Acknowledgements

I take this opportunity to thank and to express my gratitude to all those who have been with me throughout the completion of my PhD research and thesis.

I express my foremost and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Prakash P. Wadgaonkar for his constant support and guidance during my Ph.D. research. I would like to thank him for the immense help, kindness, encouragement and believing in me and making things happen. He gave me the resourceful space and freedom for the research work of my choice. He is a passionate and visionary scientist and also, most importantly a kind person. He has built my confidence from beginning to end with most valuable discussions; he has given the liberty to work independently, which will definitely be useful throughout my career. I take this opportunity to thank him for everything.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my research co-guide Dr. Satishchandra B. Ogale for giving me the opportunity to work under his guidance. His enthusiastic, inspiring and positive nature made me to think positive in all situations. His guidance has always been inspiring in our scientific endeavours. His general approach to overcome any difficult situation and philosophy towards life and people has also helped me grow as a human being. The idea of him to conduct weekly group meetings and seminars was helpful to me to grow in all aspects and to gain knowledge in diverse fields.

I would like to acknowledge CSIR funding (JRF-SRF) during my PhD study period. I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr. S. Sivaram (former Director, CSIR-NCL), Dr. Sourav Pal (former Director, CSIR-NCL), Dr. Vijayamohanan Pillai (Director, CSIR-NCL), Dr. A. J. Varma and Dr. M. G. Kulkarni (former Head, Polymer Science and Engineering Division), Dr. Ashish Lele (Head, Polymer Science and Engineering Division), Dr. Anil Kumar (Head of Physical and Materials Chemistry Division) for providing the infrastructure and advanced facilities for research at CSIR-NCL. I acknowledge CSIR-NCL staff from student academic office, Accounts/bills section, Glass blowing section, Library, engineering sections and DIRC for their co-operation.

I wish to thank Professor Neil Robertson for giving an opportunity to visit University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK and for providing me a space to work in his laboratory for 3 months under Indo-UK “Advancing the Efficiency and
Production Potential of Excitonic Solar cells” (APEX) program. I am also thankful to all labmates Ioanna, Emily, Miquel, Tracy, Nina, Max, Alex, Luca, Chun-Cheng, Martina, Yoko, Georg and John for helping me. I thank Manisha tai, Yogita tai, Prasad dada, Kunal and Dr. Sandeep Pathak for their help during my stay in UK.

I also would like to thank Professor Andreas F. M. Kilbinger, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, for giving me an opportunity to work in his laboratory for five months as an academic student visitor. I also thank University of Fribourg for funding. I express my special thanks to Mahesh, Amit, Ujjwala, Swanand, Mohit, Aniket, Animesh and Swati for making my stay memorable. I thank all labmates there Nils, Christof, Mark, Maren, Michael N., Michael B. and Maja for help during visit.

I thank all the journal editors, reviewers of our published articles and the editors, authors who have allowed us to reprint their published material in this thesis.

I extend my thankfulness towards Mr. Shamal Menon, Mr. Anandrao Patil, Dr. Ashutoosh Ambade, Dr. S. K. Asha, Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy, Dr. K. Sreekumar, Dr. B. L. V. Prasad, Dr. Pankaj Poddar, Dr. Rajmohan, Dr. Manohar Badiger, Mr. Saroj, Mrs. Poorvi, Mrs. Deepa Dhoble, Dr. Rahul Banerjee for their guidance and help. I thank external expert of my yearly assessment Dr. Chetan Bhongale and internal experts Dr. Jyoti Jog and C. V. Avadhani. I thank Dr. Mahendra More and Kashmira Harpale, Department of Physics, Savitribai Phule Pune University, for field emission measurements, Dr. Aravindan and Dr. Madhavi, NTU, Singapore, for Li-HEC measurements.

I acknowledge the help and support from my laboratory seniors/friends in SBO group Tushar, Rajesh Hyam, Sarfaraj, Vivek, Subas, Abhimanyu, Anup, Sarika, Arif, Parvez, Vivek, Harish Gholap, Ashish Yangantiwar, Prasad, Shruti, Supriya, Meenal, Rohan, Lily, Mandakini, Abhik, Onkar, Rupali, Nilima (all PhDs from group), Aniruddha, Rounak, Pradeep, Satish, Yogesh, Wahid, Umesh, Golu, Sambhaji, Reshma, Divya, Dipti, Pooja, Mukta, Ketaki, Aparna, Shital, Srashti, Ishita, Poonam. I am grateful to Dattakumar Mhamane, Anil Suryawanshi, Vishal Thakare, and Dhanya P. for their help, constant support and encouragement.
I would like to thank my labmates/friends in PPW group Dr. Arun Kulkarni, Dr. Arvind More, Dr. Ankush Mane, Dr. Pandurang Honkhambe, Dr. Prakash Sane, Dr. Sharad Pasale, Dr. Bhausaheb Tawade, Dr. Savita Kumari, Dr. Aarati Shedge, Dr. Nilakshi Sadavarte, Dr. Vivek Kodgire, Dr. Mahesh Biyani, Dr. Nagendra Bhairamdgi, Kishor Kumbhar, Parimal, Indravadan, Naganath, Nagedra, Samadhan, Sachin Patil, Sachin Kuhire, Nitin Basutkar, Deepak, Dr. Shyambho, Dr. Murugesan, Vikas, Uday, Sachin Basutkar, Nitin Valsange, Durgaprasad, Jagdish, Bharat, Abhijit, Kavita, Deepshikha, Rajeshwari, Sayali, Rupali and Ashwini for their help and support.

I specially thank my friends Satyawan and Amol for their constant help and support. I thank Rajashree for helping me for CV measurements. I thank Shrikant for his help for special NMR measurements and Sharath for BET measurements. I also thank, Aaditya, Manik, Chinmay, Satej, Chayanika, Neeta, Amruta, Megha, Swapnil, Shekhar and Nisha for their help.

I must say a special thanks to my best friend Shivangi and Alok for keeping faith in me and encouraging me constantly. I wish to thank my friends, Kashmira, Yashashree, Rima, Tejashree, Mayuri, Harshal, Shyam, Sonal and Ameya.

I wish to thank my family, Aai, Baba, Harshada, and Pranali for their absolute love, support, care and comfort without whom this work would not have been successful. My parent’s constant emphasis on the importance of education has always been a guiding path for me. Special thanks are also due to all my relatives and my grandparents for their constant encouragement.

Finally, I thank the almighty God for being with me all the time.

Shraddha Yashwant Chhatre