ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research study is the fulfilment of a long cherished desire of mine, to study the sustainment of the women’s groups called Mahila Mandals. It is an attempt of scientific research methodology searching for principles and characteristics in a simple and ordinary phenomenon created by very ordinary women. The search brought to light the fact how a group of ordinary women could transform their lives by working together with their own means and resources. As a tribute to the achievements of these women, I dedicate this research study to the members of these Mahila Mandals whom I interviewed for this research. I thank them all for the cooperation they extended to me in the collection of data, without minding any of the inconveniences it caused them.

My thanks are to Dr. J. Visuvathas Jeyasingh, Research Supervisor, Madras School of Social Work, for guiding me through this work. I am grateful to Dr. (Mrs.) S. Muthu Chidambaram, Reader, Department of Sociology, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for helping me, as co-guide, to standardize my work. I am indebted to Dr. P. Annaraja, Reader, St. Xavier’s B.Ed. College, Palaymkottai for his encouragement and advice. My gratitude to Mr. S. Mariasusai, Dr. A. Rajagopal, Dr. P. Radhakrishnan and Dr. K. Nagaraj, all from Madras Institute of Development Studies, for their ready professional assistance whenever I required it.

The Directors of the NGOs permitted me to do this study of their Mahila Mandals, and along with their staff, gave me adequate support for completing the field study. My congratulations to them on their dedicated work and my gratitude for all their help.

Palayamkottai

P. Ignatius Rosario