ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty God for helping me to realize all my dreams and experience the pure joy and satisfaction of their fulfilment.

An old Chinese proverb says “When the student is ready, a teacher will appear.” I am extremely fortunate to have Dr Kasturi Sen Ray as my guide who has shared her vast intellectual insight, excellent analytical skills, accurate and unbiased judgement and reasoning along with her immense enthusiasm throughout the thesis work. In addition to being a mentor, she has also been instrumental in shaping me into a better individual and prepared me to face greater challenges in life.

I thank Dr S.A. Udipi, Dean and Director, Department of Post Graduate Studies & Research in Home Science for her support and guidance throughout the research and encouragement for performing better.

“And when you want something, the entire universe conspires in helping you to achieve it”. Indeed, there is a role of many individuals in facilitating the successful completion of my thesis.

The present study would not have been possible without the kind co-operation and generosity of my volunteers who have donated blood in plenty for this research. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of them – Amit Singhania, Kumkum Singhania, Harish Singhania, Meenu Singhania, Anand Singhania, Anuja Chokhani, Meeta Raheja, Neha Lohia Tulsiyan, Kavita Gavand, Garima Gupta, Swati Dhingra, Nikita Gandhi, Lata Premchandani, Pooja Falak, Deepika Narkhede, Aesha Shah, Gauri Shanbaug, Aditi Pandya, Aditi Paricharak, Neha
Gehi and Vinod. I am deeply indebted to my subjects for their unquestioning support and wish them success in all their endeavours.

My parents, Rattan Singhania and Madhu Singhania, have been like the divine force inspiring me to excel and keep moving forward in life. There are no words to express my gratitude towards them for their unconditional love and patience. Also, I extend my deepest appreciation to my sister Mrs. Shraddha Bagaria and all my relatives who have been my inexhaustible source of strength and energy in all these years.

My special thanks to Meeta Raheja for motivation and guidance throughout the research and to Zainab Barbhaiwala for her assistance and support in lab work. The constant help and moral support provided to me by my colleagues Divya Singh and Neha Paharia throughout the thesis is duly acknowledged.

I profusely thank my very proficient technicians – Mr Aatish, Mrs Archana, Ms Sandhya who performed the challenging task of repeated venous blood collection. I would like to acknowledge the support of late Mr Mandar Sawant whose professional and responsible attitude allowed me to build trust and confidence in the lab results of my subjects.

I would also like to thank Mr Sunil Kasare and Mrs Devika from S.M.T. lab for their assistance in providing necessary glasswares.

The study has been sponsored by centrally administered Doctoral fellowship granted by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi.

Pooja R. Singhania