ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words sometimes appear to be very shallow and cannot adequately express our feelings. This happens to be one such time. Prof. B.K. Bachhawat, whom we all affectionately call "Guruji" has not only guided me through my Ph.D programme, he has also taught me what scientific temperament is. His patience, generosity, humility and tolerance has been a source of inspiration for me. I am very grateful to him for his guidance, moral support and encouragement throughout this investigation.

I would like to say a very special word of thanks to Prof. A.M. Siddiqui, Prof. M. Saleemuddin, and Prof. H.M. Hadi for their help, encouragement, and moral support.

I am also very grateful to Prof. U.N. Singh for his immense patience while correcting the numerous mistakes in my manuscripts. From him I have learnt the intricacies of scientific writing.

I am very grateful to Dr. A.K. Tyagi for his continuous encouragement and support.

A very special word of thanks to my husband Mr. Naim Hasan, who has had to partake numerous cold meals, for his patience and affectionate concern.

I would like to thank Mr. G.B.R. Pillai, Mr. Baba Nand and Mr. Subrata Ghosh for their valuable help in maintaining the lab in a smooth working condition.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Rajiv Chawla for his software advice.
I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my friends and colleagues, specially Dr. Z. Shervani for his help and cooperation, Amla for always being there in times of need, Gargi for the stimulating discussions, Kiran for her cheerful presence, and Poonam for her excellent typing.

Last but not the least I would like to thank Mr. Vijender for looking after the animals.