

## Acknowledgement

*'Difficulties are opportunities' is a popular saying but very hard to believe and implement in general life. During the course of my research journey, I have felt and realized this truth very closely and I am thankful to the unforeseen for conferring me mental strength and energy to accomplish the task of writing this doctoral dissertation. However, it will be utterly selfish to arrogate the entire credit to oneself as there are numerous persons who have been supportively involved in my research, directly and indirectly, from its inception.*

*First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my heartiest gratitude to my most loving parents who have always posed immense faith in me and have been extremely supportive throughout my research work. Their intimate association with my academic efforts has been remarkable during the journey of my research. I adore my mother not just because she is my mother but for her knowledge, intellect, generosity, patience, and wonderful ability to make complex situations as simple as one cannot think of. My father's practical and organized personality has influenced me to channelize my inner strength to writing my Ph.D. thesis.*

*Research guide plays a key role at all the stages in the doctoral journey, from guiding and directing the research to stimulating the intellectual quest. I would like to thank my research supervisor Dr. Raj Kumar Hans for his constant encouragement and guidance both at professional as well as personal front. And whenever I was in different crises, he would not hesitate to assuage my deep anxieties and fears, even through longer conversations on telephone. He has been a great source of inspiration for me in my*

*work. His intellectual inputs in the subject have been remarkable and words may not adequately express my gratefulness to him.*

*I am also thankful to other members of the department who in some way or the other have put in their words of encouragement and in this respect my special thanks to Prof R J Shah, the Head of History Department who did not hesitate in clearing the technical snags for the smooth submission of this dissertation.*

*My gratitude to Sunetra Mitra, a very good friend, for her instant support and help whenever I needed in shaping the present work. Her patience to go through my work, my long conversations on phones and candid feedbacks were incredible. I owe her a special thank.*

*I am thankful to my Baromamu Subodh Chakroborty for his intellectual as well as emotional support in my Ph.D work. I would also like to thank Vijay and my dear brother Anirban Roy Chowdhury for their sincere efforts into photo scanning and editing. The technical help provided by my brother in the course of my research work constitutes as an important support. Most importantly my niece, little Sonai, has been a reservoir of my strength and energy for the last few years. Too little to understand my work but her cheerfulness always enlivened my sagging spirits. Thanks for that Sonai.*

*My special thanks to my good friend Sanjukta Paul for her continuous encouragement and to Vinayak Bhandari for his selfless help during ups and downs during different phases of my research. I am also indebted to Ms Sumitra Padmanavan, Suchandra Ghatak, Subhasree Bhattacharya and Deepak Manna for their sincere assistance provided at some crucial stages of my research.*

*I am thankful to Lakshmi Das (my respondent) for her time and cooperation during my interview and my special thanks to Tapudi (Tapati) and Debashish Bhattacharya for making the interviews possible.*

*My sincere thanks goes to all the administrative staff members of the National Archives, New Delhi, the West Bengal State Archives, the West Bengal Secretariat Library, the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, the Manada Sundari Granthagar O Gabeshana Kendra, CINIASHA (NGO), the Women's Studies Research Center, Baroda, the Centre for Contemporary Theory, Baroda, Smt Hansa Mehta Library of Maharaja Sayajirao University, and CODESRIA library, Dakar for their kind cooperation and valuable assistance in leading me to research materials. I am also thankful to Kalu'da for arranging all the paper volumes overnight and for making the Xerox copies ready within a short period. I am indebted to Apu of Dey's publishing house for his involvement in searching relevant valuable books and materials.*

*The work needed funds to meet vast expenditure for traveling, data collection and documentation. Completion of the present research work would not have been possible without the grants awarded to me during the tenure of my research. I would like to thank Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda for the 'Maharaja Sayajirao University Fellowship' and most notably the Indian Council of Historical Research for the ICHR Junior Research Fellowship with much desired extension. I would like to thank especially Ms. Indira Sil of ICHR for her all kinds of cooperation. My thanks to Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and The South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS)*

*for selecting me as a research fellow and allowing me to participate in the workshop held in Dakar (Senegal) during 2006 which helped deepening my research base and enriching my worldview by cross-cultural interactions and exchanges.*

*Last but not the least I would like to acknowledge my heartiest gratitude to my beloved 'MUM' who has not only stood by my side as a technical assistant but his contribution in executing the final shape of my doctoral dissertation is remarkable and unforgettable. Mum has proved himself as a person with heart of gold standing by my side in the ups and downs of my research period especially during the last two years. Discussions with him on various issues have remained helpful. His valuable comments on some aspects of my work have been significant in the final organization of my Ph.D. thesis. His constant encouragement and all-round support strengthened me to channelize my intellectual passion to produce this doctoral dissertation. Many, many thanks.*

*But having expressed my sentiments to various individuals and institutions for their assistance, support and inputs, I owe all responsibilities for mistakes and inadvertent errors.*

*Anindita Roy Chowdhury*

Anindita Roy Chowdhury