

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe my deep and sincere sense of gratitude to all those who have contributed to this work in various ways and made this dream become true. First of all I express my gratefulness to the grace and blessings of God who enabled me accomplish this endeavor.

I take this opportunity to thank my guide Prof. P.V. Patel for all his valuable and constructive guidance. I also thank him for the liberty he provided me in my work place. I thank him for all the support and encouragement he provided in the course of my study.

I would also like to give most of the credence to Dr. B. Suresh, who has been very much instrumental in completing my doctoral studies. I thank him for all his valuable and constructive guidance, immense help, encouragement and support throughout the study period. I am indeed obliged for his imperative comments and advices during the Thesis writing.

I express my heartfelt acknowledgements to Dr. Isha Desai who in spite of her very busy schedule, read most part of this thesis and provided many helpful suggestions.

I also take the opportunity to thank Dr. Pragna Parikh and Dr. Dolly Kumar for their all time warmth and support.

It is a pleasure to extend my thankfulness to all my labmates Reena, Priyanka, Ambali, Pratyush, Ayaz, Tushar, Sarada, Ruchika, Asiya, Anushree, Bhavika, Shalaka and also Mrs Hetal Roy for all their support and friendliness. The joyful moments we spent together would be an all time memory. I thank Ruchika for looking into my references inspite of her busy work in the lab.

I thank Pratuys for the all support he has been extending from the day I joined the university and also for his critical eye on editing the references of this treatise.

I am heartily thankful to Tushar and Sarada for all the help they extend so very promptly whenever required. Their jovial and friendly nature has always made my days in the lab delightful.

My appreciation is also due to Ayaz for his all-time willingness to help and share his scientific ideas.

I am very much thankful to the Head, Department of Zoology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda for providing me all the necessary facilities to carry out my research work.

Thanks are also extended to the non- teaching staff of our zoology department who have been quite helpful.

I am also grateful to madam Vandana Rao of Metallurgy Department, Techno Faculty, The M. S. University of Baroda for helping me in carrying out the Scanning electron microscopy.

I would like to acknowledge the University Grants Commission, New Delhi for providing me the financial assistance in the form of Junior Research fellowship (CSIR-UGC NET.)

I am indebted to my Father-in-law and mother-in-law for all the support and encouragement they provided and their belief in the importance of education. I also appreciate my sister-in-laws for their cooperation and friendliness. I would also like to fondly remember my niece Saadika and nephew Lalith.

I am greatly thankful to my dear parents who always believed in me, brought me up with all the pamper and at the same time instilled in me the importance of education. I would never forget the love and support they have been extending throughout all these days. I extend my appreciation to my sweet younger siblings Sowjanya and Praveen, who are also my best friends.

*Finally, I am deeply indebted to my husband, Kishore for all his love, patience, encouragement and support throughout the work. He always took commitments and never missed them. His selfless ways in supporting the family are admirable. I owe him the larger credibility in the successful completion of my work. **I very fondly dedicate my thesis to my husband and my parents.***