Acknowledgement

“I never see what has been done; I only see what remains to be done”: Gautam Buddha

What Gautam Buddha said is what my thesis is all about; I don’t think it is a complete but just the first step towards completion. Working on the thesis has been a wonderful and overwhelming experience for me. It is hard to say whether writing, the real learning experience was struggle or making sense of what I was writing and to remain focus during writing. In any case, I am indebted to many people for making my Ph.D an unforgettable experience.

First of all, I am deeply grateful to my Supervisor Dr. Rani Mehta with whom working has been a real pleasure. She has always been patient and encouraging in times of new ideas and difficulties I brought to you. She listened to my ideas and helped me at incorporating them. I will remain indebted to her throughout my life for her constant encouragement and moral support. My sincere thanks to her for encouraging me to fulfill my dream.

When I joined Ph.D. in 2008, the then Chairperson, Professor Sherry Sabbarwal, had been of great motivation throughout. I am also extremely indebted to her for guidance, valuable advice, constructive criticism and extensive discussions around my work during my final stage.

I owe my cordial thanks to Professor Rajesh Gill, Chairperson, Department of sociology for extending and granting me permission to execute the research work and for providing necessary infrastructure and resources to accomplish my research work.

At this moment of accomplishment, the road to my Ph.D. started with the fieldwork in Ladakh.

I expand my thanks to Stanzin Otzer, Phuntsok Namgyal and Chamba Kaysar who trekked with me to Markha village, staying in those subzero temperature and surviving only on Maggi would not be fun without these people. A journey became easier when we travel together and interdependence becomes more valuable than independence. This thesis is the result of friends like them who were always there when I really needed. ‘Thank you’ doesn’t seem sufficient but it is said with sincere appreciation and respect to all of them for their support, encouragement, care, understanding and precious friendship. I can see the good shape of my thesis because of their help during my stay in Ladakh. I am much indebted to Stanzin Otzer from whom I learned a lot about life, research, how to tackle new problems and how to develop techniques to solve
them. His friendship is what I would cherish for lifetime. I wish to thank Rigzin Angmo and Stanzin Lotus and their families for providing me a home away from home.

This work would not have been possible without the everlasting support and encouragement of Yumlembam Khogen Singh and Naresh Sharma. With them by my side I successfully overcame many difficulties and learned a lot. Their steady guidance and influence throughout my Ph.D. career have oriented my work in better direction and they supported me with promptness. Long discussions with them frequently led to key insights. Their ability to select and approach compelling research problems, their high social scientific standards, and hard work set an example. Their insights significantly improved my work and inspired many new research directions. Thank you for the fun and the encouraging discussions throughout. I would definitely place on record a sense of appreciation to Suman Bhanoo and Anu Chaudhry for their constructive criticism and enlightening talks during my work.

I am also thankful to University Grant Commission, Government of India for providing financial assistance in the form of Junior Research Fellowship for first two years and then as Senior Research Fellowship, which strengthened me to perform my work comfortably during my Ph.D. Last but not the least, I would like to pay high regards to my parents and brother for their sincere encouragement and inspiration throughout my research work and lifting me uphill upto this phase of life. I owe everything to them. They were always beside me during the happy and hard moments of my life to push and motivate me.

Besides these, I would like to thank several people who have knowingly and unknowingly helped me in the successful completion of thesis. And my heartfelt thanks to all my respondents who co-operated me in completing my work.

Writing a thesis was more of a spiritual journey for me. I express my indebtedness to the Almighty for being with me throughout my life. After being in a Buddhist land for quite sometime, now I have got answers to the questions I was seeking for. Ladakh has made me calmer and more tolerant as a person. The fantastic journey has taken me from the heights of ‘I’ to the depths of awakening of ‘impermanence’. I expand my heart out to the people of the “last Shangrila” and their Buddhist philosophy to develop myself. I am very fortunate that at the top of world my real research began.

Monica Chauhan
18.10.2012