ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It has been a long journey. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to a large number of people who have provided me with invaluable support, personally and professionally throughout the journey. Without their encouragement, patience and trust, I would never have been able to finish this dissertation.

First and above all, I would like to extend my deepest and most sincere gratitude to Dr. Yaj Medury, my supervisor, who not only gave the best mentoring I could have ever asked for but also provided all the possible support whenever I needed.

Appreciation is also expressed to the members of my dissertation committee, Professor Neerja Pande, Professor Naseem Abidi, Dr. Mukta Mani Gupta and Dr. Nidhi Sinha for their valuable comments and feedback that essentially made this study more meaningful.

A special thanks to Professor Ravi Shankar and Dr. B. S. Nagi, for supporting our ideas. Your comments and help are most appreciated.

My best friends should also be given heartfelt thanks for their love and concern. When I was frustrated, they were always by my side. Special thanks to Dr. Aayushi Gupta, Dr. Sharmistha Bhattacharjee, Dr. Santoshi Sengupta, Dr. Santosh Dev, Monica and Anuja who went out of their way to help me through the stressful times of my life. When I needed assistance of any kind, they were the first to come. I am so lucky to have a wealth of best friends. No road is tortuous with good company.

I would also like to acknowledge the grace of God and the love of my children Ananya and Aryaman and other family members for bearing my late working hours and cooperating in all possible ways to help me accomplish my goal. Love is a gift from God and I truly appreciate it.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things
(1 Corinthians 13)