Acknowledgements

I genuinely express my gratitude to my mentor, guide and supervisor, Prof. Mohammed Asger. His dedication and keen interest above all his overwhelming attitude to support had been solely and mainly responsible for completing my work. His timely advice, meticulous scrutiny, and scientific approach have helped me to a very great extent to accomplish this task.

I am highly gratified to my co-supervisor, Dr. Firdous Ahmad Shah for his help at every stage of my research. His timely suggestions, scholarly advice and dynamism have enabled me to complete my thesis.

I generously thank my friends and ex-colleagues, Mr. Qamar Rayees Khan and Dr. Tasleem Arif for their valuable suggestions and support throughout my study period.

It is my privilege to thank my parents and my wife for their constant encouragement throughout my research period.

I am highly obliged to my daughter, Taqwa, a source of inspiration for this study.

Above all, I am thankful to the Great Almighty-Sea of knowledge and wisdom, for his countless blessings.

Mohd Yasin Pir