ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every mission needs a spirit of dedication and hard work, but more than any thing else it needs proper guidance, working atmosphere and mental support. In all humility and profound deep sense of gratitude and heartiest thanks to Dr. Praveen Singhal, Professor (Retd.), Department of Human Biology, Punjabi University, Patiala, my mentor for guiding through the execution of the present work with remarkable patience, scholarly insight and benevolent help. I am indebted to her for constructive criticism, invaluable suggestions, meticulous supervision, ardent interest, ever encouraging words and inspiring hard work that helped me to accomplish this treatise. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to her for untiring efforts, the critical analysis she provided and the keen interest she took in the work at each and every step. It has been a distinct honor and a rare privilege for me to work under her supervision.

I pay my special thanks to Prof. S.M.S. Chahal, Prof. Pushpa Singhal, Prof. S.P. Singh, Former Heads and Prof. Promila Mehta, present Head, Department of Human Biology, Punjabi University, Patiala for providing necessary laboratory facilities.

I am eternally grateful to Dr. Rajinder Kumar for encouraging me in pursuing my Ph.D and research work.

I am also thankful to all the members of faculty members of Human Biology Department Punjabi University Patiala, Chandigarh, for their praiseworthy support and co-operation.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance in form of RF from Special Assistance Program for meritorious students in Science, University Grants Commission, New Delhi,

I extend my thanks to the librarians of National Medical Library, Libraries of Indian Council of Medical Research and All India Institute of Medical Research, New Delhi, Government Medical College, Patiala, PGIMER, and CRRI D, Chandigarh for consultation of literature.

I am obliged Sh. Amritpal Sehra, Department of Economics, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana for his assistance during the statistical data analysis of this research work.

I sincerely admire the contribution of all my lab mates along with my colleagues and friends Sakshi Jasuja, Monika Bali, Neetika Sharma, Swati Mehta, Neelam Chouhan, Anupreet,
Anjandeep, Swati Singla, Raminder Kaur, Ginjinder Kaur, Sonia Baghla, Jyoti, Sonam, Upasna and Heena Sharma for extending their unstinted support and unfailing help during the course of entire study.

I sincerely express my gratitude from the core of my heart to all the people who corporated with me during collection of study data.

Words prove a meager media to write down my feelings for my father Sh. Jagdish Chand Nag, mother Smt. Sarla Nag and brother Amit for providing me constant encouragement, divine presence and supporting me spiritually throughout.

I sincerely acknowledge the love and support of my father in law Sh. Shiv Singh Karakoti, mother in law Smt. Champa Karakoti, brother in law Lucky. I find myself short of words for the inexhaustible perseverance of my soul-mate Mr. Daljeet Singh Karakoti who stood by my side and have devoted me to dizzy heights of optimism out of the bouts of my resentments.

Finally I thank the Almighty for having extended his grace to me to support me.

Anu Nag