts of this work are also thanked herewith.
ICDS supervisors and Anganwadi workers and helpers in the Kodungalur, Nemmara, Chalakudy and Parakkadavu blocks are wholeheartedly acknowledged for their unparalleled knowledge base on the households and area within their purview and the dedication and compassion with which each one of them had extended their support making field work an intimate and incredible experience. Smt. Susan, ICDS supervisor is gratefully remembered for suggesting Anganwadis as contact centres that had radically changed the outlook towards field work itself.

All the Panchayath members, secretaries, Kudumbasree workers and Agricultural Officers of the panchayaths of Nelliyampathy, Athirappilly, Pariyaram, Parakkadavu and Edavilangu are gratefully acknowledged for the caring respect with which my work and I were treated and the generous help that was extended for the study. Various contact persons in all these villages had at numerous instances assisted in the work taking it up as their own concern. Throughout these field work days, land and lifescapes of unbelievable beauty and resilience had opened up at the most unexpected of turns. For all those moments of hope, happiness and all the most personal details and insights shared ungrudgingly and all the food that was offered lovingly we will forever be indebted.

Let me express my endless gratitude to my wonderful family –Acha, Amma, Jithu, Asha and Amma at Thaikkattusserry for believing and taking pride in me even at times I clearly did not deserve it... for silently absolving me of many responsibilities, giving space to make PhD my first priority for all these years. I can only offer my gratefulness and love to the memory of Ammooma who had focused life right through the field work days. I touch the feet of all healers who had taken care of my health and wellbeing throughout the period. I cannot thank enough my friends throughout the years all of whom I had nearly abandoned during the strenuous field work days and days of ill health, hibernation and writing...thank you all for numerous bolstering phone calls, texts, mails, calm understanding and for not giving me up for dead! Radha, Lathachechi, Unnichettan for that initial spark that had lighted up entirely new worlds. Bachan, Ravichettan and Krishnettan for being merely a phone call away from expert opinion on various facets of the basin and Venu, Narayanettan and Vincent for teaching me the necessity and art of pluri-activity as a way of life.

This work would have remained a dream and PhD a lifelong wistfulness if not for Madhu, my husband, his constant help, unwavering companionship and conviction in my work right from its conception in our cluttered kitchen to the drudgery of copy editing and proof reading. All those intense months of survey and shared observation of the lands, lives and livelihoods of the basin of a river we both cherish has breathed life into this work and form its vibrant core.

Sreeja K. G.