Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to those who have contributed to this thesis and supported me in one way or the other during this amazing journey.

The first and the foremost, I would like to thank the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi for the award of fellowship and The Director, NCL for providing facilities which enabled me to carry out my research in such a prestigious research laboratory.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my mentor Dr. Prakash P. Wadgaonkar for giving me the opportunity to be a part of his research group and also for his constant support and critic throughout the up and down phases during my work. I am indebted to him for his valuable advices, liberty, encouragement, interest and most of all, intellectual stimulation, without which my exertion would surely have come to the naught. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Madam, Shivani and Sir’s family for bearing my interruption in their weekend enjoyment when I would visit Sir for manuscript and Thesis corrections.

I owe my sincere thanks to Dr. C.V. Avadhani, Mr. Shamal Menon, Mrs. Deepa Dhoble, Dr. Ashootosh Ambade and Mr. Anandrao Patil, for their constant support and encouragement. I must acknowledge that without the support of senior research scholars in the department it would have been hard to successfully conclude the present study. These include Snehalata, Pandu, and Nilakshi.

I am indebted to my colleagues and friends in PPW group, Anjana, Arun, Arvind, Sony, Sachin Bobade, Prakash, Anil, Mahadeo, Nagendra, Mahesh, Bhausaheb, Indra, Deepshikha, Rupali, Shraddha, Sayali, Ashwini, Kavita, Jagdish, Samadhan, Sachin Patil, Sachin Kuhire, Bharat, Kishor, Ankush, Amol, Durgaprasad, Vikas, Naganath, Nagendra, Nitin, Parimal and Sharad.

I would like to thank all my NCL friends Payal, Ruby, Anjali, Rageswari, Priyanka, Ruchi, Samriddhi, Chinmay, Kausal, Nagendra, Ghanshayam, Prajita, Swapnil, Sreekant, Joyashis, Rekha, Nisha, Prajita and Mohan Raj. All of them made my life in NCL campus easier and more enjoyable. Thank you all! I am also indebted to Mr. Saroj Jha and Mrs. Poorvi Purohit.

To complete any mission successfully in life, it is not just the roadmap that helps, but also the company of good friends which soars you to the heights greater than those reached alone. I have always been blessed with the best of good hearts, to relieve me from the most tiresome moments of life. I take this opportunity to thank my friends with whom I assimilated the basic concepts of education as well as of life, many thanks to Virendra and Manindra. Next comes, friends from educational field with whom I gained interest as well as confidence in Science. I am indebted to my friends Jai Prakash, Sandeep Pathak, Ashwini Mishra, Deepak Chattopadhyaya, Kishore Jena, Deepak Sachan, Sahjada Firoz, Saji Thomas and Lakshmi. Thank you all!!!

I am blessed with a very caring and loving family. My special gratitude goes to my Mother Mrs. Suniti Devi and Father late Mr. S. R. Singh, who instilled in me a desire to learn, strong work ethics and the value of common sense. Whatever I am today, and intend to be in future, is because of the goodwill and unflinching support of my parents. My success is dedicated to them; now and always. I would not have completed this thesis without the constant encouragement and motivation from my brother Raj and both the sisters (Ranjana and Meenu).
Finally, I record my special thanks to my husband, Virendra for giving encouragement, support and freedom to this work. Plain words are not enough to express my feelings towards my lovely son Takshashil for bearing my absence at home when he needed me the most.

October 2013

Savita Kumari