ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I offer my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. D.R. Sharma, Professor of Eminence cum Dean, School of Biotechnology. He has supported me throughout my thesis with his advice, patience, keen interest and guidance whilst allowing me the room to work in my own way. One simply could not wish for a better or friendlier supervisor. It gives me great pleasure in acknowledging the support and help of my co-supervisor, Dr. Kamal Dev, Associate Professor-cum-Associate Dean, School of Biotechnology. His critical analysis and constant encouragement has made this thesis possible.

I would like to thank the members of Research Guiding Committee, Dr. Kamal Dev, Dr. Saurabh Kulshrestha and Dr. K.L. Dhar for their helpful career advice and honest appraisal. I will forever be thankful to the committee members for their candid discussions, constructive criticisms and many valuable tips during my research work.

In my daily work I have been blessed with a friendly and cheerful group of fellow students. My friends have been my support system during all the phases of research. They were present besides me when the times got tough and gave the much needed encouragement and moral support.

None of this would have been possible without the most basic source of my life energy: my family. Their support has been constant and unconditional. They have cherished with me every great moment and advised me whenever I needed it.

Vipash Surya