ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work presented in this thesis was carried out under the supervision of Professor R.K. Varma. I am sincerely grateful to him for his guidance and encouragement throughout the course of the work. I also thank him for critically going through the manuscript and for important suggestions towards its improvement.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and constant encouragement extended by Professor P.I. John without which it would have been difficult to complete the work. I thank Dr. Y.C. Saxena for his interest in the work and friendly advice, specially during the numerical analysis of the results. I also thank both of them for their useful suggestions during the preparation of the manuscript.

I have academically benefited a lot from Drs. S.K. Mattoo, M. Sinha, A.M. Punithavelu, B.N. Goswami and P.N. Guzdar.

I thank Dr. V. Sheorey for making the programmes of function minimization available to us and Dr. K.S. Rao for help during the computation. The assistance of Mr. V.R. Choksi during data handling and analysis is acknowledged.

The experimental work presented in this thesis was supplemented by the efficient technical assistance of M/s. K.S. Lali, H.D. Pujara, H.A. Pathak, S.B. Bhatt, A.H. Shaikh and D.R. Vinchi. The help rendered by M/s. M.P.K. Kurup and
K.K. Sivsankaran from the glass blowing section and M.M. Mistry and D.M. Suthar from the workshop staff during the installation of the experimental system is greatly appreciated.

I owe immensely to my friends and colleagues K.K, K.K. Jain, Venkat, Manab, Jiten, Bhatta, Mohan, Nirjhari and P.K. Bhattacharji for their cooperation and help during the course of the work in some way or the other.

I sincerely thank Mr. T.T. Chacko for neat and efficient typing of the thesis. My thanks are also due to M/s. H.S. Panchal, S.K. Bhavsar, N.D. Dave and D.R. Ranpura for their efficient and skilfull drafting and photography. I also thank Mr. Ghanashyam Patel for speedy cyclostyling of the thesis.