ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been, but for His will.

The tenure at the University has seen me through trying times. Coping with education and family life simultaneously at Doctoral level can be just about formidable.

Among the venerable, my supervisor Dr. Prince Sharma, Reader, Department of Microbiology, Panjab University, stands foremost. It has been my proud privilege to have worked under his able guidance. He indeed has been a perpetual source of inspiration and encouragement during all the stages of my thesis work.

I gratefully acknowledge the essential laboratory facilities provided by my co-supervisor Prof. (Dr.) KG. Gupta for enabling me to carry out research work. At the same time I also express my sincere thanks to the previous Chairmen and Prof. Sanjay Chibber, Chairman, Department of Microbiology, Panjab University, for rendering all requisite help required for this thesis work.

A special word of thanks to Dr. S.K. Soni for his timely help and assistance is also due.

Words fail to express my gratitude to David for always being there and for standing by me throughout my tenure. The cherished memories of Parva, Manjit and Jasleen will always stay in my heart for their love and constant moral support. I also thank Kashyap and Pawan for providing a congenial atmosphere in the Department. Thanks also go to juniors for their help in my hour of need.

Back home, I owe so much to my dearmost hubby JP whose warm love, concern and care kept me going even through the toughest of situations. No words can adequately suffice my love for my little angel ‘JASNOOR’ who has been a constant source of joy and laughter in my life. I will always remain indebted to my family who eulogized my efforts and provided eternal inspiration and encouragement.

Financial assistance provided by CSIR is duly acknowledged.

I would like to thank Varinder for giving this manuscript the present shape.

Dapinder K. Bakshi