

Acknowledgments

I take this opportunity to convey my gratefulness to one and all those who have supported and guided me through the entire tenure of PhD work.

First and foremost, a sincere and heart filled gratitude to my mentor Dr. Prasanna Venkatraman for being such a wonderful and motivating guide. Her stimulating suggestions, experience and encouragement accompanied by the freedom of thought that she granted, has not only helped me to discover my potential but also kept me sparked throughout my PhD tenure. Ma'am, I can never thank you enough for all that I have learned from you. I will always be proud to be known as your first PhD student. A special thanks to Venkat sir, whose motivating thoughts and positive spark have helped me to re-discover myself and grow as an independent researcher.

I am thankful to Dr. Rajiv Sarin (Director, ACTREC) and Dr. Surekha Zingde (Deputy Director, ACTREC) for providing me an opportunity to work in this institution and the excellent infrastructure. I also thank DBT for funding the project and my fellowship. I am fortunate to have Dr. S. Zingde (ACTREC), Dr. S. Dalal (ACTREC), Dr. V. Kumar (BARC) and Dr. S. Mazumdar (TIFR) as my doctoral committee members. Their expert comments, critical analysis of the results and helpful suggestions have contributed significantly to the work. A special thanks to Dr. P. Balaram (IISC, Bangalore) for suggestions on the helix stabilizing mutation and Dr. Saraswathi Vishveshwara (IISC, Bangalore) who guided us with the MD simulations. I am thankful to my thesis evaluators Dr. Varadharajan (IISc) and Dr. Matouschek (University of Texas) for their valuable comments and suggestions. I will also like to thank Dr. Hideyoshi Yokosawa (Hokkaido University, Japan) for providing yeast strains for proteasome purification, Dr. Stephen Sliger (University of Illinois, Illinois, USA) for providing sperm whale myoglobin cDNA and Dr. Chris Tyler Smith, University of Oxford, UK

I am extremely thankful to, the common instrument facility specially Mr. Dandekar for his constant support and help with instruments, the sequencing facility photography, library, administration and accounts department of ACTREC for their constant help and support.

I want to express my warmest thanks to all the Prasanna lab family members Vinay Sir (ready to help), Kamlesh (meticulous), Manoj (friend and philosopher), Nikhil (good at assembling information, a true spiritual person), Padma (multitasking and straight foreword), Indrajit (born artist) for their help in numerable ways during the entire period. Thanks to Dr. Vinita and Dr. Priya postdocs in the lab. A special thanks to Yogesh, Shrikant, Rakesh, Ajit, Dhanesh, Sudhish, Pratibha, Hemant and all other trainees who have worked with me. I learned a lot while working with you guys. I will also like to thank Pradnya and Satish. All these people have made the lab a true 'Prasanna Lab Family' for all these years.

I owe a lot to all my friends Amit R, Amit F, Atul, Lalit, Tabish, Ajit, Manoj, Sapna, Pallavi, Amit V, Manoj B and the entire student's community of ACTREC who kept the tough and tense days of my PhD as joyous as possible. Amit R, you deserve special thanks, for being such a wonderful roommate; you are the most down to earth person I have ever seen. I am extremely thankful to one of my oldest friends Renku for being patient listeners and keeping my days fun filled. I would also like to thank my MSc friends Jawed, Vandana, Jitu, Awadesh, Vijith and Prasad.

And now, the most important people in my life, my family. Mummy and Papa, you always have been my greatest strength and source of inspiration. Whatever I have achieved today is all because of your blessings and sacrifices. I feel so proud and blessed to be your son. Nani, Nana, Mama and Mami, with whom I spent my childhood. Ma and Baba for the trust they showed in me by giving their daughter's hand in mine. Thanks to my younger brothers Manish (excellent manager and social person) and Deepak (think different), sisters Shikha and Deepa; chacha and chachi. Finally, Polo, my invaluable companion and a brilliant scientist by herself. She is the source of perennial support. Thank you for being in my life.