

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to God. He has given me strength and encouragement throughout the challenging journey to complete my goal. I am eternally grateful for His everlasting love, mercy, and grace.

I have immense pleasure in expressing my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Prof. Rolee Kanchan, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, The M. S. University of Baroda, for her constant inspiration, insightful guidance, personal encouragement, constructive criticism and painstaking scrutiny of the manuscript throughout the course of this research work. Her motherly care gives me the strength to work efficiently toward my objective.

I would like to extend my thanks to Prof. N. R. Dash and Prof. Bindu Bhatt, Head Department of Geography, Faculty of Science for their motivation, encouragement and for the providing of adequate departmental facilities to carry out this work. I would like to thank, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), New Delhi, India and The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda for providing financial support in the form of a fellowship to carry out the research.

I also acknowledge the support of the entire staff of Smt. Hansa Mehta Library, The M. S. University of Baroda, I am also grateful to all the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, The M. S. University of Baroda.

I am greatly thankful to Dr. Tathagata Ghosh and Mrs. Vanya Bajpai for their support, motivation and encouragement during the research period.

I extend my special thanks to Mr. Sukanta Kumar Saha, Mr. Biplab Banerjee, Dr. Chandam Chandabadani Devi, Mr. Atul Kant Tiwari, Mrs. Gauri Vipra, Mrs. Vaishali Vyas and Mr. Bikramjit Barooah for their constant support and encouragement for me during my Ph.D.

I would like to give thanks to my all teachers and friends from the Department of Geography The M.S University of Baroda and Kandra Radhakanta Kundu Mahavidyalaya (Kandra, Purba Bardhaman).

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents Mr. Nilmani Saha and Mrs. Mukullata Saha, sister Mrs. Pallabi Saha, grandparents Mr. Sarojakhsha Saha and late Mrs. Mirarani Saha, parents-in-laws Mr. Arun Kumar Garai and late Mrs. Manikuntala Garai, maternal uncle Mr. Arun Kumar Saha and aunt Mrs. Saswati Saha for their unshakeable belief, constant support, and never-ending patience.

In the end, I would like to express my love and utmost gratitude towards my wife Mrs. Shilpi Garai. Without her support and patience this would not have been possible.

I hereby conclude by extending earnest appreciation to everyone who helped me in my research journey either directly or indirectly.

(Somnath Saha)