Acknowledgement

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Amit Ghosh for his excellent guidance throughout my Ph.D. programme. He instilled in me the confidence to develop my own research, through his constant encouragement and constructive criticism.

I would like to thank Dr. C.M. Gupta, Director, IMTECH and Dr. S.K. Basu, Ex-Director, IMTECH for their support and encouragement.

Thanks to Dr. D.K. Chattoraj of National Institute of Health, Washington for his keen interest and Dr. Anil Ghosh of Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Calcutta for his useful suggestions and kind gift of carboxy methyl xylan. I am also thankful to Mr. Swamy of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad for his help in the analysis of amino acid sequence.

Words fail me in expressing my sense of indebtedness to the galaxy of my friends Dr. Rajeev Sharma, Dr. Pardeep Mohindra and Mr. Rajeev Aggarwal for their kind help, encouragement and inspiration.

A special tribute of gratitude goes to my lab. mates Thungasadra, Sangeeta, Navneet, Suveena, Jyoti, Gautam, Kislay and Sankar. I would, in particular, like to acknowledge Charu for all her allaround co-operation and helpful discussions.

My special thanks to the research fellows of IMTECH especially Randhir, Ranjit, Gurjit, Bharat, Anshu, Jitesh, Naveen Niwani and Abhijit da.

My thanks to Mrs. Batra, Surinderji and Sharanjeet who unflinchingly extended thier assistance in the smooth running of the laboratory.

I would like to thank Rajesh, Sushil and Vineet for typing and formatting of this thesis.

The work would not have materialised had their not been constant support, moral as well as intellectual, of my beloved wife Neena, who equally contributed in the venture as did I.

I acknowledge with gratitude, the forbearance of my parents and other members of my family. But for their loving understanding, this thesis could never have been completed.

Last but not the least, I respectfully dedicate this thesis to my parents.

The financial support provided by CSIR and DBT is acknowledged.

(Naveen Kumar)