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The thesis put forward has been written under the constant shadow of death - the shadow which has been haunting me for the last two years. In fact two years are nothing if things are even partially favourable; but trying to cross the mighty ocean by a sinking boat, fighting the mighty waves and wild currents, seems somewhat to be difficult, if not impossible. But, to be frank and honest, this has been the case with me since Feb. 1998 when I suffered the very first attack of Pancreatitis.

When I started putting my thoughts on paper, I was quite unsure whether I will be able to complete it or not. Now finally when it is going to be submitted, I am still not sure whether I will be alive till the viva-voce to defend it or not, of course, if this work is accepted. My this endeavor is the result of many seen and unseen hands, whether felt or unfelt.

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