I feel immense pleasure in expressing my heartfelt sense of gratitude to Dr. Suresh Bhat, Reader and Head, Department of Botany, Meerut College, Meerut (U.P.) for the successful completion of this arduous task that could be possible under his expert guidance, constant encouragement, sagacious suggestions and constructive criticism.

I am thankful to Dr. S.K. Agarwal, Principal, Meerut College, Meerut (U.P.) for providing the facilities for completion of research work.

I am highly grateful to Dr. V.K. Dahal, Dr. A.K. Bentri, Dr. Lokenath Singh, Dr. O.P. Sharma, Dr. (Mrs.) Pankaj Malhotra, Dr. Hoshiyar Singh, Dr. P.C. Pandey, Dr. D.K. Jain, Dr. P.K. Navjot, Dr. Satish Kumar, Dr. A.K. Gupta, Dr. N.L. Sharma, Dr. R.C. Arora and Dr. (Mrs.) Suman Verma and other faculty members for their encouragement and valuable suggestions.

I am thankful to Sh. Shabbir Ahmad, Sh. Chandra Pratap, Rajeev, Amu and other non-teaching members of the department for their cooperation from time to time during the course of the present study.

I am thankful with depth of heart to my friends/coworkers and lab mates Sangita, Sanita, Veenu, Anjali, Subhash and Nishit for giving me valuable time for completing of this manuscript.

I am thankful to Dr. J. Radhamani, Dr. Veena Gupta, Ms. Anjali Kak, Scientist, NBPGR, New Delhi for providing help and suggestion and to Dr. S.R. Kushwaha, Division of Plant Physiology I.A.R.L., New Delhi for his valuable advice and analysis of experimental data. My thanks are also due to Dr. Seema Upadhyay, Sh. Upendra Dwivedi and Santosh Mishra Faculty Members, Department of Biotechnology, I.M.S. Engineering College, Ghaziabad, U.P. for their valuable suggestion and cooperation during the study.

I feel pleasure and proud of my parents Dr. R.P.S. Dhaka and Smt. Rukmani Devi, elder brothers Dr. Arvind Kumar, Dr. Pushpendra Kumar, Dr. Naveen Kumar and Dr. Vinit Kumar, sister-in-laws Mrs. Shakuntala Singh, Mrs. Alka Singh, Mrs. Monika and my niece Aarnavi and nephew Harsh for their constant encouragement, inspiration, valuable suggestions and help from each and every corner during study.

I owe my thanks to the team of Mrs. Shiva Computers, New Delhi for typing the thesis with patience, cheerfulness and precision.

Place: Meerut
Date: 30.12.2005

(Anshu Dhaka)