ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Looking back at the end of a rather long and chequered innings, I've often been overwhelmed by the warmth, affection and encouragement shown by Prof. Najma Z. Baquer, which were touching in their genuinity. I thank her for her guidance and help throughout the course of this work.

My sincere thanks are also due to:

Prof. P. Mohanty, Dean, School of Life Sciences, for his affection and encouragement which has many a times been a boost to sagging spirits.

Prof. R. Prasad, who has been very understanding and immensely helpful throughout the course of this work.

Prof. Sipra Mukherjee and Prof. Asis Datta who have helped me in one way or the other.

Mr. Ali Baquer for encouragement.

My lab colleagues, Dr. Kazmi, Dr. Neelkamal, Dr. Dash, Dr. Seema, Dr. Nehal, Sonone, Venkat, Gupta, Azam, Mansoor, Sadhana and Gopa for cooperation.

Dr. Arun, Dr. Murthy, Venugopal, Anjana, Thunga and Shalini for help and encouragement which went a long way in the completion of this work.

Dr. Ganesan, Dr. Ranjana, Natarajan, Gouri and Rashmi for their help and Maya for friendly gestures and encouragement.

Mr. Saini and Mr. Chinmay Nath for the fine drawings.

Mr. A.C. Alexander, Mr. A. Ahmed and Mr. B.A. Khan for excellent technical help.

Mr. Satyapal, Satbir and Vinod for good laboratory assistance.

Mr. Ram Prasad for typing the rough draft of my thesis and Mr. Gaajanand Hegde for the excellent typographical work.

The members of my family for their immense patience and help.

Jawaharlal Nehru University and University Grants Commission for providing financial assistance in the form of Senior and Junior Research Fellowships.

K. SUMATHY