

Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank my Ph.D. Guide Prof. Rasheedunnisa Begum for her continuous support during my Ph.D. tenure. Her way of analyzing scientific data has always kept me in awe of her vast knowledge. As she rightly says Ph.D. is not a mere degree but a rigorous training process that enables one to take challenges head on. I hope I can do justice to the training I got in my past 7 years of knowing her and do some good to mankind.

Besides my guide, I would like to thank my doctoral research committee: Head, Prof. C. Ratna Prabha, Prof. Sarita Gupta, Prof. Pushpa Robin, and Prof. Vihas Vasu for their periodic assessment, insightful comments, and mind ticking questions. Prof. N. G. Kumar, Dr. Shashikant Acharya, Dr. Jayshree Phonerkar, Prof. Rajesh Singh, Dr. Laxmipriya, Dr. Ravi Vijayvargia and Dr. Sanjeev Kumar also have an extensive role to play in my journey and I extend my heartfelt thanks to them.

My sincere thanks also goes to the non-teaching staff, especially Anil bhai and Sandeep bhai, and Ramesh bhai and Narang bhai from animal house for their help throughout this journey, and to Bharti Ma'am for taking care of the project related work.

I thank my fellow team-mates: Ms. Roma Patel, Ms. Nirali Rathwa and Mr. Nishant Parmar, for the stimulating discussions, meeting deadlines together, and for all the fun we have had in these years. Most importantly for holding each other from falling or stopping from giving up. Also, I thank my lab mates: Tina Jubin for her 'to die for' helping nature, Ashlesha Kadam for being the sweetest friend, Shahnawaz Jadeja and Jayvadan Vaishnav; dissertation students: Sneha Rana, Nitisha Patel for her witty remarks, Hemangi Dhimmar, and Nilay Dalvi for his 'never say no' attitude. Appreciations to the departmental research scholars: Milton, Dhruv, Arpi and Shivani too for lending their knowledge, reagents, and time without a second thought.

I am also grateful to Prof. A. V. Ramachandran for always being there unconditionally, be it academic or non-academic. A tough but a beautiful soul inside, diabetes team has had some amazing memories with him.

I would also like to thank the Dean Prof. H. Kataria, Neeta Dhar madam and Milind dada, and all the administrative staff for extending their support whenever I needed their help.

Beyond the departmental family there existed another family of friends who would be always eager to share my highs and lows, and I would like to specially mention Palna, Kamya and Kejal for lending me a patient ear and making me feel at home in a new city. My heartfelt thanks to my furry companion, a jet-black Labrador named Mr. Mooshie who entered my life in the last year of this journey as COVID-19 pandemic began, busting much stress out. Also, I would like to convey my thanks to Prof. Soma Chaki who always believed in my research abilities while I kept self-doubting myself.

My deepest gratitude goes out for my parents who invested 28 years of their life helping me shape into a decent human being, my specially-abled brother, Anirban, my partner, and my in-laws in investing their love and support to help me reach here. Shanaya, my 5 years old daughter's contribution was no less who started sending me off to work with two tear-filled eyes from the time she was just 4 months old. Words fail me when I try to thank all these beautiful souls in my life.

The list still goes on, as there are a huge number of people who have played small or big roles in this journey, but, since words are all that I have, I would just float across a heartfelt 'Thank You' to each of these beautiful souls.

Finally, though the *Almighty* is too big an entity for me to mention an acknowledgement here; it is his direction and the purpose that he has chosen for me which has led me here.