ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the completion of this study. I take this opportunity to thank all of them. First of all, I would like to pay my sincere offering to the almighty without whose grace it would not have been possible to add a new dimension to my life. I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Latika Singh for her continuous support, patience and motivation during the entire period of Ph.D study without which it would have been difficult to carry out this study. I would like to thank her for encouraging my research and for allowing me to grow as a research scientist. I could not have imagined having a better supervisor and mentor for my Ph.D study. I would also like to thank management of my Institution without whom this project would have been a distant reality.

I wish to convey my earnest gratitude to Prof. Prabha Sharma, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, NCU and Prof. R.K Agrawal, Dean SCSS, JNU for providing overwhelming guidance and support for my research work. I take this opportunity to thank my thesis committee: Prof. Naveen Rajpal, Dean USIT, GGSIPU and Prof. Swaran Ahuja, Dean Academics, NCU for their insightful comments and suggestions which encouraged me to widen my research from various perspectives.

I would like to thank my family from core of my heart especially my loving daughters Lakshita and Yashasvi for giving me ample time to achieve my goal. I would also like to place on record the help and constant encouragement rendered by my husband Col. Devavrat Chhikara without which this study would not have been possible. Their patience, love and encouragement have motivated me all throughout my research and especially when I was exhausted and tired. I sincerely extend my appreciation and thanks to my colleagues and students who directly or indirectly helped me in shaping up this thesis to its present form.

Rita Rana