ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words can never be enough in expressing how grateful I am to many people around me, who made my doctoral thesis possible. I would like to make an attempt to acknowledge them all for all their help and support and making my research period a time, I will always treasure.

It is a privilege to express my heartfelt and deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to the person who has been most instrumental in the present study, my mentor Prof. Dr. (Mrs.) Avinash Nagpal, for her humane sense of supervision which she employed in guiding me. I would like to thank her for her immense confidence and faith in me and my capabilities along with her knowledge, experience and perceptiveness without which I would never have been able to finish my thesis. She is the role model for me of a successful researcher and a good human being. I am thankful to her for her persistent encouragement, motivation, love and incomparable guidance. I will never find words to tell what I owe to her and if I start doing it, I would not know where to stop. Thanks for everything Mam, to me, you are “perfection personified”.

I am delighted to express my thanks to Dr. Jatinder Kaur my Co-supervisor for her active involvement and continuous support at each step of my thesis. I would like to thank her for all her support, patience and enthusiasm throughout. My special thanks are due to Prof. Renu Bhardwaj for being kind to help me with all her support and guidance in carrying out biochemical analysis during my work. I sincerely thank Dr. P.S. Ahuja, Director, IHBT, Palampur for allowing me to carry out some of my Ph.D. work at his Institute. It is my prerogative to thank Dr. Y. B. Pakade, Scientist, Division of Hill area Tea Science for generously allowing me to work in his lab and providing all the necessary facilities to carry out heavy metal analysis embodied in this thesis. I shall be failing in my duties if I fail to acknowledge the co-operation provided by everyone in his lab especially Mr. Piar Chand.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr. Satwinderjeet Kaur, Head, Department of Botanical and Environmental Sciences, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar and former Heads of the Department, Dr. Saroj Arora and Dr. A.P. Vig for providing me necessary guidance and laboratory facilities. I have always had the awe and reverence for Dr. A.K. Thukral for his assistance in statistical analysis of the data, Dr. G.S. Virk, Dr. A.S. Soodan and Dr. M.S. Bhatti for helping me in one or the other way with all their generosity and affection.

I also avail this opportunity to acknowledge my sincerest thanks to Dr. Rajinder Kaur, Er. Bhupinder pal Singh, Dr. Rajbir Singh, Mr. Vaneet, Mr. Rajinder Singh and Mr. Baldev Singh for their whole hearted support and cooperation during soil sampling. I pay my gratitude to all the people who allowed me to collect soil samples from their agricultural fields, without which this work could not be possible.

I am grateful to non teaching staff members of the Department for their help. I must acknowledge that without the support of my friends, junior and senior research scholars in
the department, it would have been hard to successfully conclude the present study. My special thanks to Dr. Gurveen, Manik, Savinder, Harpreet, Ashita, Mandeep and Manish. I acknowledge the help, inspiration and cheerful company of my elders Mr. Arun Agnihotri, Mr. Kashmir Singh, Dr. Arvind Ranade, Dr. Hardev Arora, Dr. Jagmeet Singh Nagpal, Dr. Samson and Mrs. Jasbir Kaur for their whole hearted support during the course of time. There are, however, some other people at different universities of the world whose contributions demand my special mentioning even at the expense of time and space who were always ready to render me with the literature I needed. I am grateful to Dr. Ravneet Kaur, Dr. Sonia, Aditi and Shounak for their timely help.

I am highly thankful to University Grants Commission (UGC) for supporting me with fellowship.

My acknowledgement will never be complete without the special mention of Madhu who always stood by me in the need of hour. I am lucky enough to have her as my best friend, who was always there at several steps. I thank God for blessing me with such a great friend.

Finally I fall short of words to describe the depth of gratitude towards my family especially my father, Mr. Tarlochan Singh Soodan and Mother, Mrs. Taranjeet Kour Soodan who mean world to me. Their love, blessings and all kinds of support moral as well as financial, backed me up to achieve what I desired. My heartfelt thanks to my younger sister Dr. Jasmeet Kour for her love and affection. I extend my respect to my elders, Nani maa, Dr. Joginder Singh, Mr. Paramjeet Singh, Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Er. Gurmeet Singh, Dr. Navdeep Singh and their families whom I owe everything. They have always supported and encouraged me to do my best in all matters of life.

The warmest of thanks to my husband Mr. Ajjeetpal Singh for all his love, understanding and patience while I was working on my Thesis. I would express my deep sense of gratitude to the affection and support shown to me by my parents-in-law Dr. Gurcharan Singh Rissam and Mrs. Joginder Kour. My sincere thanks and appreciation also goes to Dr. Rajinder Singh Bajwa, Dr. Amitpal Kaur, Er. Amarpal Singh, Er. Rituraj and our Princes Jaishnoor. Without their blessings and love this work, could not have taken material form. I consider myself the luckiest in the world to have such a supportive family, standing behind me with their love and support.

Above all, I express my gratitude to God for the strength and protection HE shielded over me which saw me being steadfast in my line of thought throughout the research.

Thank you all!

Rajneet Kour Soodan