ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take this privileged opportunity to record my profound gratitude to my teacher and supervisor, Dr. Atanu Kumar Pati, for his expert guidance. I am quite fortunate to have been associated with him. His farsightedness, undaunted strong will and his positive and simplistic approach to solve any difficult problem will always continue to inspire me.

I tender my special thanks to my revered teacher Prof. M.L. Naik, Head, School of Life Sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, for providing constant encouragement, help and laboratory facilities.

I sincerely acknowledge the kind co-operation of Dr. G.B.K.S. Prasad, Reader, School of Studies in Biochemistry, Jiwaji University, Gwalior and Dr. A.K. Gupta, Senior Lecturer, School of Life Sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University during this endeavour. I am also grateful to faculty members, Dr. V. Rai, Dr. S.K. Mishra, Dr. Aditi Poddar, Dr. S.C. Naithani, Dr. Nibha Gupta and Dr. Vijaya Koche for their help and encouragement.

I am grateful for the help, suggestions and good wishes extended by Prof. Victor H. Hutchison, George Lynn Cross Research Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, for this research effort.

No thanks can adequately repay the gracious help and whole hearted co-operation rendered by my seniors, Dr. Shobha Gupta and Ms. Arti Chandrawanshi and research collegues, Mr. Arvind Agarwal, Ms. Renu Maheshwari and Ms. Seema Gupta.
Kind co-operation and willing help of Ms. Shashi Gupta, Ms. Sanju Sinha, Ms. Joyce Das and other research colleagues is gratefully acknowledged.

Thanks are also extended to the supporting staff of School of Life Sciences.

Thanks are due to CSIR, New Delhi, for the award of JRF and SRF under UGC-CSIR NET scheme.

My sincere thanks are due to Mrs. Sanjukta Pati for her kind words of encouragement during this tenure.

I am deeply grateful to my parents and my sister, Shyla, for their blessings, care and encouragement. I have been equally supported by my parents-in-law, Sweety and Lajeev. I express my heartfelt thanks to them.

Finally, I thank my husband, Mr. Thomas Cherian, for his help, understanding, encouragement and patience during the entire period of this research work and also to my daughter, Shruthi, for bearing my absence cheerfully.

Ms. Elizabeth Varghese