Acknowledgements

It would be no wrong a bit, if I say that this thesis work is only an outcome of constant guidance, ceaseless encouragement and continuous support provided to me by my supervisors, family, friends and countless other people whom I met during my research work. I will ever remain indebted to them for their generous and loving contribution towards the completion of this thesis.

My most sincere thanks go to my revered Supervisor, Dr. Surinder Singh, Professor and formerly Head, Department of Physics, Ex-Dean, Faculty of Sciences and Ex-Dean Academic Affairs, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. I have been inspired by long hours of fruitful discussions with him. His incisive criticism and pertinent suggestions strengthened my skills in research methodology and encouraged me to be more practical and confident. He has his unique way of encouraging his students to lift their spirit enabling them face their times of low morale. These are only his relentless efforts and invaluable guidance provided to me over this period that I am being able to submit my thesis from this prestigious institute. Any effort to find words to express my gratitude towards him fails.

Equally my heartfelt sincere thanks to my Co-Supervisor, Dr. Bikramjit Singh Bajwa, Professor and formerly Head, Department of Physics, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. He is a dynamic and nice human. I am grateful to him for inspiring discussions, guidance in learning various experimental techniques and for providing consistent all round support from the beginning up to the completion of this work. I feel myself ignorant about the knowledge of appropriate words to express my heart-felt thanks for him.

I am indeed obliged to Dr. Lakhwant Singh, Professor and Head, Department of Physics, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar along with entire faculty of the department for their valuable advices and positive outlook at many stages in the course of my research work. I have been lucky to be in the company of brilliant and genius teachers of this department.
I acknowledge my gratitude towards Dr. Arvind Sabharwal, Assistant Professor, Khalsa College, Patiala and Dr. Bhupinder Singh, Assistant Professor, Government Polytechnic, Amritsar for their immense co-operation during this research work. Thanks are also due to Mr. Santokh Singh and Mr. Narinder Singh, Senior Technicians; and to members of my lab for their assistance and co-operation during this work.

I feel extremely grateful to Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS), Department of Atomic Energy, India for providing financial assistance during this research and Inter University Accelerator Centre (IUAC), New Delhi for providing necessary help and facilities for Gamma Ray Spectrometry measurements. I am thankful to Dr. V. Balaram, Scientist and Head, Geochemistry Division, NGRI, Hyderabad, for his kind help in using ICP-MS for elemental analysis of water samples at his institute. My thanks are equally due to the Dr. R. M. Tripathi, Dr. Ajay Kumar, Dr. Chinnaswamy, Shri Sunil Sahoo, Bhaba Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai for their heartfelt support in this work. Special thanks also due to Dr. K. P. Eappen, Ex-Scientist, BARC, Mumbai for the guidance and help he rendered in the calculation of radon equilibrium factors and doses.

Coming back to my lovely department, I would like to thank Mr. Onkar Singh, Mr. Sunil Kumar and my other friends including Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Mr. Vishal Arora and Mr. Pradyumna Lenka (BARC), from the core of my heart for their selfless affection and help in every possible situation.

I am thankful to the residents of the study area for their help and cooperation during the field work.

I am nothing without my big, joint family. These have only been expectations, blessings and wishes of my parents, elder brothers, sister-in-laws and kids in the family that enabled me stood firm in rough phases of life and research work. I am short of words to express my feelings towards my beloved wife ‘Renu’ for her relentless support and sacrifices she made for the completion of this thesis.

Above all, I owe my reverence to the Almighty, by whose grace I have been able to complete my research work successfully.

Sanjeev Kumar