ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A major research work like this is never the work of anyone alone. This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study. I would like to extend my gratitude to the following.

Thank God for the wisdom and perseverance that he has been bestowed upon me during this research work, and indeed, throughout my life: “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

I owe deepest gratitude to Dr. Sukhdev Singh, my research supervisor for making this research possible and his sincerity and encouragement I will never forget. His support, guidance, advice throughout the research work, concern and consideration, as well as his pain-staking efforts is greatly appreciated. Indeed, without his guidance, I would not be able to conduct this research.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their unconditional support, both financially and emotionally throughout my degree. I am especially thankful to my husband and son for their unconditional love and support to write this thesis. I thankfully acknowledge the contributions of several colleagues and friends.

ShubhkamnaRathore