Acknowledgement

From the depth of my heart, first and foremost, I offer my highest praise and utmost gratitude to the Almighty Allah for the bounteous blessings He had bestowed upon me to do this work. This thesis has been kept on track and been seen through to completion with the support and encouragement of many individuals including my well-wishers, my friends, colleagues and various institutions. At the end of my thesis I would like to express my thanks to all these people who contributed in many ways to the success of this study and made it an unforgettable experience for me.

At this moment of accomplishment, words are too debilitating to express my thanks to my Supervisor, Dr. Tahira Khatoon (Associate Professor, Department of Education, A. M. U.) for according me the chance to further my studies and learn from her research expertise. This work would not have been possible without her valuable guidance, scholarly inputs and consistent encouragement, I received throughout the research work. A person with an amicable and positive disposition, Ma'am has always made herself available to clarify my doubts despite her busy schedules. She has also greatly helped me in the preparation of manuscripts, both with regard to language and techniques, and thereby helped me improve my presentation skills.

I am immensely pleased to place on record my profound gratitude and heartfelt thanks to Prof. Nabi Ahmed (Chairman, Department of Education, A. M. U.) for providing me the opportunity and making the department facilities available in carrying out this study. Special thanks go to Prof. C. P. S. Chauhan (Professor, Department of Education, A. M. U.) for his constructive knowledge and advice that offered me an opportunity to take the course work paper entitled 'Advanced Techniques of Research' under his guidance. His involvement helped focus and improve my thinking and writing. Special gratitude is due to my beloved teachers, Prof. Roquiya Zainuddin (Ex-chairperson, Department of Education, A. M. U.) and Prof. Sunita Sharma (Professor, Department of Education, A. M. U.) for their guidance and discussions.

I want to recognize my loving husband, Dr. Aftab Aslam Parwaz Khan, without whose love, friendship, support, encouragement, input and editing none of this would have been possible. I am forever indebted to him for showing me that I could succeed even when things seemed impossible. This research work is as much of a testament of his endurance as it is of mine.
I don’t have words to express my profound gratitude to my parents, Mrs. Shameem Aftab & Dr. Aftab Hafeez, to whom I am greatly indebted for their undying support, love, affection, valuable advice and useful suggestions, encouragement and tolerance during my study. Without their unconditional love and Dua it was not possible to achieve my goal. Many other loved ones in my life have helped me get to this place. Grateful appreciation goes as well to my cheer-leaders—my sister, Bushra, my brother Rameez and my aunt Mrs. Shaheen Ara who played a fundamental role in helping celebrate the big and little victories, as well as coping with the inevitable challenges. I am so fortunate to have been able to share this experience with them.

Thanks are due to Mr. Md. Asif Khan (Assistant), Mr. Imaduddin (Personal Assistant) and library staff of the Department and University for their cooperation and helping attitudes since I entered the Department.

I am also indebted to a very dear friend of mine, Dr. Sadia Mahmood for her constructive suggestions on analyzing the data. I cherish the moments I spent with her. I always shared with her the problems faced by me in my research work. I really appreciate her passions in listening and then providing valuable suggestions in certain difficult and crucial situations. I would also like to pay gratitude to my dearest and adorable senior colleagues and friends, Dr. Shagufta Munir, Ms. Afsana Parveen, Anila and Salsabeel who along with their valuable suggestions are helpful to color my life by providing a stimulating and fun-filled environment.

I would be failing in duty if I forgot at this stage the principals and teaching staff of the selected forty one secondary schools in Uttar Pradesh districts, India, who had so kindly allowed me to tax their time and patience by confronting them with the tools used. For their willing assistance, kind cooperation and prompt responses, I extend my grateful acknowledgements and high appreciation.

I also wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to University Grants Commission, and the Division of Scholarship, Aligarh Muslim University for financing my study through Maulana Azad National Fellowship.

Finally I thank all those who have helped me directly or indirectly in the successful completion of my thesis. Anyone missed in this acknowledgement are also thanked.

Mariya Aftab