ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to undertake this research and to complete it satisfactorily.

With utmost sincerity, I express my gratitude to my guide, Prof. Niladri Ranjan Dash for introducing me to this inspiring and challenging field of research. Prof. Dash extended continuous support and encouragement to me during the entire duration of this doctoral research. I thank him for his patience, motivation and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me at every moment of this research and writing of the thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) Ranjita Niladri Dash for her affection and constant encouragement. Being a library professional, Mrs. Dash was a great source of help during this research.

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to Prof. Bindu Bhatt, Head, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, The M. S. University of Baroda, for her constant support and encouragement.

My heartfelt thanks to Prof. A. A. Ansari, Prof. Rolee Kanchan, Prof. Bindu Bhatt and Dr. Ami Rawal, who taught me the basics of the discipline during my graduation and post graduation in the Department through their teachings. Their insightful comments and encouragements have always been highly enlightening for me. I am highly obliged to all my other colleagues and friends, Dr. Mudit Mankand, Dr. Pawan Shukla, Dr. (Mrs.) Sangeeta Jha, Dr. Vishal Gupta, Dr. Tathagath Ghosh, Mr. Bhaghirath Prasad, Dr. Janak Joshi, Mr. Vijay Solanki and Mr. Mukesh Lodhavi for their encouraging words and moral support.

My special thanks to Dr. Pawan Shukla for his invaluable advices, feedback on my research, preparation of the maps and the printable form of this thesis. I sincerely thank Ms. Tinani Khimeya (Department of Statistics, MSU) for sharing her knowledge on statistical analysis of the data.

I am also very grateful to Dr. Shankar Jha (Department of Business Economics, MSU) and Dr. (Mrs.) Sangeeta Jha, who helped me and extended support in numerous ways during various stages of my Ph.D. I thank Prof. Sashikant Kumar for his cooperation and useful suggestions all through this research.

I would also like to thank my field research team members and students, Dr. Shankar Jha, Dr. (Mrs.) Sangeeta Jha, Mr. Ashok Zala, Mr. Vijay Solanki and Mr. Bhimji Vaghela for their exceptional help and cooperation in collecting the primary data from the sample villages of this research. I would also like to thank all the respondents for their kind cooperation, without which it would have been absolutely impossible to generate field data for this research. Without their passionate participation and inputs, the survey could not have been successfully conducted. I am also grateful to Mr. Ranjit Rathva and his family members for their friendship, the warmth they extended to me and for sincerely looking after my comfort during the field work.

I am highly obliged and sincerely express my gratitude for Prof. Ganesh Devy and his wife Prof. (Mrs.) Surekha Devy for providing me accommodation at the *Adivasi* Academy, Tejgadh and for their guidance regarding the life and culture of the tribes during my field work. I thank Mr. Vipul Kapadia, administrative staff, Bhasha Kendra, Vadodara, Dr. Arvind of *Adivasi* Academy, Tejgadh and their staff for my comfortable stay with fooding facilities at their Academy. I am thankful to Mr. Govandhan Bhai Rathva, Sarpanch Gojariya village, Kavant, for providing space to stay at his home during my field work

I thank my colleagues, Mrs. Aparna Datta, Mrs. Vanya Bajpai and Mr. Shukanto Shaha for helping me in different ways to complete the research work.

I sincerely thank the administrative staff of the Department, Mr. Sanjay Joshi, Mr. Prasant Andharikar, Mr. Kanubhai Bhil, Mr. Sanjay Patel, Ms Priyanka Gurkha, Mr. Bhagwan Bhai, Mr. Jagdish Bhai, Mr. Ranjit Bhai and Mr. Harish Bhai for their constant support and timely help.

I would also like to thank the staff members of the Smt. Hansha Mehta Library, The M. S. University of Baroda, for their untiring help extended to me.

Last but not the least, I express my sincere thanks to all my family members. My parents, brother and sisters have been a great source of inspiration for me all through. Without their support and encouragement, it would have been extremely difficult for me to gather strength to complete this exhaustive work.

(Vijayata)