Acknowledgements

I thank Padmashree Dr. G. C. Mishra, former Director NCCS and Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, Director NCCS for allowing the use of the institutional facilities for my work.

I would like to thank my Ph.D. guide Dr. Yogesh S Shouche for his support throughout the completion of this work. I have been immensely fortunate to have an advisor like Yogesh sir, who gave me all the freedom to explore any avenues and arenas that I wished to.

My sincere thanks to Dr. D G Joakim Larsson, Department of infectious diseases, University of Gothenburg, for his support and efforts put in this work. I hope that I could be as lively, enthusiastic, and energetic as Joakim and someday be able to command an audience as well as he can. He was more a friend, than a supervisor. I enjoyed time spent with him, especially, ice fishing.

I would also like to thank Dr. Edward R B Moore, Director, CCUG, Sweden, for his immense support. He was my host, for my visits to Sweden. He was very encouraging and supportive during this journey of Ph.D.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Anders Janzon, Postdoc, Cornell University, Washington, USA. I have learnt a lot of things while working with him. I enjoyed the discussions with him about Swedish and Indian traditions. His immense knowledge about all the things always inspired me (we nicknamed him Wiki).

Although, I am the sole author of this thesis, this work would not have been complete without the efforts put in by many people. I thank Dr. Viduthalai R. Regina, Aarhus University, Denmark. He initiated this work and taught me different techniques in my early stages of Ph.D. I will always be grateful to him. Dr. Carolin Rutgersson, the department of physiology, University of Gothenburg, helped me immensely during my stay in Sweden; especially, during qPCR analysis. I am grateful to Dr Jerker Fick, Umeå University, Sweden for carrying out the chemical analysis of the well water and soil samples. I thank Dr. Carl-Fredrik Flach and Birgitta Weijdeård for their help in sample processing. I wish to thank Christofer
Flood and Dr. Stina Lassesson, Genomics Core Facility, the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg, for their help in setting up qPCR at the core genomics facility at the University of Gothenburg.

My sincere thanks to Mr. Anil Dayakar & Mr. Solmon Raju (working for an NGO-GAMANA) for their help in sampling in the Patancheru area. Without their help the sampling would not have been possible.

All these lively years in Lab-3, NCCS, have been made unforgettable by all my colleagues. To talk about some of them and inadvertently not talking about others would be ungrateful, so I sincerely thank all of them! There are however some people who one bonds with and enjoys time spent with them. I thank Kaustubh, Mandar, Snehit and Swapnil for a wonderful time spent with them. Kaustubh was senior to me, and went for Postdoc, halfway of my Ph.D, but he always kept on inspiring me. I miss having discussions with him on various topics like music, movies (especially Batman series) and life. Mandar and I joined the lab at the same time he has always been helping me throughout this journey of Ph.D. With his Hindi and impromptu nature, he has definitely added entertainment value to life. I sincerely thank him for being a friend, he is. Snehit is very enthusiastic, and helped a lot in issues concerning visa and documentations. Swapnil was very encouraging and we had a wonderful time together. He helped me immensely during the thesis writing. I would like to thank Sudarshan for always inspiring me to keep going. Shrikant, Girish, Dhiraj and Rahul were always there for discussions. I want to thank Dr. Deepak Patil (Bhau) for teaching me a lot of things at the beginning of my Ph.D. Having discussions with him on human gut microbiota research was very fruitful for my interest in this area. I thank Meghana, Rucha, Lakshmi, Ankita, Sonal and Hitendra for always being there for a cup tea.

I would like to thank all my colleagues at the Department of Physiology, University of Gothenburg. I had a great time with Anna, Carolin, Fredrick, Anders, Carl-Fredrick, Lina, Filip, Johan and Bethanie. I would also like to thank Aysha, Corinna and Nikhil for making my stay in Gothenburg worthwhile. My warm thanks to Elisabeth, Liselott, Sofia, Christel, Nahid and all the CCUG Staff for their help. I would also like to thank the Guest service University of Gothenburg, for arranging my stay in Gothenburg on a short notice.
There are some people who simply cannot be ‘thanked’ adequately ever. I thank my Aai and Baba, Mugdha and all the family members who have supported me all the time. No words can give justice to their love and concern. The thesis would have been impossible without their constant support and unconditional love!

I am grateful to the funding agencies that funded this work. I appreciate the financial support provided by Council of Scientific and Industrial research (CSIR), New Delhi, India. I am grateful to Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for funding this work and my visits to Gothenburg. The time at Sweden certainly helped me scientifically and changed the way I look at research.

Last but not the least; I thank Ganapati Bappa for making all this possible.