ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this highly complex society, no work can be accomplished by a single individual but it needs inspiration and sincere gratitude of intellectuals as well as the grace of that Almighty. With limitless humility, I would like to praise and thank "GOD", the merciful, the compassionate, who bestowed me with health, tenacity and courage enough to go through this crucial juncture. I am grateful to "GOD", for bestowing me with affectionate parents, whose love, dedication & inspiration encouraged me to undergo higher studies.

With the 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 advisor Dr V.K. Sharma, Professor (Soils), CSK HPKV, Palampur and Chairman of my Advisory Committee for his excellent and praiseworthy guidance, keen interest, adroit admonition, juvenile encouragement and parental affection during whole course of my study and particularly at times of research and preparation of this manuscript. With a conscientious supervision, he has saved me from the taste of several errors by his frank and unsparing criticism. I shall always remain indebted to him.

No expression of thanks will be sufficient without recognition of intelligent and professional dexterity of the members of my Advisory Committee; Dr S.P. Sharma (Director of Research, CSK HPKV, Palampur), Dr G.D. Sharma (Agronomist, Department of Agronomy), Dr (Mrs.) Usha Rana (Associate Professor, Department of Biology and Environmental Sciences) and Dr (Mrs.) Promila Kanwar (Professor & Head, Department of Home Science Extension and Communication Management) for their valuable guidance, utilitarian exhortation and constructive suggestions.

I emphatically express my thanks to Dr S.P. Dixit, Head (Department of Soil Science), Dr K.K. Katoch, Dr V.K. Suri, Dr S.K. Subehia, Dr Y.P. Dubey, Dr Sanjay K. Sharma, Dr Narendra K. Sankhyan, Dr Pradeep Kumar, Dr R.S. Sharma, Dr Sanjeev K. Sandal and Dr Navneet Datt for their suggestions and kind cooperation during the period of investigation.

Perhaps no language exists in which I can express my indebtedness and obligation to my revered parents Sh. Sohan Lal, Smt. Kamla Dhiman, wife Mrs. Neelam, sons Mr. Anurag Dhiman, Aryan Dhiman, brother Sh. Vikas Dhiman, sister-in-law Mrs. Neesh Dhiman, nephews Shivakshi Dhiman, Aditya Dhiman, Akhilesh, Gaurav, sister Lata Dhiman and Jiayi Sh. Pawan Dhiman who spent their life making my life. Their endless love, care, inspiration, hard work and genuineness have influenced my life in the most beautiful manner. I owe every single success of mine to them. My reverence to them and their benevolence to me have neither any measure nor any words.

I sincerely thank Dr Kamlesh Singh, Dean, Postgraduate Studies, CSK HPKV, Palampur and university authorities for providing necessary facilities and help during the course of investigation.

Heartfelt thanks are also due to Trilokji, Manoharji, Kori, Paras Ramji, Jagdishji, Ravinderji, Pradeepji, Gupchha, Shakti, Ajay, Basuji, all the office staff members of Department of Soil Science, COA, CSK HPKV, Palampur for their cordial assistance and timely help extended during the study.

Exultant and enviable company provided by my coterie, especially Dr Sanjay Sharma, Dr Praveen Sharma, Dr Rakesh Kaundal, Dr Novell Chander, Dr Neeraj and Sh. Deewanji who kept me in exalted state even during moments of despondency affable demeanour, benevolent help and joyful company during pursuit of this study is greatly acknowledged.

I can hardly overlook the cooperation, timely help, moral support extended by the galaxy of my friends especially Dr Jintu, Dr Sushil, Dr Swapna, Dr Shweta, Dr Nagi, Dr Upinder, and Vijay, who boosted me up in periods of mental stress & strain & made this place a home away from home.

Genuine appreciation goes for ADR (R&E) Dr Satish Kumar Sharma, my colleagues Dr Joginder Singh, Dr Pramod Sharma, Dr Sudhir Verma and Dr Jagat Ram Verma for their cooperation, support and help rendered. It would be inappropriate if I commit a mistake not to mention name of my juniors; Bikram and Bengia who kept me in exalted state during moments of despondency.

I am also thankful to Dr (Mrs.) Sharda Singh, Programme Director, GIS for preparing the maps of the study area.

I take this opportunity to thank Dr Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan, H.P. for permitting me to carry out my remainting research work for completing the Ph.D. degree.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning the beautiful town Palampur and Shivalik (PG) Hostel for some unforgettable experiences and memories.

Needless to say, all omissions and errors are mine.

Place: Palampur
Date: 19.7.2013

(Anil Kumar)