ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents and Sabita Dutta.

Sometimes I look back at the last five years of my PhD and wonder whether I did any work at all, or if I only managed to channelize the knowledge and support of everyone around me. Truth be told, there's a long list of people I need to thank.

First and foremost, I want to thank my research supervisor, Prof. Mrinmoy Kumar Sarma for being a voice of reason in my otherwise cluttered life. He has taught me, both consciously and unconsciously, how research is done. I appreciate all his contributions of time, ideas, and criticisms that made my Ph.D a great learning experience.

I am deeply indebted to my doctoral committee members, Professor Chandan Goswami and Prof. Debabrata Das for taking time out of their busy schedules to help me whenever I visited them with my doubts and queries. I am sure it has helped complement the development of my dissertation.

I want to express my gratitude towards Prof. Chandana Goswami, Prof. S. S. Sarkar, Prof. Papori Baruah, Dr. Tridib R Sarma, Dr. Anjan Bhuyan, Dr. Arup Roy and all the faculty members in the Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University for their valuable comments and feedback in the progress seminars. Every interaction with you lot has left me more knowledgeable than before.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the non-teaching staff working in our department – Tarun Jyoti Borah, Brindaban Borah, Kushal Roy and Suren Borah for their invaluable help throughout the duration of my Ph.D program.

They say the journey always matters more than the destination and so does the people you share it with. I want to thank all the research scholars in the department – both past and present – for being there for me. I have learned a great deal from all of you. Special mentions for Pankaj Kumar, Lakhimi J Chutia, Deep Jyoti Gurung, Maumita Choudhury, Shivam Kakati, Bhaswati Adhikary, and Dorothy Dutta.

Sometimes, the best help comes from people who are in a completely different field. I want to thank Pintu Roy, Stuti Barukial, Nupur Sinha, Saket Bharadwaj, Champak Talukdar, Anil Hazarika, Dhruba J Gogoi, Manash Borah, Homen Lahan, Ritesh Watharkar, Sourabh Chetry and Bhagya Raj for their friendships and for giving me encouragement and practical advice when I needed it the most.

I am grateful to the University Grants Commission for providing me with financial support throughout the duration of my PhD under the Junior Research Fellowship and Senior Research Fellowship schemes.

I want to thank my parents for everything. There have been times when I have thought about quitting but it is only because of the values they have passed on to me that I could manage to survive this. I would also like to thank my brother Jaideep, my sister Jyoti, my brother-in-law Arup and my nephew Prateek for their constant support.

Last but not the least, I want to thank Sabita Dutta, my once and future closer. Without you by my side, I could never have done this. Thank you for your friendship, love and faithful support throughout my PhD.

Sandeep Kumar Singh Tezpur University