Preface

I joined teaching profession in July 1999 after completing my MBA program from S. K. School of Business Management, Patan. After spending about four years in the teaching profession, I decided that I should pursue for Ph. D. degree. Accordingly, I tried to register for Ph. D. under guidance of Professor (Dr.) H. J. Jani Sir at G. H. Patel Postgraduate Institute of Business Management (MBA Program), Sardar Patel University, Vallabhbhidyanagar in March 2004 after settling down in educational environment.

However, for another two years, much work could not be done because of the administrative responsibility; I had as the In-Charge Principal of V. M. Patel College of Management Studies, Ganpat University. In June 2005, I was relieved of the administrative work. This provided me an opportunity for devoting time and energy for this research work. It was probably after this time; I started working with more zeal on my Ph. D. topic and I registered for Ph.D. in March 2006.

The most important input for getting the details and literature pertaining to the research has been Internet. I have extensively used the web sites of many organizations as disclosed in chapter references. For preparing the thesis, I have referred to plenty of material from books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and such other secondary sources in addition to the web sites. I have taken utmost care to render my thanks to the writers by mentioning the original source either as a footnote or in the chapter references or at both places. However, if inadvertently, I have forgotten to mention some sources, I convey my apology to the original contributors of these sources.

I have tried to put in my best efforts to prepare this thesis. I hope that the work presented here will be beneficial to the food processing industry, entrepreneurs and investors, professionals working in the industry, academicians and students aspiring to join this industry. Academicians, students and professionals working in this field will come to
know present scenario and future challenges to this industry. It will also provide requisite data to the industries.

For the food processing industry growth is expected to occur as the outcome of socio-economic changes, different value perceptions, and rapid transformation currently taking place in Indian society. Time-saving, easy-to-cook processed food products are fast capturing consumer demand. Fast-paced life, increasing numbers of working women, dual income nuclear families, larger disposable incomes, and the demand for safe, good quality, nutritious food are all factors fuelling the growth of this industry.

This research is an attempt to study the consumer attitude towards processed food products with concentration on two select sub-sectors of fruits & vegetables processing and spice products in Gujarat. The key factors considered are the housewife, family and other peer influences, socioeconomic strata of the family and their attitude towards ready to use processed food products. Housewives’ cognition element, liking or disliking and purchase intention is taken into consideration for measuring their attitude towards processed food products. The demographic profile and family profile of the housewife besides her socio-economic classification (SEC) are also considered as factors interfering in their attitudes towards processed fruits, vegetables and spice products. The study identifies the socio-economic strata of housewife’s family has a significant role to play in her attitude towards these products. The study utilizes the Tricomponent Attitude Model that comprises three components, viz. cognition, affect and conation, for measurement of consumers’ attitude towards these products.

- Hitesh A. Patel