ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank the GOD who had blessed me with strength, patience and capability to explore the NATURE to fulfill the undertaken research work presented in this thesis. Acknowledging contribution is an important exercise as a research involves help and assistance from numerous individuals and agencies.

Starting from Vice Chancellors, I am thankful to all of them as many changes during my tenure at the University. I greet my special thanks to Head of the Department of Environmental Sciences, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Maharashtra, starting from Dr. V. S. Ghole, Dr. Praveen G. Saptarshi, Dr. (Mrs.) Nilima S. Rajurkar, and the present Head Prof. N. R. Karmalkar for providing me many opportunities to carry research in the field of my interest.

I wish to put on record my deep gratitude for my supervisor Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali, Associate Professor, Department of Earth Science, Solapur University, who not only introduce me to the fascinating world of forest ecology, but also for his esteemed guidance and support throughout the work. I owe my thanks for your valuable guidance. I am greatly indebted to Mr. C.G. Wakhankar, Formerly Chief Coordinator, World Wildlife Fund in Nature (WWF) for his Co-Guidance and immense help. His valuable suggestions added to outputs of this research and inspired me to complete my thesis as soon as possible.

A special thanks to Principal Chief Wildlife Warden, Govt. of Maharashtra, Mr. B. Majumdar, for giving permission to work in Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary and for helping to get the permission from the Central Government for my research work at Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary.

My acknowledgement would be incomplete without giving thanks to Dr. Y. L. P. Rao, Deputy Director General, UAl, New Delhi, for his help, scholar guidance, support and constructive
suggestions during the writing of my thesis. I sincerely thank Dr. V. P. Uniyal, Scientist, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun for his memorable support during my work. From the core of my heart, I want to thank Mr. R.N. Nale, Range Forest Officer, Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary for their company like a great friend. They helped me the way which I can't express in words.

This study would not have been possible without the help of the Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary staff. The local staff at the sanctuary helped me during the hot days of summer without any explanation. Thanks to all the villagers of the studied villages for their homely nature and food which they provided during the village stay.

Special thanks is due to my M.Sc. students from the Department of Environmental Sciences specially Preeti, Ranjana, Daya, Priyanka, Poonam, Sahil, Hrishikesh, Yogesh and some name which I am not able to remember. I also express my thanks to the non-teaching staff specially Savita, Hole mam, Vishal, Holker Kaka, for their affection and timely help.

I specially thank my friends Dr. Nishith Dharaiya, Dr. Jahangir Khan, Dr. Rashmi Rana, Dr. Praveen Kumar, Anuja Sharma, Dr. Shital Kadam, Praveen Wamane, Dr. Prabhakar Wavde, Prasanjeet and Dr. Porabita Basu for their support and encouragement.

Last but not least I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my parents, specially my Father, who always been with me when I needed him either emotionally or financially. I have special gratitude for my Mother and Younger brother, Nikunj, for his love, affection and encouragement to fulfill my work. More preciously, my son Vedant’s presence was enough for me to look for accomplishing my work after all the hindrances. I have no word with me to acknowledge the love and concern of my family throughout the entire period of my research work.

Ms. Neetu Panwar

January, 2015