**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First of all I would like to express my deep sense of gratefulness towards my research guide, Dr. B. M. Khan for his inspiring guidance, unparalleled humanity, constant support and encouragement, valuable suggestions and for giving me self-determination in finalizing the research and preparation of this manuscript without which the task would have been difficult. His enthusiastic attitude, innovative ideas and scientific knowledge have inspired me intensely. I sincerely thank for the care and never ending affection that I received from him in the entire period.

I would like to thank my research co-guide Dr. Anjan Banerjee, Asst. Professor, IISER Pune, for his valuable comments and suggestions throughout this research work.

I wish my sincere thanks to Dr. S. K. Rawal, Former Head, PTC Division, NCL, for his comments and suggestions during the progress of this work.

I am really grateful to Mrs. M. V. Shirgurkar for her help in plant tissue culture work.

My sincere thanks to Uma Kumari for her help in plant tissue culture, plant treatment with different stressors, plant transformation, and analysis of transgenic lines. I would like to extend my thanks to Somesh for his help in HPLC analysis, Prashant for his help in protein purification experiments and Krunal for his help in homology and modeling studies of proteins.

Many thank to Mr. S. C. Mishra (Uncle jee) who had suggested me to do my M. Sc. dissertation at NCL and I got constant support during my stay in Pune.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Sucheta for her timely help and guidance during my stay at NCL.

I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. D.C. Agarwal, Dr. Urmil Mehta for allowing me to use their lab facilities and all other members of the scientific and supporting staff (Mr. Mahale, Mr. Jathar and Mr. Khamkar, of the Plant Tissue Culture Division, Biochemical Sciences Division and NCL Library. My sincere thanks to Mrs. S. Kendurkar for suggestions and encouragement. Mr. Suryaprasad deserves special thanks for using his technical expertise for timely repairing of the equipments.

Many thank to my seniors Dr. Sameer, Dr. Sushim, Dr. Noor, Dr. Ashish, Dr. Manish, Dr. Arun, Dr. Pallavi and Dr. Abhilash, for their encouragement and help during start of this work.

Dr. Sameer, Tonima Bhabhi jee and Saurav (Rodu) deserve special thanks for their constant support and suggestions.

I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Sushim and Poonam (Bhabhi jee) for affection, listening and sharing personal as well as professional things and valuable suggestions and pumping confidence in me during my testing times.

I am immensely grateful to seniors cum ex-labmate Dr. Ruby and Dr. R. J. Santosh Kumar for their valuable support and suggestions during the entire work.

I would like to thank my labmates and colleagues Somesh, Prashant, Krunal, Neha, Uma, Shakeel, Parth, Sumita, Santosh and Kannan for maintaining lively and cordial atmosphere in the lab.
I thank my trainees Zoheb, Deepali, Sonali, Nazneen, Jayesh, Mukul, Minal, Sobia and Ambreen for their valuable help during my work period. Many thanks to lab trainees Henna and Mehak for their help.

Special thank to Prashant, Krunal, Zoheb, Shakeel and Uma for helping in corrections and editing, and providing some materials for the thesis.

Thanks are due to all my friends Somesh, Sudhanshu, Prashant, Krunal, Parth, Shakeel, Ruby, Santosh R.J., Neha, Pooja, Trupti, Uma, Manas, Manisha, Pushkar, Dr. Fazal, Ezaz, Devdutta (DD), Prabhakar, Kapil, Arup, Sangram, Dr. Bhuban, Dr. Prasad, Raju, Poonam, Rita, Ravi, Yashwant, Sandeep, Vithal, Kannan, Neha Khandelwal, Abhishek, Shamim, Pallavi, Madhurima, Nishant, Manas, Deepak, Priyabrata and Rajeshree for the support, best wishes and lighter moments shared together throughout my work period.

Special mention is a must for Somesh, Prashant and Parth for being my extended family during the course of my work. Those were really memorable days when, on weekends we all including Neha, Pooja (Beta), Krunal and Ruby gathered for dinner. They have given me a perfect family atmosphere and I never ever felt that I am away from my home.

I take this opportunity to thank my M.Sc. friends Nidhi, Manisha, Meenal, Nikki, Tripti, Shashikant, Tanuj, Vishal, Ajeet, Radha, Ruchi and Ankita for affection, wishes and encouragement.

I am highly indebted to my friends Prashant, Krunal, Pooja, Uma, Manisha and Trupti for their support and encouragement especially during my last period of thesis writing when I was having tough time due to some unusual things.

Special thanks to Sameena and Azfar for their, help, suggestions and support.

Lumbini deserves special thanks for her encouragement during start of my Ph.D career. We shared good time together.

I would like to thank my new room partners Pravin, Sunil and Suhag for their support and healthy environment at home.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my parents and whole family for their blessing, constant support and unconditional affection, which helped me in building my career.

Thanks to all who directly or indirectly helped during my Ph.D tenure and I might have forgotten to mention those names here.

I am grateful to Dr. Saurav Pal, Director, NCL for providing necessary facilities and permitting me to submit my findings in the form a thesis.

CSIR, India is duly acknowledged for fellowship and grants.

Last but not the least I thank almighty God for giving me the strength and courage at every step of my life.

Rishi K Vishwakarma