ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As I settle down to revise the PhD work for the last time; occupied in details, somehow out of somewhere nostalgia seeps in through that little window of time. Faces, instances and some names emerge. The chronology unfolds; as if it was yesterday that I got enrolled to start the research. That day still seems young. I can still sense the sheer excitement and enthusiasm running through my bones. I can still smell the joy in that day. The past few years of my involvement in research have been a mix of breakthrough solutions and unexpected setbacks at times. All of them have greatly contributed in my overall understanding of research. From the fieldwork to research writing, it has been a journey filled with endless memories and experiences. This journey remains meaningless without cherishing the helping hands that assisted me sculpt out one of the best monument of my life.

In all humility, with all grace I offer my humble submission towards my worthy supervisor Professor Shalina Mehta, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh for permitting me the learning opportunity through her praiseworthy guidance. I take this opportunity to thank her for inculcating valuable research capabilities and familiarising me with constructive research tools and methodologies. I shall always seek your blessings. Thanks you for being a supportive administrator, a kind trainer and a proficient supervisor. I feel blessed to have such a generous and kind soul as a guiding light in my life not only professionally but personally as well, for playing a part in shaping my personality, I always will look upto you during the thick and thin of my life for continuous inspiration to live the life to the fullest. Finally I express my heartfelt and deep sense of gratitude to my supervisor, for her invaluable guidance throughout this work, and without whose help it would not have been possible for me to complete this research project.

I would never be in a position to thank enough my parents whose love, support and encouragement have always kept my quest of acquiring knowledge, skills and competency alive for all these years. This speck of insatiable desire and resolution for seeking more and more knowledge in me has been passed to me through them.

I am also thankful to the present Head, and the previous chairpersons of the Department of Anthropology for providing me with the platform and all necessary facilities to carry out this
research. I would also like to thank the precious guidance and support of my respected teachers. I take a bow, thanking the entire faculty of the Department of Anthropology. I am thankful to the worthy teachers for encouragement and support at all the times. The support of the non-teaching staffs is also highly acknowledged here.

While preparing this study I have greatly benefitted from discussions and consultations with my seniors Dr. Suninder Sodhi and Dr. Gurinder Kaur. I would especially like to thank them for their significant help and guidance. I express my sincerest gratitude, and will always remain thankful to them for their help.

I also thank my friends for helping me at various stages of my life and my academic career. I would like to take the opportunity to thank my friends Dr. Reza Eghdami, Dr. Reetinder Kaur, Dr. Neelam, Dr. Milankumar Sharma, Mrs. Anu Gupta, Chakraberti Mahajan, Taranpreet, Khogen, Tejinder, Rohit, Sumit, Avnee, Baljeet, Richa, Mehdi, Rupal, Ankita, Priyanka, Abhishek, Gagandeep, Sonam, Simmy, Chozin, Arun, Aman, Bahadur, Kavita, all the research scholars and hostel friends for being a part of my PhD research career.

It gives me immense pleasure and joy to thank especially Sarbjeet, Dinesh, Vijay, Sandeep, Shruti, Ratika, Nitin and Gian for their valuable support and constant help by giving their precious time to execute this research project successfully. The sweet memories of time spent with them will remain forever with me for the rest of my life.

I would also like to thanks University Grants Commission (UGC) for their financial assistance to sustain my research work effectively. Last but not the least I would like to express my special thanks to my friends Saroj, Bapin and Pradeep who helped me throughout data collection for this project.

S. Ranabir Singh
26/9/14