Acknowledgement

The author expresses his deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to his Guide Dr. Hemanta Kumar Gogoi, Scientist-F, Defence Research Laboratory, Tezpur for his inspiring guidance, keen interest, encouragement and painstaking efforts during the course of investigation.

The author extends his sincere gratitude and deep sense of indebtedness to his Co-guide Dr. Mohan C. Kalita, Professor, Department of Biotechnology, Gauhati University, Guwahati for his invaluable suggestions and active assistance during the course of investigation.

The author is highly obliged to Dr. (Mrs.) Jubilee Purkayastha, Scientist-D, DG-LS, DRDO HQrs, New Delhi and Dr. S. Datta, Scientist-D, DRL, Tezpur, who were instrumental in teaching the molecular techniques involved in this study and for their expert guidance.

The author also likes to offer special thanks to Dr. Vanlalhmuaka, HOD, Biotechnology Division, Defence Research Laboratory, Tezpur for his scholarly suggestions and guidance. He also acknowledges the help and support received from all the members of his division especially Nitul, Madhav, Swetnisha and Susmita during the tenure of this study. Special thanks to Dr. K.S. Nakhu, Scientist-D, DRL, Tezpur for galley proofing of the manuscript.

The co-operation and helping hand extended by all the Scientists, Officers and Staff of Defence Research Laboratory, Tezpur at various juncture of this academic pursuit is duly acknowledged.

The author also likes to offer sincere thanks to Director, Defence Research Laboratory, Tezpur for his valuable guidance and providing necessary support for undertaking this investigation.

It would be injustice if I do not acknowledge the support received from my wife, Sangapriya, who stood by me, with patience and without complaint, during long hours of time spent in laboratory beyond office hours.

The author, with profound joy, expresses his deepest sense of gratitude to his parents, Bonti mahi, sister Sangita and all his family members and well wishers for their blessings, love and moral support. Heartiest thanks to my special friend Pranab Ranjan Nayak for his selfless help and support during his stay at DRL, Tezpur.

Above all the author remembers the Almighty for His benevolence and for synchronizing everything in perfect harmony which led to the successful completion of the manuscript.

The Author