ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I find it difficult to express the depth of my gratitude to the people whose efforts made this thesis come tangible. I am highly indebted to my supervisor, for his consistent support, encouragement, and help in completing this study. I am also deeply thankful to Dr. Suresh Kumar (Department of Statistics, Panjab University, Chandigarh) and Dr. Monica Bedi (University Business School, Panjab University, Chandigarh) for their thoughtful advice which contributed a lot in statistical applications of this research work. Exceptional thanks go to my husband, Mr. Gaurav for his unconditional love, support, and encouragement.

I am also grateful to all the faculty members and friends at University Business School, Panjab University, Chandigarh for extending all possible help to me. The discussions with Kapil, Gunjan, Mandeep, and Mrs. Seema have always been quite useful; and the tips given by them made the things easier for me to attain this arduous task.

I acknowledge with thanks the cooperation extended by Mr. S.S. Bedi (Librarian, University Business School, Panjab University, Chandigarh) and staff of the Delhi School of Economics Library.

Last but not the least, I have no words to express my gratitude to my in-laws and parents who have been very understanding and always encouraged me to finish this work with perfection at the earliest possible.

(Ragini)

Chandra

3-11-08