ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I bring to record my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness first and foremost to my both the guides Dr. Lokendra Singh, Reader, Department of Botany Meerut College, C. C. S. University Meerut (UP) and Co-Guide Dr. R.C. Sharma, Principal Scientist, Division of Plant Pathology, I.A.R.I. New Delhi, for formulating an interesting, useful and contemporary problem and also for their inspiration, expert guidance, critical comments, valuable suggestions and helping all the way during the course of investigation. More words will not be sufficient to express my sense of gratitude and sincere thanks to Dr. R.C. Sharma for his support, expert guidance, in addition to devoting invaluable time for correcting the manuscript and critical analysis for thesis data.

I humbly express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. N.N. Singh, Project Director, Directorate of Maize Research for his support, commendable encouragement and expert guidance throughout the course of study.

I greatly appreciate the sincere help, expert guidance, timely suggestions, encouragement and support given by Dr. Sangit Kumar, Principal Scientist, Directorate of Maize Research and Dr. R.P. Singh, Principal Scientist, Directorate of Maize Research, Pusa Campus, New Delhi.

I am immensely thankful to Dr. Iqbal Singh Principal Scientist, and Dr. S.B. Singh Principal Scientist, for their technical guidance, sincere help and for providing seed materials for carrying out the study.

I am immensely thankful to Dr. Sujay Rakshit for his kind help, valuable suggestions and providing facilities in his laboratory to perform the molecular work during the course of my research work.
I express my special thanks to Mr. Deepak Baweja for his sincere help, support and encouragement during my research work.

I express my hearty thanks to Drs. Poonam Yadav, Ram Dutta, P. Srinivas, S.N. Rai, M. Karimi, Mr. Sushil Dutt for their sincere help and valuable suggestions during my work.

I also express my sincere thanks to Mr. Bhagwat, Mr. Suresh and Mrs. Kalpana for their kind help all the way in laboratory as well in the fieldwork.

On a personal note showing debt of gratitude to my dearest parents, ever encouraging and supporting husband Mr. V. K. Shekhata, loving kids Sahaj and Shrinjan and cousin Anshu whose sacrifice, love and affection were always the source of inspiration during my hard time and period of despair.

I express my special thanks to Mr. Ashok for devoting his time in neat and flawless typing of the thesis. I also express my thanks to Mr. V.K. Rawat for his help in the typing work.

With all regards, I acknowledge the co-operation and help rendered by all the staff members of the Directorate of Maize Research and Botany Department of Meerut College, C. C. S. University, Meerut during the research work.

On a finishing note, I kneel to praise the lord Almighty who blessed me with health and confidence, which carried me to the completion of the work.

(Meena Shekhar)