ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor Prof. P.K. Kaw. He has been a teacher in the true sense of the word and has given unstintingly from his vast storehouse of knowledge. I have, I am sure, tested the limits of his patience many times. But the light at the end of the road could never have seemed attainable without his constant encouragement. He has always been a discerning yet discreet guide throughout the course of this thesis. I have learnt the most valuable of attitudes towards research from him; that of enthusiasm and enjoyment in the entire process of learning. I shall remain grateful to him for just being what he is.

I would like to thank Prof. A. Sen and Dr. K. Avinash for reading this thesis carefully and offering useful comments. Their suggestions have certainly added to the clarity of the ideas presented here.

Thanks are due in large measures to the academic faculty at IPR. They have created an atmosphere of informality and openness, very conducive to a free exchange of ideas. I am grateful to them for giving me many opportunities to advance and for their encouragement in the course of this thesis.

Prof. Y. C. Saxena has been extremely helpful in going out of his way, many times, in providing much needed computer time in the initial stages of the thesis. The computer and drafting section staff have also been prompt and helpful. I
would like to thank the entire library staff for their willing and cheerful assistance. IPR administration also needs to be thanked for all the help they have given from time to time in various matters in such a friendly way.

At a more personal level, I have had the good fortune of having some extremely nice people as friends. My colleagues, Puravi, Shishir, Ajay, Chitra, Bevli, Venkat, have made life interesting and enjoyable and provided much needed moral support and encouragement at all stages of this thesis. Without them everything would have been ever so flat and dull. They have helped me grow in many ways and it is inadequate to just say thank you. Chenna, Revati, Chandru and Harsha have very kindly included me in their daily life and I am truly grateful. I am indebted to Prof. Alurkar and family for the many very caring things they have done for me. Many other staff members at IPR have become good friends and contributed in no small measure to keeping my spirits up.

Shridhar, though being a late addition, has done his bit in keeping me pepped up. His contribution has been in the form of some damping, some unasked for differential equations and large quantities of sheer zing. It would be ridiculous to thank Ma and Pa for being my parents and Punu for being my brother. But it is completely true that without all the limitless things they have given me, none of this would have been possible. They have been the anchors of my rather rocky boat through all the ups and downs and absolutely the best
friends I shall ever have in my life.

Finally, I would like to thank Sourabhan for the quick and accurate typing, Bevli for the exceptionally fast proof reading and Ajay for the enthusiastic help on the PC.

Sharadini Rath
Ahmedabad, June 1990