It gives me immense pleasure, as I take the privilege, of this unique opportunity to express my gratitude and respect for my guide Dr. M. L. Nath, Professor, School of Life sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur. I am profoundly grateful to him for his valuable guidance and handling of the reins of work so efficiently.

I tender my most cordial and appreciative thanks to Dr. Vibhuti Rai, Professor and Head, School of Life sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur for his encouragement and to providing me all the necessary facilities.

I am also highly thankful to other faculty members of School of Life sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Dr. V. Rai, Dr. S. K. Mishra, Dr. A. K. Bati, Dr. (Mrs) A. Poddar, Dr. A. K. Gupta, Dr. S. C. Naithani, Dr. (Mrs) Vijaya Kirth, Dr. A. Parjaniha, Dr. K. K. Sahu, Dr. R. K. Pradhan, Dr. S. K. Jadhav and Dr. Amiya Terkey.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Anjana Sharma, M.Sc, Ph. D, Bacteriology laboratory, Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur for her unreserved help and concern and an active involvement at every stage of my work. Without her help this thesis could not have seen the daylight of completion. I also extend my thanks to her research scholar Animesh Chaturvedi who has made an equal contribution in this work.

The work must not have been possible without the impetus, unhesitating help, encouragement concern, and active involvement at every stage of my work and whole hearted suggestions rendered by my senior Dr. Sanju Sinha, Project investigator (D.S.T.), School of Life sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur. Without her help this thesis could not have seen the daylight of completion.

I am also thankful to all my seniors Dr. Arvind Agrawal, Miss Garima Gupta, Dr. Veetu Harmukh and Mr. Meetul Kumar for their uninhibited help and support all through the period of my work. Heart felt thanks are also due to my labmates, Mrs
Rachana Choudhary, Dr. Krishna Kumar Patel, Ms. Shweta Das, Mrs. Kritika Namdeo and Mr. Ravindra Sirmour.

I acknowledge gratefully the facilities and help rendered by technical and supporting staff of the School of Life sciences, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur and for financial help by Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur.

I am highly grateful to all my past and present research colleagues among which a few names are Mrs. Priyanka Sharma, Mr. Kamal Naik, Miss Pushpa Poddar, Mrs. Yogita Thakur, and Miss Chitrangada Mohanty.

I am at a loss of words when it comes to express my thanks and gratitude to my parents Mr. Sampat Kumar and Mrs. Sudha Sampat which has helped me to complete this thesis. I wish to extend my thanks to my sister Soumya Sampat who has always encouraged me to reach this stage. I express my gratitude also to my father-in-law Mr. Krishnaswamy and mother-in-law Mrs. K. Madhuram for their kind cooperation and support throughout the research work. I express my affection to my sisters-in-law Mrs. Shubha and Mrs. Smita and baby Riya for their encouragement throughout the work. However, above all, it was the understanding, wishes, encouragement, sacrifices and help of my husband Mr. Alok Iyengar which has only made it possible to complete this work.

Finally, I thank all those who had helped me directly or indirectly during the period of my research work.

Radhika Sampat

6/6/05