Acknowledgement

All praise to THE ALMIGHTY, who favoured me to achieve this goal. I bring all the praises and commendation for providing me with strength, during my research work, that helped me to overcome the troubles and difficulties in the toilsome journey and who kept me from losing my patience at times when my nerves were challenged.

I feel deeply obliged to express my profound gratitude to my esteemed supervisor Prof. Shamim Ahmad, Chairman Department of Agriculture, Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh for his scholastic guidance, persistent inspiration and encouragement throughout the course of this research work. His advice and timely help was invaluable at every stage of my work. Words are inadequate to express my indebtedness to his, who made this intricate and difficult work, easy and fruitful to me. He has indeed been a source of inspiration to me. I would always remain thankful to him as he stood by me through my tough times and was kind enough to forgive all my offences.

My Husband Mr. Saad Md Ali duly deserves my heartful thanks for his co-operation, coordination and encouragement during the critical juncture of this work. I am also thankful to other research scholars who remained close to me.

With best regards, I feel short of words to express my deep feelings to my loving Abbu, Ammi & in-laws, and my uncle Prof. Liaqat Ali, my aunty Prof. Naima Gulrez. Special credit to my son Sarim who constantly missed my presence in those moments when he needed me most.

I am highly indebted to Sadia Shams, Reshma Anjum, Fauzia Usmani, Tanweer Ur Rahman, Safya for their significant advice, encouragement and sincere help during the course of my work.

Financial assistance from U.G.C., New Delhi is gratefully acknowledged. Before concluding I doubt, I could have forgotten to mention and acknowledge many persons who help me in one way or other.

 UMME HANI