# Dedicated to

My Mother Madhuri Borgohain and My Father Gunadhar Borgohain

#### DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the thesis titled "**Urban Land Governance and Informalities** in a Post-Colonial Frontier: A Study on Urbanisation in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh" submitted to Tezpur University in part fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology under the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, is a result of my original research work on the subject. It has not been submitted in any form or part for any diploma or degree of any other institution, including this University.

Date: 29-12-2023 (Revised on 03-06-2024) Place: Tezpur University Bhaswan Bryon

(Bhaswati Borgohain) Registration No.: TZ189893 of 2018



**Prof. Chandan Kumar Sharma Professor** Department of Sociology Tezpur University Email: chandan@tezu.ernet.in Phone: + 03712-275802 (O)

### **Certificate of the Supervisor**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Urban Land Governance and Informalities in a Post-Colonial Frontier: A Study on Urbanisation in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh" submitted to the **School of Humanities and Social Sciences**, Tezpur University in part fulfillment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in **Sociology** is a record of research work carried out by **Bhaswati Borgohain** under my supervision and guidance.

All help received by her from various sources have been duly acknowledged. No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for award of any other degree.

Date: 29-12-2023 (Revised on 03-06-2024) Place: Tezpur

(Prof. Chandan Kumar Sharma)

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

How does one wrap up the most challenging yet the most meaningful journey in life till now? As I sit to write this acknowledgement, I feel blessed and grateful to all the people who have been part of this journey.

First and foremost, I feel eternally indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Chandan Kumar Sharma who has been a constant support all throughout this journey, both personally and professionally. He introduced me to the vast sea of knowledge that went beyond just my research topic. He is kind and generous with his time and knowledge, has been a patient listener to all my problems while being a very understanding guide all throughout. I am grateful to the universe for giving me a mentor for life.

I would like to thank my Doctoral Committee Members, Prof. P. K. Das, Prof. B.K. Danta, all the faculty members of the department of Sociology whose comments and feedback in each of the six-monthly progress seminars have immensely benefited my research. I want to thank the support staff, Amar Bharali and Jogen Das for assisting in all kinds of official paperwork.

I am very thankful to the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) for offering me the ICSSR-Doctoral Fellowship 2019-20 and financially supporting this research for two years (Jan 2019-Dec 2020). I am thankful to Tezpur University for providing me with the institutional fellowship for the duration of July 2017- Dec 2018 and Jan-June 2021.

I offer my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Varun Sharma and Dr. Namami Sharma who not only welcomed me to their home with good food, but always gave very insightful feedback to my work. I have enjoyed long meals with them along with great conversations. Dr. Durlav Sonowal's home has been another warm and happy place during my stay on campus. I offer my heartfelt thanks to him for all the delicious meals and good times. I am very grateful to Dr. Natasha Hazarika, for always making my research journey easier through her very practical advice and right kind of motivation. Discussing my research with her has always been very enriching.

I feel immensely blessed to have gained a few lifelong friends in this journey. This PhD would not have been possible without Maitrayee Patar and Hiranku Hazarika. From fellow PhD colleagues we became friends over our shared love for 'laal saah' and long addas

discussing life. They are kind, compassionate and offer me the most positive and reflective venting space. I cherish this friendship of deep connection and mutual growth. Dr. Mai Muhammad and Syeda are two other friends who have enriched my life by exposing me to new kinds of art, cinema and books. I thank Nitish Gogoi, who by being the hardworking and sincere person that he is, inspires me to work. He has been a great company accompanying me on the campus over long walks and sharing great meals, discussing work and life. His last-minute help in arranging the reference has made me indebted to him. I want to thank Mekory Dodum, who has attended to every little query of mine from the field and cross-checked data for me without any complaint. She has always been so gentle and warm and a great friend. I want to thank my friend Sipli Sikha Dowerah for all the good times as we bonded over our shared love for nieces and being 'invested aunts'.

I want to thank my hostel wingmates, Dixita, Nimi, Gauri, Trishna, Atrayee, Priyanka, Parveen, Dimpee for making the hostel a home. Their young chirpy energy made my days in the hostel lively and fun. I want to thank all the hostel staff, especially Krishna Dammai, for keeping my hostel room clean. A special thanks to my aunt, Huno pehi and cousin Anuj who have helped me during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I want to offer my special thanks to Dr. Sammy, Barnam Jyoti Saharia, Dr. Damini Kashyap, Dr. Jharna Choudhury, Dr. Preeti Prakash, Dr. Prithibi Pratibha Gogoi, Benjamin Karam, for contributing to my journey in their own ways.

In Itanagar, my field site, many people have helped me in my research. While naming all would not be possible, this note of acknowledgement would be incomplete if I miss thanking Pema Norbu Thongchi, Madan Mili, Polumatla Pravimal Abhishek, Apeda Rondo, Gumjum Haider, Tsering Sonam, Tara Tagin, Dr Nabam Budh, G Basar, Jarjum Ete, Sunil Mow, Prof. Kh. Kabi, Mepung Tadar who have helped me in the initial phase of my fieldwork. I offer my thanks to Late Father Cyriac of Don Bosco Youth Centre for offering me the stay for fieldwork and thank its staff, Bhaswati Bora and Miss Ethel for their help during my stay.

I want to thank the Principal of the Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya (VKV-Chimpu), Dr Kakde and Pravin ji of Vivekananda Kendra office for allowing me to stay in their school guest house to conduct my research. I want to thank Aakash Doley, staff of VKV-Chimpu who took good care of my stay. I thank my friend, Dr. John Gangmei and his wife,

Khetjing, who offered their warm hospitality during my stays at their home to conduct fieldwork.

This acknowledgement would be incomplete without thanking Hasina Kharbhih, founder of Impluse NGO Network, Shillong and Dr. Walter Fenandes, founder director of North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) Guwahati. I thank Ms. Kharbhih for providing me the first opportunity to conduct social research, which directed the course of my career as a development practitioner interested in action research. I am eternally grateful to Dr. Walter Fernandes for providing his invaluable mentorship that instilled a lifelong passion for social research.

I am indebted to my mother, Madhuri Borgohain, who is a force in herself, my father, Gunadhar Borgohain, who offers calmness and peace through his stable support. I am grateful to my elder sisters- Nilakshee and Minakshee Borgohain- who are my safety net for life, my younger sister- Dipima Borgohain for being the more mature one, and brother Chinmoy Borgohain for being the silent support. I thank my understanding in-laws- Bina Saikia (mother-in-law), Madhab Rajkhowa (father-in-law), Binita Rajkhowa (aunt-in-law) and all the members of my extended family, for providing me comfort and warmth throughout this journey. I thank my fun cousins, Koushik Phukan, Partha Pratim Phukan, Jasashree Phukan and Banashree Phukan for their presence in my life. I offer my love to all the kids in the family who refuse to stay kids- Neha, Doreen, Disha, Siphung, Jiri and Piu- and fill our lives with joy and happiness. Last, but not the least, I thank my husband, Prasanta Rajkhowa, who has suffered the most, endured my long absence and yet has been my most bankable provider, sensible caretaker and patient lover.

Bhaswati Borgohain

## LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
Table 2.1	Administrative and Political Growth of Arunachal Pradesh: From	61
	Colonial Entry to Full Statehood	
Table 2.2	Consolidation of Formal Administration: District Formation	68
	Timeline	
Table 3.1	Census 2011	74
Table 4.1	2011 Census Details of Ganga Village	130

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page. No.
Figure 2.1	Screenshot of p. 155 of Recommendations and Conclusions of	60
	Administrative Reforms Commission: A Compendium, The	
	Administrative Reforms Commission (Secretariat), July 1970	
Figure 3.1	Agency Council Session	83
Figure 3.2	Farewell of Agency Council Members	87
Figure 3.3	Pradesh Council Members and President's Visit	88
Figure 3.4	Young Nabam Runghi	90
Figure 3.5	Old Nabam Runghi	90
Figure 3.6	The Nabam Runghi Memorial	94
Figure 3.7	Framed Photos in the Nabam Runghi Memorial	95
Figure 3.8	Portrait on the Tombstone of Nabam Runghi	95
	Source: Author	
Figure 3.9	Full Tombstone of Nabam Runghi	95
Figure 3.10	Government Quarters in Chandra Nagar in the early 1980's	107
Figure 3.11	Zero Point Then (1980's-90s)	117
Figure 3.12	Zero Point Now	117
Figure 4.1	Application to the CM by Ganga Villagers	139
Figure 4.2	Unused rows of quarters	145
Figure 4.3	Dilapidated Quarter 1	145
Figure 4.4	Dilapidated Quarter 2	145
Figure 4.5	Occupied Quarter	145
Figure 5.1	Government Quarter Encroachment 1	178
Figure 5.2	Government Quarter Encroachment 2	178
Figure 5.3	Government Quarter Encroachment 3	178
Figure 5.4	Government Quarter Encroachment 4	178
Figure 5.5	River-bed encroachment by people and bridge construction by the	179
	State	
Figure 5.6	Pigsty and low cost houses	179
Figure 5.7	Five-Storey building	179

### LIST OF MAPS

Map No.	Мар	Page No.
Map 1.1	Itanagar Location Map within Northeast India	4
Map 1.2	Boundary Map of Itanagar Capital Region	19
Map 1.3	Latest Proposed Master Plan Map of Itanagar Capital Region for 2031	19
Map 1.4	GIS based Master Plan for Itanagar	20
Map 2.1	Topographic Map of Arunachal Pradesh	27
Map 2.2	Assam Province.	45
Map 2.3	District Map of Arunachal Pradesh	67
Map 3.1	Location Map of Itafort	86
Map 3.2	Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary	99
Map 4.1	Location Map of Ganga Village within Itanagar Proposed Plan	133
Map 4.2	Itanagar Area Boundary	133
Map 4.3	Zoomed Boundary between Itanagar urban area and Ganga Village	133
Map 4.4	Zoomed further with details within Ganga Village	134
Map 4.5	GSI Land Allotment Map	137
Map 4.6	Boundary Line between GSI and Ganga Village drawn in 2004	143