ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is indeed, a privilege as well as duty to express my gratitude to all those who have made it possible for me to complete this work.

I would like to convey my profound gratitude and regards to my supervisor, Prof. B.S.Pabla, Professor and Head, Mechanical Engineering Department, National Institute of Technical Teachers Training and Research, Chandigarh for his keen interest and painstaking supervision throughout the period of this work. Working with him was an experience which I shall cherish forever. I am grateful for his incisive comments and insightful suggestions that have helped me to remove many lacunae from this project.

My deepest gratitude and regards to my guide Prof. A. N. Sinha, Professor, Mechanical Engineering and Director, Corporate Institute of Science and Technology, Bhopal, who shared with me a lot of his experience, expertise and research insight. Without his guidance, support and personal involvement, the work would not have seen the light of the day. His enthusiasm, patience and encouragement in helping me to steer through this thesis are invaluable.

I wish to thank Prof. Parijat De, Director, National Institute of Technical Teachers Training and Research, Chandigarh for giving me an opportunity to do the research in the area of my interest. I am grateful to faculty and staff members of Mechanical Engineering Department, National Institute of Technical Teachers Training and Research, Chandigarh for providing the necessary infrastructure and other facilities for carrying out the work.

I owe thanks to all my friends and colleagues for their help and cooperation at every step in the study.

My work would be incomplete without the constant support and inspiration of my family. A very special expression of appreciation is extended to my wife Mrs. Pratima, son Master Aayush Parashar and parents. Without their encouragement, patience and understanding this endeavor would not have been possible.

(SUSHANT SAMIR)