ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“Trust in Allah with all your heart.
Don’t put your confidence in your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path.”

First and above all, I praise Allah, almighty for providing me this opportunity and granting me the capability to proceed successfully. This thesis appears in its current form due to the assistance and guidance of several people. I would therefore, like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them.

Dr. Rajni Dhingra, Professor and Head Department of Home Science, University of Jammu, Jammu, my esteemed supervisor, my cordial thanks for accepting me as a Ph.D student, her warm encouragement, thoughtful guidance critical comments, instructive, corrective measures which gave success and strengths to my thoughts and mapped my way to complete this work. She has taught me both consciously and unconsciously, how good research is done. I appreciate all her contributions of time, ideas to make my Ph.D experience productive and stimulating. The joy and enthusiasm she has for her research was contagious and motivational for me, even during tough times in the Ph.D pursuit. I am also thankful for excellent example she has provided as a successful woman researcher and professor.

This thesis would not have been possible unless I thank all the sample beneficiaries and AWWs who spared their valuable time for being patient while, probing information from them. Without their support this piece of research could not see the light of the day.

I would like to extend my thanks to Professor Neelu Sharma, Dr. Shashi Manhas, Dr. Samridhi Arora, Dr. Sarika Manhas and Dr. Nirojini Bhat Bhan esteemed faculty members of P.G. Department of Home Science, University of Jammu, Jammu, for their