Acknowledgements

It is my sublime duty to express my great indebtedness and gratitude to Dr. Wasim Ahmad, my research supervisor without whose guidance and constant supervision the completion of this work was not possible.

I would like to thank Prof. Durdana S. Jairajpuri, Chairman, Department of Zoology for providing all necessary laboratory facilities during the course of this study and to Profs. M. S. Jairajpuri, Shahid H. Khan, Irfan Ahmad and Dr. Qudsia Tehseen for their valuable suggestions and encouragement during the entire period of this work.

Further, I wish to thank Dr. Dieter Sturhan, Institut für Nematology, Münster, Germany; Dr. Jihua Wu, Institute of Biodiversity, Fudan University, China, and Dr. Alejandro Esquivel, Institut Nacional de Biodiversidad, Costa Rica for their help in getting the material from these countries and also from their personal collections.

Thanks are also due to my friends and lab colleagues, Samar, Saima, Mehrunnisa, Lubna Khaliq, Yasreel, Khalid Saifullah, Badaruddin, Asghar Ali Shah, Mahamood, Athar, Rahmat, Razia, Mushtaq and Baniyamuddin for their help.

I would like to acknowledge my batchmates Anshumala, Zeenat, Bushra, Abul Farah, Shah Haris and Manjur for their continuous support.

Lastly, I wish to thank my brothers Hilal and Muheet, my sister Hina and my father whose self denying love, interest and curiosity made it possible for me to accomplish this work.

(Azra Shaheen)