ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis work would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study.

First and foremost, my utmost gratitude to Dr. Jayanta Bhattacharya, for rendering me the privilege of working under his guidance, whose sincerity and encouragement I will never forget. Dr. Bhattacharya has been my inspiration as I hurdle all the obstacles in the completion of this research work. He was instrumental in inculcating the good virtues of life in me. Knowingly or unknowingly, he taught me that balance, peace, and joy are the fruit of a successful life. It starts with recognizing your talents and finding ways to serve others by using them.

I would like to thank Dr. Ramesh Paranjape, Director of National AIDS Research Institute, Pune for providing necessary laboratory infrastructure, critical advice and necessary help. He was always greatly supportive to my ideas and was a great inspiration for me, as a good human being and researcher. I would also like to thank Dr. Arun Risbud, Dr. Smita Kulkarni and Dr. Madhuri Thakar, NARI for necessary help and support at different times.

I take this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge the NARI PhD committee for fruitful monitoring of progresses made on my thesis and important suggestions at routine intervals.

I am thankful to Mrs. Swati Salunke for extraordinary administrative supports and help. Any problem looked easy to handle because of her strong administrative skills. I thank Mr. S M Shahabuddin, Assistant Librarian and Information Officer, NARI for providing good library facilities.

Very special thanks to University Grants Commission (UGC)-Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India for giving me an opportunity to carry out my doctoral research and for their financial support. It would have been impossible for me to even start my study had they not given me the prestigious Junior and Senior Research Fellowships for five long years. I am also honored to receive a travel grant from Indian Council of Medical Research and International AIDS
society to present part of my work at International Conference on AIDS pathogenesis, treatment and prevention in Rome, Italy during the fourth semester of my PhD. It was a wonderful experience to be able to visit this eternal city.

I feel really fortunate to be able to discuss my thoughts and views to the wide spectrum of scientific community across India and outside. It was a real encouragement to know such intellectual people.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all lab members Lavina Gharu, Rajesh Ringe, Ajit Patil, Archana Gautam, Lipsa Das, Sampurna Mukhopadhyay, Ipsita Choudhury and Ganesh for their support and help at various phases of my work.

Lavina through her honesty and dedication taught me that the real things are still the same. It is still best to be honest and truthful; to make the most of what we have; to be happy with simple pleasures; and have courage when things go wrong. Lipsa was a great friend and support and was instrumental in keeping me going when stuff seemed hopeless. It was largely due to her encouragement (and at times criticism) that ultimately made it possible for me to see this project through to the end.

Rajesh and Ajit were great support in the practical aspects of my work. I thank Archana for patiently teaching a number of experimental techniques. Sampurna and Ipsita were always there to make the lab environment cheerful.

I am greatly indebted to Srikanth Reddy and Manish Kumar Singh, for always being there with precious advice and solid support. They very aptly justified the quote "It is one of the blessings of old friends that you can afford to be stupid with them!".

I am greatly indebted to a lot my friends in the real and virtual world for being there for me. I particularly thank Sandeep for giving great advice all the time, Krutika for being greatly supportive, Krishnendu and Saif for providing healthy competition and Atul for all the free reagents and great midnight discussions.

At last and most importantly, I am grateful to my family members that mean the world to me and I could not have done this without their support and faith. I greatly appreciate their patience and I owe my most respectful thank to my Mummy and Papa who have been constant support of love, affection, encouragement that is
immeasurable and also for keeping faith in me and I hope I make you proud. You supported me through everything. You instilled the values I possess today. I am thankful to my sister Deepika for always being the cheerful and happy person that she is and giving me confidence to tide over the obstacles.

Deepak Sharma