ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Five years ago, when I joined Ph.D. as a step towards my career, I never thought that it is going to be such a wonderful journey. A journey is easier when you travel together. Interdependence is certainly more valuable than independence. This thesis is the result of five years of work whereby I was accompanied and supported by many people. It is a pleasant aspect that I have now the opportunity to express my gratitude to all of them. It could be that some of the people could have missed the mention but their efforts are not forgotten.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to my Guide, Prof. Anjana J. Desai, for introducing me to this wonderful topic. Her valuable guidance, encouragement, down to earth nature and never ending patience has always encouraged me work towards a quality work. She gave me my own scientific space which provided wings to my imagination and scientific aptitude. The confidence that I have in myself today, is because of the unending faith that she has on me.

I would also like to Prof. H. S. Chhatpar, Head of the Department, for providing the infrastructure for the execution of the work.

I take this opportunity to thank Dr. G. Archana for her valuable guidance and useful discussions on several problems encountered during the course of work. I thank her for being patient and professional as my co-guide.

Dr. Vyas, Dr. Ingle for extending help as and when required.

A very special thanks to Dr. Anuradha Nerurkar, for her caring and considerate nature, and being a part of our RL-II family.

Mr. Rajiv Vaidya was the only research scholar around, when I joined. He helped me settle in the department as a research student.

Mugdha Karkhanis, my first labmate. Thanks for being by my side in the initial stages of my PhD. Time spent with you was really great.

Ms. Tulsi Munshi: Thanks for being a great friend. You might not be knowing but there were several times, that you have lend me a listening ear, when I actually required.

I would like to thank all my colleagues:
Arif and Geetha – for creating a fair competitive environment,

Mr. Manish Shukla and Mr. Avishek Nath – for teaching me patience.

Mr. Vipul Gohel has been a constant source of inspiration. He inspired to rise above short comings to prove your mettle.
My labmates, Priyadarshan, Vimal for being co-operative and sparing me the computer full-time for my thesis writing.

Srinandan, Priya Ma'm, Sapna, Anil, Aparna, Kuldeep, Subramanium, Sumant, Ketan and Radhika for making my stay at the department enjoyable.

Harish for his pleasant presence in the lab and witty comments that he made to cheer up the environment.

My heartfelt thanks to Aparna Ma'm who whole heartedly welcomed me in RC-II. She is been a family beyond family in the department. She has always been a support during highs and lows of my work. She help me graduate from an M.Sc. student to a research scholar in a short span of time. No words would suffice my gratitude towards her.

My very near and dear friends and colleagues – Murali and Ruchi – I thank both of them for being by my side through the toughest times. I have survived because of both of them. Whenever I started getting frustrated due to failure of some major experiment, I always saw Murali smiling, his smile made me feel that things would get ok. Many a times he was a mute bystander to all my frustration. Any problem with my experiment, I was never alone, thanks to Ruchi. The many hours we spent chatting and discussing my experiments have led to many fruitful developments. Thanks for bearing me all these days, especially towards the end of thesis writing. I know I was really irritating. Thanks for being an indispensable part of my life.

I would like to thank a few people in Department of Biochemistry. Firstly, Prof. Naresh Kumar, for his critical comments regarding my work, I am also grateful to Mr. Vikas Sharma for always being there for discussing problems, particularly in molecular biology. Also I would like to thank Divya Patel and Aditi Buch for their help during my work.

I got an opportunity to guide several M.Sc. students – Swati Kholiya, Bhupinder Panchal, Priyadarshan Keluskar, G. Narmada, Payal Joglekar and Amisha Chaudhari for having faith in me and cooperating with me. Their inquisitiveness made me dive deeper in my work, which sharpened my understanding.

University Grants Commission, Government of India is acknowledged for the project funding.

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India is acknowledged for the fellowship provided.

I would like to thank Mr. Shirish Nagarkar and Mr. Khatri for efficient handling of financial matters of the project. A special thanks to Shirish bhai for the printouts and other relevant help whenever required.
I also extend my thanks to Mandwekar bhai, Praveen bhai, Talati bhai for providing glassware and chemicals whenever required. A special thanks to Praveen bhai for the unlimited supply of distilled water.

I thank Thomas Ma’m from the bottom of my heart for whatever she has done for me.

I also acknowledge the efforts of Dilip bhai, Babu bhai, Pradeep bhai, Nilesh bhai, Jayesh bhai for providing me clean working area. A special thanks to Babu bhai for providing refreshing “tea”.

How can I forget my B.Sc. friends - Jasmi-Baiju, Madhu, Prashant, Prakash-Sucheta, Zala, Purvadhi, Arpit-Chandni, Saurabh, Ajay, Harshit and Milind. Their regular visits at the department made my hours at the department less monotonous, and much more enjoyable.

It was innumerable times that I thought that I do not want to continue any further with the Ph.D. because I could actually see it going nowhere. Dhwani was always ready with his “injections of confidence”, as he likely calls it, to lift up my spirits. Those were really hopeless moments. Thanks for being my hope. I am glad that, in this long journey of life, I have you as my life partner. Thanks for being there….always.

I fall short of words to thank my family who saw me through all the difficult times, encouraging me and believing in me always. Papa, for teaching me hard work, and Kinjal for being a sweet friend. A special mention to my mother-in-law, Smita Desai, without her cooperation, I do not think, I could have seen this day.

My mere existence in this world, I owe to my parents. No words could suffice your overwhelming love and understanding for me. I thank my mummy, for having tremendous faith and confidence in me, which has helped me go a long way. My papa - through the distances across the world, I have always felt his caring touch. The “never say die attitude” I have inherited from him has allowed me to stand tall through the rough patches. I also thank my siblings, Dhemendra, Rachna and Dhiren for bearing, but still constantly supporting me, also for being at my “at my service” towards the end of my Ph.D. I do not have words to express how much I love them.

Adversity is often one of our best teachers. Even those people who have somehow gripped my meanest imagination, violated me in some way, even those people are due their honor for what they have taught me. I wish to acknowledge all for their role in my life.

I am forever grateful for the mercy and blessings of God Almighty.