ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to several people who supported my Ph.D work, and it gives me immense pleasure to record my gratitude and thanks to them.

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Anand Inbanathan, Associate Professor, Centre for Study of Social Change and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, whose guidance and support in my work made this thesis possible. He has been my constant source of encouragement and support and provided me with enlightening ideas which made my thesis richer. There could not have been a better advisor and mentor than him for my PhD study. I thank him for the patience and enthusiasm he showed throughout this study. I also thank Mrs. Pratibha Inbanathan, who along with Dr. Anand Inbanathan provided me with a constant source of encouragement as well as warmth, care, and a home away from home.

My sincere thanks to Professor R S Deshpande, Director, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, and Professor N Jayaram, former Director, Institute for Social and Economic Change, for providing me with an opportunity to carry out my research work at the Institute, and also providing constant encouragement to carry out the research with great rigor.

I am deeply appreciative of the contributions of my doctoral committee members Dr. K.G. Gayathri Devi, Dr. Lekha Subaiya, and Professor S. N. Sangita, who provided critical and encouraging suggestions, which helped enrich my thesis. I also thank Dr. Elumalai Kanan and Dr. N Sivanna who were panelists at my biannual seminars, and provided me valuable ideas and encouragement.
I sincerely thank Mr. K.S. Narayana and Ms. Vimala of the PhD section at ISEC, and Mr. Satish Kamat, for the kind support and cooperation extended to me during my PhD work.

I am indebted to my parents and my brother who gave me constant support and always stood by me. I owe a special thanks to my father for his belief in me and his constant encouragement.

I owe a special thanks to my beloved late sister Riya who has always been a constant source of motivation to me.

I thank my friends Sailaja, Sancheeta, Khalid, Tunga, Malini, Shyam, Architesh, Sandhya, Reetika, Durba, Nitin, Ananth, and Monojit and my other batchmates at ISEC who provided me with creative ideas, long lasting friendship and made my stay at ISEC memorable.

I thank my husband Angan Sengupta for his unfailing support, encouraging ideas, and the help that he provided in both my professional and personal life, which made my PhD journey a smooth sail.

Finally, I thank the villagers in the study villages, the officials at OSDMA, the Gram panchayat sarpanch and the NGO workers who provided me with their valuable time and information without which this thesis would have not been possible.

(Priya Gupta)