Acknowledgement

I thank Professor Madhura Swaminathan for guiding me at every step of my research. She has carefully read this entire thesis and given insightful comments and constructive criticisms. Her help at the level of ideation has been specially invaluable.

I am very grateful to Professor V K Ramachandran for guiding this thesis and providing crucial support in many ways. I specially thank him for his patience and encouragement. Throughout the production of this thesis he gave me enough space to set my own pace and think independently.

Additionally, a word of gratitude is due to a few individuals who have given very useful advice and comments. These include, Professor Venkatesh Athreya, Professor Sripad Motiram, Professor Mohan Delampady, Professor Sarmila Banerjee and Samba Siva Rao Pasupuleti. Discussions with these scholars helped me understand my research area better.

I have carried out my research in the Economic Analysis Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore and I am grateful for the facilities that were provided by the institute, specially financial assistance in the form of Junior Research Fellowship.

Last but not the least, I want to acknowledge the support that has been extended by my family and friends during the research period.

Bheemeshwar Reddy A