Acknowledgements

Completion of this doctoral dissertation was possible with the contribution and never-ending support of several people both personally and professionally. At the end of this thesis work I would like to express thanks to all of them who made it an unforgettable experience for me.

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude and profound feeling of admiration to both of my supervisors, Prof. (Dr.) Rabindra Nath Misra and Dr. Minal Wani, for their support throughout this research. Their motivation and encouragement have made this thesis possible. Their guidance helped me immensely throughout the course of this research work.

I would like to thank Prof. (Dr.) Madhukar Khetmalas, Director of Dr. D. Y. Patil Biotechnology and Bioinformatics Institute for his scholarly inputs and consistent encouragement during the entire course of this research work. Special thanks are due to Dr. Neelu Nawani and the other members of the research committee for their academic and administrative suggestions and comments at various stages of this work. I would also like to thank the entire faculty and staff members of the Dr. D. Y. Patil Biotechnology and Bioinformatics Institute for their wonderful interaction and support that helped me in achieving this goal.

I would like to express my deep sense of thanks to Dr. Salil N Vaniawala, Director of S N GENE Lab, Surat for allowing me to use the state-of-art molecular biology laboratory setup of his organization for carrying out my research work. His encouragement and motivation throughout the research immensely inspire me. Special thanks are also due to all my lab colleagues who were always there with constructive suggestions and made me feel at home away from home during the course of this work.

I would like to thank Dr. Pratap N Mukhopadhyaya for encouraging me to join this research work and for allowing me to grow as a research scientist. His advices in both research as well as personal development front were priceless.

I would also like to thank all of my family members and friends for their sincere encouragement and inspiration during the entire course of my research work.

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my parents for all of their silent sacrifices made at every stage of my personal and academic life in order to see me
achievement this goal in life. Very special thanks are due to Shree, my wife and Arju, my son who patiently withstood the long separation in time and space during the course of this work. I also wish to thank my younger brother Anjan, who was always there to cheer me up and encourage me like a true friend to successfully reach my goal.

Last but not the least, I am grateful to all the study participants of this research work for their support and for agreeing to share clinical samples which constituted the foundation pillar of this thesis. I wish them a healthy and disease-free life.