Acknowledgement

It gives me immense pleasure to express my heartiest devotion to the almighty who sailed me through turbulent situations with his graceful blessing during the period of my study.

With deep regard and profound respect, I avail this opportunity to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Astha Tripathi for introducing the present research topic and also for her inspiring guidance and valuable suggestions throughout the research work. I most gratefully acknowledge her constant encouragement and help in different ways to complete the work successfully. Her knowledge in the field has inspired me grow as a researcher and a person. I will always remain grateful to her.

My sincere thanks to our Honorable Vice Chancellor Prof. P.K. Khosla, and Registrar Dr. Sunil Puri for providing me the infrastructure and necessary facilities to carry out the research work.

I also wish to owe my sincere thanks to the members of the advisory committee, Dr. Saurabh Kulshrestha, Dr. Nitika Thakur and Dr. Amit Seth for their timely encouragement, kind support, persistent involvement and noble behaviour.

I emphatically owe my sincere thanks to Dr. Anuradha Sourirajan, Dr. Kamal Dev, Dr. Azhar, Dr. Adesh Saini and Dr. Reena Saini for their inspiring guidance, timely help and invaluable suggestions.

I emphatically owe my sincere thanks to staff members of Directorate of Mushroom Research Center (DMR) Solan especially Dr. Shwet Kamal, Dr. V.P Sharma, Dr. Anupam Barh, Dr. Shweta Sharma, Dr. Sanjeev Sanyal, Ms. Radhika, and Mr. Rajender for their support and guidance.

I do acknowledge my amiable regards to all non-teaching staff specially Mr. Dalip, Mr. Jai and all other laboratory and non-teaching staff members of School of Biotechnology and Applied Sciences, Food Science and Technology for their untiring help during the research work.

As life is incomplete without friends, so my appreciation also goes to my lovely friends Rahul Chauhan, Sukrit Sagar, Priyanka, Shaveta, Isha, Monika for providing me a very stimulating and fun-filled environment. I thank them for always being there to guide and encourage whenever the journey got tough. I am also privileged to have friends who always stood by my side in my lows.
My deepest gratitude goes to parents Sh. Bhopal Singh Thakur and Smt. Promila Thakur, Mr. Rohan Thakur and Mrs. Sweety Thakur (Bhaiya and Bhabhi), Mr. Digvijay Thakur (Bhaiya) and my loving niece Aaryana whose undying encouragement, counselling and love made it possible for me to make it to the end of this experience. From the bottom of my heart, I am thankful for every little thing they have done for me. I am also thankful for myself to make it to the end of this experience.

Finally, this dedication would not be complete without a very special thank you to the men and women of Indian Armed Forces who protect and defend our freedom all over the world.

I thank the almighty for giving me the strength and patience to work through all these years so that today I can stand proud with my head held high.

I owe entire responsibility for all the errors and omissions

Neha Thakur