PhD has been the most enriching and memorable journey of my life. A work of such extent as a doctoral thesis cannot be an individual’s endeavor. It is based on support, guidance and help of numerous individuals you work or discuss with. I have been extremely lucky to have so many supportive and learned people around. I thank each and every person who has influenced my beliefs and thought process over years.

Not only for the sake of writing the acknowledgement, I would sincerely like to thank my PhD supervisor Dr Debasis Dash. He gave me freedom to choose what I wanted to work on but at the same time he was cautious to pull me back to the objectives if I deviated beyond a threshold. He is the coolest advisor and one of the smartest people I know of. His trick of not imposing tasks on me yet getting projects done kept me afloat through this journey. I wish I could acquire his data curation and visualization skills as part of the DDash lab legacy.

I am also very grateful to Dr Andrew Lynn, who not only taught me structural bioinformatics skills but also trained me to make better decisions in life. As I was an intern in his lab and was trying to build my career in science, every offered position was equally lucrative to me. But his advises made me choose the right path.

There is one very important aspect that both Dr Dash and Dr Lynn – that was to be verbal about your work and to be able to present your work.

Thanks to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for awarding me the senior research fellowship (SRF).

I also thank Dr Rajesh Gokhale for inspiring students like me to move out of the comfort zone and experiment with different research aspects. I also thank him strengthening the IGIB research community with constant words of encouragement and guidance.

Thanks to the multi-dimensional research at IGIB, I was just few steps away from learning and understanding different disciplines of life sciences. Dr Y Singh and Richa Mishra have been tremendously cooperative in making me learn the art and science behind protein purification. Dr Mitali Mukerji has been instrumental in
making me realize the power of genomics and craving right questions out of observations. I am also grateful to Dr Rita Kumar & Niha for allowing me to be a part of their research and understand applications of environmental microbiology.

I would also like to extend thanks to Open Source Drug Discovery Consortium, especially to Prof S K Brahmachari, Dr GPS Raghava & Dr Anshu Bharadwaj. The platform with such great minds helped me learn aspects of chemoinformatics and functional annotations.

I have to thanks my labmates for providing me the support, comfort and affection. GP thanks for reviewing, critiquing and bettering my work and manuscripts. It was a bliss having you as a friend as well as a collaborator. Ankita (Donkita), thanks for supporting me through thick and thin, being the best roommate I could have asked for and also for discussing genomics and population genetics with me. Rishi Das Roy (Dhishi), Dhirendra (Dhiru), Anupam (Donu) and Amit K Yadav-you guys have been great work, fight and laugh buddies.

I would also like to thank Vikarm, Pallavi and Puneet for being supportive and encouraging. Since we had a combined lab, I was fortunate to interact and learn from researchers of all ages – Pankaj Jha, Dr Faruq, Dr Rajesh Pandey, Dr Amit Chaurasia, Dr Tavpritesh Sethi, Dr Aradita, Pramod, Amit Mandal, Pradeep, Saurabh, Shubhashree, Anchal, Gourja, Manjari, Rajni, Bhanwar, Srikant, Rupanjali, Shreyा, Chaitali, Jyotsana, Sangeeta Khanna, Bharati, Debashish, Deepanjan, Ashish, Rintu and Ali.

Thanks to the trainees, especially Namit and Sonal for being great to work and learn with. Special thanks to Raghu Sir and Ashish K Singh for providing immense support and help in understanding and running MPI and cluster-based jobs.

I also appreciate the guidance and help of Dr Girija Nair, Mr B R Gupta and Mr Vishal Goyal. I am also thankful to the accounts department at IGIB. I would also like to thank my teachers and professors at Patna University and Banasthali Vidyapith for teaching me basics of the subject and help me grow. I would also like to thank some of my good pals outside IGIB -Ajeeta, Payal, Sunita and Amit Tuteja.
Last but not the least, my sincere thanks to my parents -Dr Rashmi Ojha and Dr Arun K Ojha for being inspirational and supportive in all my pursuits. Mom you will always be my favorite teacher. Thanks to my elder brother Kshitij Ojha, for introducing me to the term Bioinformatics, not to mention our fights and naggings. Special thanks and acknowledgement to my husband-Ajit Chouhan for being the anchor as well as the punching-bag throughout my PhD. I sincerely thank my Nana and Nani-their care, love and affection is irreplaceable. May their souls rest in peace.

Meenakshi Anurag