ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this thesis has been one of the most significant academic achievements for me. This wouldn't have been possible without the guidance, support and patience from some of the most important people in my life. It is to them that I owe my deepest gratitude.

In the first place I would like to gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and supervision of Dr. Renu Sharma (Associate Professor), my guide, at the Dept. of Psychology, The M. S. University of Baroda. Her belief in and support of this research (and me) has made this very long and arduous apprenticeship a tremendously rewarding experience. She guided me wisely and flexibly step by step towards the success in the research work. I dedicate my success in this work to her wisdom, flexibility, encouragement and trust in me. She supported me at every critical stage of the PhD program, no matter how busy she was, always offering her help as soon as possible. She also encouraged me to have independent ideas and always inspired me to think differently. Her words were always encouraging, even during difficult times during the research work, and she always accommodated my schedule. Without her unconditional support, I cannot imagine how I would have completed this thesis. She has been a wonderful advisor, and guide from whom I have learnt a lot. Thank you ma'am for your advice and guidance from the very early stage of this research.

I extend my sincere thanks to Prof. Urmi Biswas, and Dr. Priyanka Behrani, Dept. of Psychology, The M. S. University of Baroda, for their constant support and guidance in terms of research methodology and statistics, during the entire journey of completion the research work.

A special Thank You to Dr. Rashmin Sompura for his tireless efforts spent in analysing the jumbled data to distil the essence of the findings. I have learnt much from his insightful direction.

I also convey my thanks to many experts, principals, teachers and students for giving their valuable time in allowing me to gather my data. Their anonymity masks the significance of their contribution to this study.

I would specially like to thank Mrs. Anjali Hardikar, Head, Counselling Centre, The Galaxy Education System, Rajkot, for suggesting this topic to me for my research work. Without her, I wouldn't have been able to do any research work on this particular topic.

I would like to express my special thanks to my parents and my in-laws for providing all kinds of support and encouragement during the entire journey of my PhD work. Without their support doing this research work wouldn't have been possible. I am also grateful to my loving, supportive and caring husband Akash Verma for his constant encouragement, support and immense trust in me throughout this research work. Without him, it would have been impossible for me to finish this work.

I am deeply thankful to my little brother, Narayan, for always being by side, and helping me a lot throughout the data collection phase of my research. Without his help and support, this work would have been very difficult.

I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to my best friends- cum- sisters, Priya Vadaya (Bhatt), Deepika Rajawat, Manisha Banik and my sweetheart Mansi. A special thanks to my dear friend, Dr. Anand Ahuja. They have been a strong support system, mentally and physically, for me throughout this work. Without them, completing this thesis would have been an impossible task. It is due to their constant support and immense faith in me that I was able to complete my thesis. They have always been at my beck and call whenever I had required their help.

Last but not least, I extend my gratitude to the Almighty for giving me enough strength and courage to accomplish my goal of doing the research.