ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Help and encouragement received from various sources have been most indispensable for the completion of this work. I am especially thankful to Dr P.C. Kesavan under whose supervision this work was carried out, for his constant advice and valuable discussions particularly during the writing stage. I am also thankful to Prof. P.N. Srivastava, Dean, School of Life Sciences and to Prof. Sivatosh Mookerjee for providing me the necessary facilities and their interest in the progress of this work.

To the authorities of the University of Jammu and to my colleagues at the Department of Biosciences, I am extremely grateful for providing me leave and sharing my teaching responsibilities without which it would have been impossible for me to undertake this work.

Many practical suggestions, and excellent technical expertise provided by Shri Avais Ahmad in completing the experimental part, are gratefully acknowledged. I also wish to thank Shri Prem Singh and Shri Lakshmi Chand for their valuable assistance during the performance of the experiments. To Shri Madan Potra thanks are due for his careful typing of the thesis. Financial help from Mahindra and Mahindra during the tenure of this work is gratefully acknowledged.

Last but not the least, I deeply appreciate my association with the fellow students whose help, encouragement and cheer have kept me afloat during the periods of sagging morale, which
are a common occupational hazard of a researcher. For this I sincerely thank Dr Sunita Nadkarni, Dr Yashvir, Raju, Balu, Jiten, Amloo, Suresh, Javed, Piku and especially to Srinivasan, Anwar and Vinu for their friendship which I will always cherish.