Emotions cannot be adequately expressed in words because then emotions are transformed into a mere formality. My acknowledgements are many times more than what I am expressing here.

With limitless humility, I would like to take this unique opportunity to first thank "The Almighty" who showered His blessings on me and bestowed me with health and courage to undergo this crucial juncture.

Words are insufficient to describe the magnitude of support and love extended to me by my parents and family, my source of strength and inspiration.

With an overwhelming sense of legitimate pride and genuine obligation which gives me exuberant pleasure and privilege to express my eternal gratitude to my learned and revered research guide and chairman of Advisory Committee Dr. (Mrs.) Sumati Rekha Malhotra, Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, CSK HPKV, Palampur for her excellent and praiseworthy guidance, unsparing criticism, juvenile encouragement, liberal attitude and parental affection during the whole course of my study. I shall always remain indebted to her.

I feel honoured in expressing my profound sense of reverence and gratitude for the members of my Advisory Committee, Dr. (Mrs.) Rajni Modgil, Associate Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, Dr. (Mrs.) Radhna Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, Dr. M.K. Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology, Dr. Nageswer Singh, Assistant Scientist, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Dr. C. Varshney, Professor & Head, Department of Veterinary Pharmacology & Toxicology, for their benevolent guidance and whole hearted support from time to time during the study.

I express my cordial thanks to Dr. Y.S. Dhaliwal, Head, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, for providing required facilities and valuable suggestions.

I also extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Pradeep K. Sharma, Dean Postgraduate Studies and Dr. Shubhangna Sharma, Dean, College of Home Science, for being kind and considerate in providing the necessary facilities. The financial assistance provided by the Dean, Postgraduate studies in the form of merit scholarship is duly acknowledged.

No expression of thanks will be sufficient without the recognition of co-operation, remarkable help, and continuous encouragement from the teachers of the Department of Food Science & Nutrition namely, Dr. H.R. Sharma, Dr. Sangita Sood, Dr. Anupama Sandal and Dr. Ranjana Verma.

It is my utmost duty and privilege to express my special thanks to Dr. V.K. Gupta, Head, Department of Veterinary Pathology, Dr. Madan Verma, Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary Physiology, Dr. O.P. Sharma, Senior Scientist, IVRI, Palampur and Dr. S.S. Kanwar, Head, Department of Microbiology for their selfless help, support and encouragement.

Genuine appreciation goes out to my seniors Archana di, Satya di, Dr. Shailza, Dr. Arun Prabha for their untiring help and co-operation.

Words are insufficient to express the magnitude of support and help extended by the galaxy of my friends and juniors, Shweta, Tabassum, Isha, Aditi, Anubhav, Sonia, Purvika, Madhvi, Mrinalini, Pratibha, Ruchi, Monika, Nisha, Anita. I can hardly overlook the love and support rendered by all my friends in every walk of life.

Time stops moving when I think of acknowledging the blessings, affection and support of my parents & family members, who constantly inspired and supported me always. I wish there could have been a more befitting way than words to express my gratitude to my loving & caring family members- Chachuji(s), Chachiji(s), grandmothers, brothers- Nishant & Saurabh & sister Surbhi & all nears and dears for their love and encouragement. I shall remain lifelong indebted to them for being the supporting pillar for me always.

No expression of thanks will be sufficient without the recognition of affection, love, support and constant encouragement extended by my father-in-law, my mother-in-law, Gopi di, Umesh jiju and Pari. I wish to acknowledge them with my deep sense of gratitude and personal regards.

A word of thanks should not come between my fiancée 'Dr. Maruti N. Modgil' and me, but then my most desired thanks from the depth of my heart are for him for being my strength and support always. His remarkable ability to change the attitude from "Can I" to "I can" shall be a major boosting force all through my life.
I also wish to thank Mr. Anil Kumar, Mr. Mast Ram, Mr. Kapil, Mr. Hem Chand and all the laboratory and ministerial staff of College of Home Science for their whole-hearted help and co-operation.

I would also like to thank all those friendly & helpful people who cannot find a separate name but helped me directly or indirectly in the present investigation.

Needless to say, errors and omissions are all mine.

Place: Palampur
Dated: 6th June, 2009
(NITIKA MAHAJAN)