ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This section is going to be long, I warn.

There is no other way to start this section than to thank the most important person in the development of this thesis work, my Guide, Dr. B. Suresh. He has been my thesis director for a bit more than four years now but he has been my teacher for more than 9 years starting from the first day I stepped into this department; and I have learnt a lot from him, both actively by discussing and passively by just watching him work. I had a great experience working with him and thank him for providing the best guidance and support that helped in both academic as well as my personal development. He is not only one of the most privileged minds I have met so far in the scientific field but his talent on resolving any kind of problems has always kept influencing me. His support, extensive knowledge, patience and good advice assisted me throughout my work. He has taught me everything in the lab. I am truly grateful to you Sir! I can write several other sentences about how beneficial has been his influence in my still short scientific career but he would probably suggest me to cut this off, so I will move on.

Very special thanks to Dr. Isha Desai... Mam you’ve been the best academic advisor and a friend. Your cheerful personality has always attracted me and your knowledge about the subject has always exerted a pull on me to work hard. The way you manage things despite your busy schedule have made me learn a lot. I always felt a positive energy talking to you. Thank you for being there these years.

I owe thanks to my other teachers of the department, Dr. Dolly Kumar and Dr. Pragna Parikh. This journey would not have been so pleasant without the support of teachers like u. Thank you Mam for your affection and love.

I am grateful to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for the financial funding in the form of fellowship (JRF/SRF).

My sincere thanks to The Head, Department of Zoology for providing me with all the necessary facilities to carry out my research work.
My warmest acknowledgements are also to the other teachers of the department for their very professional, but joyful companionship.

To my Labmates: Pratyush Patankar, Gowri Uggini, Hetal Roy, Shailja Rajaram, Anushree Pillai, Ayaz Rangez, Tushar Panot, Ruchika Kataria, Bhavika Desai, Shalaka Shadekarpawar, Pranav Buch and Hiral Murawala, thank you for the good times that may never turn back again. Exceptional thanks to Shailja, for the n number of coffees and chats we had together when get worn-out of the lab work. You have been a very good friend and I will always cherish the time spend with you.

Very heartfelt and honest thanks to Hiral and Pranav for helping me with the gels and aid me wind up with this thesis work. Your hardworking nature with smiling faces has always been making the lab a great environment to work in. Hiral you have been a very sweet friend and Pranav you are an all-rounder! I am sure sir has got gem of the person in the form of u both. Thank you very much and I wish you both a very good luck and success in future.

To all those who have helped me with the thesis: Pranav, Shailja and Hiral for going through the chapters, Pranav again for editing the figures and tables, Gowri for helping me with the graphs and Pratyush for helping me editing the references. Thank you all. Your help counts a lot for this thesis.

Thanks to my other friends of the department, Kala Mokaria, Suchi Gandhi and Reshma Solanki for the warm greetings every morning as I entered the department and Deepa Menon for cheers along the way. I am also very grateful to all the nonteaching staff of the department, for their immense cooperation. Everyone has been so accommodating and very approachable. Thank you all... Talking with u people always made my mood light.

To the friends that I have made at Hostel: Shilpi, Ankita, Jigna, Akhila, Daxa, Nisha, Meeta, Nancy, Vriti, Apoorva, Hiral, Uloopi, Sweety. Thank you for the good times.... There were many!

Special thanks go to my friends Sankari, Jisha, Ruchika, Umesh Varma and Kartika for the friendship that started at my very first days in Baroda
and never knew would go so stronger. Your e-mails and messages kept me going throughout these years and made my journey very blissful.

To my best friends, **Gowri Uggin**, **Nisha Prajapati** and **Tushar Panot**. Thank you for being there and for your support. Your friendship remains irreplaceable.

To my friends from back home, thank you all.

Thanks to all my relatives and cousins for their best wishes.

My brother **Surya**...You’re love, support and encouragement has meant the world to me! Thank you!

To my **Parents**, thank you so much for your unconditional love and support. Sometimes it was the only thing that got me through some tough times. I love you more than words can express.

And finally to the Almighty God..!! Thank you for being there with me... always...

With this I fondly dedicate this thesis to my Parents

A. Saradamba