ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.

~ Oscar Wilde

I first came to the Wildlife Institute of India in 2005 to attend the ARS as an M.Sc. student of FRI, (DU) along with a friend who was a researcher in WII. I also met three Manipuri girls who were working in the project ‘Conservation Ecology of Sangai and its wetland habitat’ in Keibul Lamjao National Park in Manipur, my home state. The girls later became my colleagues. The following year, the research team conducted census of Sangai in Keibul Lamjao National Park along with Manipur Forest Department. Many volunteers were needed and, I volunteered for the census. That was when I met Dr. S.A. Hussain for the first time. He was interested on my dissertation work on NTFPs and their role on the socio-economic conditions of rural people in one hill district of Manipur. So when the post for a JRF to study the socio-economic component was advertised, I applied and got selected and involved in the project.

There are a number of people I would like to thank who have been instrumental throughout the process of this thesis. My gratitude and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Ruchi Badola, Scientist G, Department of Ecodevelopment Planning and Participatory Management, WII, for agreeing to be my supervisor when I expressed my desire to enroll for Ph.D. Her insights, guidance and experiences were a rich resource to draw from and consult throughout this whole process. I take this opportunity to thank my co-supervisor Dr. S.A. Hussain, Scientist G, Department of Landscape Level Planning and Management, WII, for being a constant supervision with profound knowledge and experience, encouraging me through the thin and lean times I had endure during the course of my study. I have been blessed to have such friendly and wonderful persons as my supervisor and co-supervisor.

I express my sincere gratitude to the then Director, WII Mr. P.R. Sinha, and Dr. V.B. Mathur, Dean, Faculty of Wildlife Sciences, WII, for providing me with an opportunity to work with this prestigious institute. Their generous support and guidance is greatly acknowledged. I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. S. Singsit, Former Director, WII, ex PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden, Manipur for his generous support throughout this study without which the field work would have been extremely difficult for me. My sincere thanks also go to the Manipur Forest Department especially to Shri L.M. Singh, Shri L. Joykumar Singh, Shri Bimol Singh, Shri Hitler Singh and Shri Sarat Singh for providing me with all the logistic help and support during the field data collection.

I am deeply obliged to Shri Qamar Qureshi, Scientist G, WII, who offered his advice and suggestions whenever needed and suggesting the title of my thesis. I am thankful to Dr. K. Sankar, Scientist G & Research Coordinator at the WII for taking keen interest in my study and for his administrative support throughout the study. I very appreciate the encouragements Dr. B.K. Mishra and Dr. Bitapi Sinha I thank the staff of Library, Academic cell, Administration and Finance Departments especially Mr. P.K. Aggarwal, Shri A.K. Dubey and Shri Kharak Singh for their continuous support and helping me with the accounting difficulties. Mrs. Anju Rawat’s help is deeply appreciated.
Very special thanks to my colleagues from the project, Ms. Ngailian Vaiphei and Ms. Chongpi Tuboi, Ms. Sangeeta Angom, and Ms. Kimjahlai Kipgen for their company, help and support in the field as well as at the institute. Their loving and caring nature coupled with the hard work and diligence has been a source of inspiration throughout my field work. My sincere thanks and gratitude to all the people who generously helped me in the field for data collection: the forest guards, the local people and especially my field assistants Ms. Medha and Ms. Naobi for the respect and support throughout the period of my field work. I am also very much indebted to Mr. Dara and his wife Sangeeta and his parents for not only helping me in my field work but also treating me as their own during my stay in Keibul. Mrs. Landhoni and her family cannot be forgotten for the love and care they have given me. I cannot help but pray to God for the soul of (L) Robert Liankhanthang whose untimely and unfortunate departure from the world saddened everyone whom he bought laughter and happiness. I’m sure he is amusing and entertaining everyone in Heaven. Robert: Rest In Peace.

I am thankful to all my friends at Wildlife Institute of India for their support. I am grateful to all my friends at the WII hostel: Bibek, Gajendra, Selvan, Suitha Neha, Ambika, Kunzes, Parabita, Samina, Pariva, Ashi, Malemleima, Nilofer, Upma, Shivani and Abrar who played important roles in hostel life and making the life as a researcher enjoyable and joyful, helping each other out in times of difficulties, encouraging each other and sharing our experiences to face the various challenges.

I am forever thankful to my family for their love, support and encouragement throughout my field work and completion of my doctoral work. Thank you, father(Th. Mohori Luwang) for encouraging me to have a purpose and thank you mother (R.K Mangi Sana) for giving birth to me and preparing me to face life in the most difficult circumstances. My brothers, Ibohanbi, Samson and his wife Radhapyari, Somon and Anju, thank you for your constant support and encouragement.

Dr. Mark Poffenberger’s (Executive Director, Community Forestry International Inc.) Mr. Tambor Lyngdoh’s (Project Director, Khasi Hills REDD+ Project) and Mr. L. S. Majaw’s (Finance Officer, Khasi Hills REDD+ Project) supports are always remembered. Dr. R.K. Sanjukta’s (ICAR-NEH), Dr. R.K. Mandakini (CVSc & AH, CAU) and Malemnganbi’s never fading support and encouraging words are forever cherished. Ms. Renuka Deka’s love and respect, Ms. Aitisha Lyngdoh’s selfless service is deeply appreciated.

I could not done this doctoral work without the help and support from my father-in-law, Mr. Pebam Sunarchand and the motherly love and care of my mother-in-law Mrs. Mamta Hijam and my brother-in-law Mr. Pebam Robert’s never fading support.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my husband Rocky Pebam, my best friend, first editor, truest colleague, and the love of my life. Your patience and guidance have been invaluable in my work, and will continue to be so. I could not have done this work without you. My love goes out to my daughter Pebam Svetlana Mangaaalleibee for being the best daughter and giving me joy and happiness whenever I am tired and run out of strength.

Sanggai Leima