Acknowledgements

I would first like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Dr. M. Syamala Devi, Professor, Department of Computer Science and Applications, Panjab University, Chandigarh. Her help, insight, encouragement and serenity have greatly helped to steer me into the right direction. The discussions we had were always supportive and taught me the essential skills of research. She helped me to sharpen my inquisitiveness and have strong fundamentals of concepts.

I would also like to acknowledge the people without whose assistance and advice this thesis would not have been possible. Professor P.V. Rao, Professor Emeritus, inspired me to induce decision making in multi-agent system. I would also like to express my earnest gratitude to Dr. Ravinder Mehta, Child Specialist, who introduced me to the health problems that Indian infants/children face in rural areas. Awareness of the need of infant healthcare care is the one of the main inspirations behind the research carried out in this thesis. He also provided me with a lot of insight of medical terms and procedures, apart from assisting in collecting medical dataset. I wish to thank the Chairperson Ms. Anu Gupta, Department of Computer Science and Applications, the Director of Computer Center Dr. Tankeshwar Kumar, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and other members of the department for their kind support.

I also gratefully acknowledge the Asian/Developing Countries financial support given by IJCAI – 07 that enabled me to attend this esteemed conference and AIME 07 for providing financial assistance during publication in Lecture Notes in Computer Science. I would also like to thank Dr. C. Ghanshyam, CSIO, Chandigarh and very lovable Meghu Shyam for their encouragement and affection shown to me during my visits and meetings with Dr. M. Syamala Devi. Last, but not the least, I would like to thank my wife Dr. Anjali Mago, my daughter and my parents who have provided me with unstinting support during the course of my thesis.