ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing and writing this doctoral thesis has been a truly life changing experience which would not have been possible without the support and encouragement from several outstanding people. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all those people who have been a part of this amazing and unforgettable journey.

This thesis owes its existence to the support and guidance of my supervisors. I am deeply grateful and shall remain indebted to Prof. Sant Prakash, Department of Zoology, Dayalbagh Educational Institute (DEI) and Prof. M.M. Misro, Department of Reproductive Biomedicine, National Institute of Health & Family Welfare (NIHFW).

I am profoundly grateful to Prof. Sant Prakash, for his insightful comments, both in my work and my thesis, and for the several motivating discussions. Sir, you have been a constant support and a driving force and I sincerely appreciate your efforts in helping me both academically and administratively. It has been an absolute honor to have been your student. It has been a real pleasure to work under the guidance of Prof. M.M. Misro, who has been a steady influence throughout my PhD career and has oriented and supported me with promptness and care. Sir, you have been patient and encouraging in times of new ideas and difficulties. Your hard work, and the ability to balance research interests and personal pursuits has always set an example. I deeply appreciate the time and effort you have invested in me. Above all, I want to thank you both for making me feel like family and understanding few of the trying times I have gone through during these years.

I feel obliged towards Dr. Alka Prakash, Cell Biotechnology Lab, Department of Zoology, DEI, for her ever encouraging words, Prof. J. K. Das, Director, NIHFW, Prof. Deoki Nandan (Ex-Director), Prof. K. Kalaivani, Head, Department of RBM, NIHFW, for their kind permission and support in providing the necessary facilities to pursue my doctoral research work, I want to extend a heartfelt gratitude towards Prof. Suman Bala Sharma, Department of Biochemistry, University College of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi, for providing the Eugenia jambolana extract for the entire study.

I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. T.G. Shrivastav, Dr. Kiran Rangari, and the laboratory staff, Dept. of RBM, NIHFW who helped me with their continuous encouragement and valuable suggestions.
In addition, I have been very privileged to get to know and to collaborate with many other great people who became friends over the last several years. I learned a lot from you about life, research, how to tackle new problems and how to develop techniques to solve them. I want to thank each and every lab member at the Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology Lab at NIHFW, Ramya M'am, Mahesh Sir, Rekha M'am, Ankur Sir, Archana M'am and Shilpa M'am. I can’t thank you all enough for teaching me a great deal about scientific and technical groundwork. Thank you for being a part of this journey in both good and the bad times. I want to especially thank Shilpa M'am for all the personal as well as research support, and for all the fun times we have had in the Lab. I would also like to thank Poonam for being a friend and my agony aunt and for all the help she has extended during these years. A special mention belongs to Anil whose ‘never say die’ attitude has always kept my spirits high. He has been a friend through thick and thin, and has brightened up each day in the Lab with his constant chitter-chatter. I also want to thank Ibrahim Ji, Hemraj and Kalpna for their support. A special thanks to Usha M'am, for her love, care, guidance and encouragement and for being our ‘Lab Mom’.

I need to express my heartfelt gratitude to Anjali, Shweta Di, Garima Di, and other scholars in the Department for providing all the support and help in fulfilling all the administrative formalities at the Department.

I appreciate and thank the support from the staff of Animal House at NIHFW, Shyam Das, Rajbeer, Jeet Singh, Suraj and other departments like National Documentation Center (Library), General and Academic Administration of NIHFW.

Two people who deserve a special mention in these acknowledgements are Pulkit and Ujjwala for all the fun times we have had outside the Lab during these years. These two constantly asked me “are you done yet?”. Thank you for your encouragement, support and most of all your humor. You both kept things light and me smiling.

Of course no acknowledgments would be complete without giving thanks to my family. I want to thank my parents for giving me a good foundation with which to meet life, for teaching me about hard work and self-respect, about persistence and about how to be independent. I especially want to mention my father for his immense faith in me. You have been a role model of resilience, strength and character, Papa, I would not have been able to get through this PhD if it were not for you. I am grateful to God for you both and for the ‘smart genes’ you have passed on to me. Thanks for making me live the most unique, magical and carefree childhood that has made me who
I am today. I want to thank my brother Hemant and bhabhi Kanika for all their love and support and their interest in my research work. Also for putting up with my innumerable mood swings that PhD gave me as a take home present. A very special mention goes to my niece, Aanya, for being the sunshine in my life. Her toothless grin and a hug were all that I needed at the end of a difficult day. It could not be possible for me to complete this thesis without the support and encouragement from my parents-in-law and for putting up with my absence for a long time. I owe my earnest gratitude to you both for your unconditional love, care and support. I want to thank my grandmother for being the guiding light from up there.

The most important thanks belongs to my husband, Apoorv, for his love, patience, support and unwavering belief in me. Thank you for your immeasurable patience during these years of study, telephone chats and facetimes, for believing in my work and supporting me, even if it meant staying far away. I can’t thank you enough for the several happy and beautiful memories during the course of this journey. Thanks for being there at every excruciating step and mood change and making things less burdensome. I could never have made this without you by my side. Your unconditional love has carried me through always.

I want to close by thanking the Almighty for giving me the strength and patience to embark on and complete this journey, with the hope of continuing the fine scientific tradition feeling more than ready to start a new journey….

“The end of every journey, marks the beginning of a new one…”

Date 03/12/13 Himani Anand