ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank whatever gods may be, for my unconquerable soul...
...I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.

-William Ernest Henley
(Invictus, 1886)

Accomplishments in nature are possible when the circumstances favor them to happen. Conducting this research and writing this doctoral thesis, has been a huge accomplishment for me indeed, and as for all accomplishments, I had several enabling elements facilitating the execution of this research. I therefore would like to express my due gratitude to all who have helped me fulfill this research, before I present its findings.

I gained realization of the ancient Hindu verse “Acharya devo bhava” by firsthand experience during this research; because my guide, mentor and guru, Prof Umapathy, has been just that to me. Her foresight, brilliance, objectivity, steadfastness and rock-solid confidence encouraged me constantly to strive for perfection and to never give up in the face of hindrances. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my utmost sincere thanks and gratefulness to her.

I acknowledge the University Grants Commission, New Delhi for providing the financial input for conducting this research, The M. S. University of Baroda and Reliance Industries for providing the infrastructural support and The Jivraj Mehta Smarak Health Foundation, Ahmedabad for both. I am grateful to Dr. Kiran Shinglot for training me in clinical estimation of blood pressure and Dr. Narendran for helping with the nutrient component analysis.

Another beam of support and source of valuable inputs for this research has been Dr. Swati Dhruv, our all beloved Swati mam.
Dr. Shonima Venugopal (Shonima di), senior and friend, has provided inputs that have helped me in personal and professional spheres of life.

Friends who made this journey a memorable experience include Trushna, Smriti di, Kuhu, Shruti di, Rachana di, Vandana, Aditika, Pooja and Arti di.

My sister, Nisha (who has always been by my side in all my endeavors) has always been a great support throughout. Vinodettan has been a godfather always and has helped shape all my significant decisions; I hold him in the highest of respects. Cheering up my life all the way has been Shivangi, my adorable niece.

Family I believe is the substratum that keeps you grounded and averts any misfortunes in this world from uprooting you. My parents have been my bedrock and nurturers of my abilities and confidence, and plainly put, there wouldn’t have been any of this without them. However much I try, I cannot thank them enough and such is their input. Mummy and Papa & Praveen in Rahul in helped me a lot during the entire time I was there and I am ever grateful to them for inspiring me to aim still higher.

This research experience brought me face to face with some really tough times, where if it were not for the brainwave and inspiration provided by my partner, Deep; I have no idea what the shape of events would have been. He has been a pillar of support, friend, husband, guru and even a therapist in times when I thought I would give up, but he never gave up in me and reminded me ‘it’s only during the tough times that we know what we are made of...’

Thanks a lot, all of you...!

Nitya