Acknowledgement

A doctorate is the pinnacle of academic process in any field, it is a long, demanding and arduous pursuance in which one needs more than self motivation and absolute commitment, a tremendous and constant direction from the guides, teachers, family and friends. This thesis is a result of all this and much more.

I would like to begin the thesis by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to my guides Dr. S.K. Soni, Reader, Department of Microbiology and Dr. J.K. Gupta, Professor, Department of Microbiology for their immense patience, constant guidance and understanding attitude which really helped in giving the right direction and meaning to the whole effort.

Thanks is due to Dr. R.P. Tiwari for providing valuable inputs for the successful completion of this project.

Dr. Suhesh Sharma and Dr. D.K. Rahi also contributed a lot by their constant support.

I would also like to thank Dr. Neena Gupta and Dr. Naveen Gupta who helped me develop interest in the field of microbiology by their able teaching during the nascent stages of my study in this field.

Thanks is due to my friend Nidhi, who make a true friend, was always by my side to comfort, support and share the pressure of various timelines.

A big thanks is due to my colleagues Vishal, Vijay, Gursharan, Neeraj, Sonika, Archana, my labmates and friends Sushma, Raman, Simran, Nisha, Bhavna, Tamanna and Kanwal.

Thanks is due to my old friends Sonali, Richa, Sumita, Harpreet, Pawan, Rippy, Mona, Shivani, Meenu, Dolly, who helped me grow as a person keen to follow her interest.

A huge thanks to my parents, Dr. Ramesh Kumar and Mrs. Sucheta Sagar for motivating me, instilling confidence in me who pursue my interest at the doctoral
level and this initiation would have been lost midway had it not been for my parents-in-law Mr. C.B. Moudgil and Mrs. Promila Moudgil, who always supported my studies and helped me take on the increased responsibility as a married person comfortably.

No words to thank my nanis Mrs. Usha Sagar and Mrs. Raj whose love, blessings and best wishes gave me strength to complete my project.

Thanks is due to my sister Neeti, my companion from childhood who pampered me, shared my anxieties and helped me broaden my perspectives in life. Thanks to my jiju Vikas, for always being there as an elder and as a friend. Thanks to my brother-in-law Prabal, whose witty nature, brotherly support and friendly attitude helped in lowering the stress during the course.

The whole effort would have been quite stressful and mundane had it not been for the little angels in my life; my niece Giggle and Jivi and nephew Anhad.

What is cherished the most is probably always under-played. I feel inadequate in expressing my feelings for my husband Pranab for always being there and making this effort possible despite all pressures.

Love and thanks are due to Pranit, my little baby who actually saw the process more closely!!

Thanks are also due to all members of the non-teaching and technical staff of the department, Mr. Premji, Mr. Pradeep, Mr. Jagir and Mr. Kamal.

Thanks to Anil for his painstaking effort in typesetting and graphical analysis of the work.

Last but not the least I bow in gratitude to Almighty whose grace has enabled me to complete various ventures of life. I thank God for all that He does for us.

(Kanupriya)