ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis represents a finale of my field work done in different villages under Phansidewa Block, Sub-division Siliguri, District Darjeeling, West Bengal that has taken place over a period of almost four years, starting as a UGC-Junior Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal. It is my duty to acknowledge the persons who made this research possible.

First of all I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Jaydip Sen, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal for his untiring, enthusiastic inspirations and constant support to formulate this research work. His valuable suggestions, constructive criticisms and meticulous supervision have given the ultimate shape to the present Ph.D. thesis.

I also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Samar Kumar Biswas, Dr. Pinak Tarafder and Dr. Subir Biswas, faculty members of the Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal. I am thankful to them for their encouragement, co-operation and valuable suggestions during the work. I am also thankful to the non-teaching staff of the department, Shri Narayan Chandra Das and Shri Sujit Kangsa Banik for their kind cooperation.

I am thankful to the library staff of the National Institution of Nutrition, Hyderabad, Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta, University of North Bengal and Post Graduate Department of Anthropology, Utkal University for their valuable co-operation and support during the research work.

I express my sincere gratitude to all the individuals of the selected Rajbanshi villages for their valuable co-operation and immense patience during the collection of the data. I would also like to express sincere thankfulness to many persons who have assisted me
during my fieldwork. I would particularly like to mention Shri Dhuba Roy, Shri Naba Kumar Roy, Shri Dindayal Singha, Shri Ajoy Kumar Roy, Shri Dhiraj Singha, Shri Dipak Roy, Shri Satyajit Roy, Shri Jogesh Chandra Roy, Shri Sipen Roy and Shri Durga Charan Singha. I also express my special regards to Shri Md. Nurul Islam and all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of this Ph.D. thesis.

My greatest personal indebtedness and which I will not forget to mention, is my parents and my wife Mrs. Shampa Das for their assistance throughout the study. I am also thankful to them for their understanding, endless patience, encouragement and constant support during the research period.

The financial support extended by the University Grants Commission, Government of India, in the form of Junior and Senior Research fellowships [UGC-Ref. No. 129/(NET-June 2007)] is also acknowledged.

Finally, I deeply indebted God Almighty for his unfailing love, protection and manifold blessings.

\[\text{Department of Anthropology} \]
\[\text{University of North Bengal} \]
\[\text{Raja Rammohunpur, Darjeeling} \]
\[\text{Date: 4th of October, 2012} \]