

## *Acknowledgement*

*Prima facie I am thankful to the invisible and yet powerful energy, the Almighty, for constantly providing me inner strength and positivity to unfold my dream into reality. I am deeply grateful to my guide and Head of the Department of Zoology, **Prof. Dolly Kumar**, for her boundless motivation, kindness, patience, care, critical feedbacks and most importantly invaluable guidance from the very first day of research work till the successful completion of entire journey of research. Her meticulous guidance, tentative suggestions, freedom to express my ideas, beneficial criticism is primarily responsible for this accomplishment.*

*Special thanks to Department of Zoology, for providing all facilities to carry out the whole research work. My sincere thanks to all the Professors as well as Teaching and Non-teaching staff of the department for providing me constant support at every step.*

*My heartfelt thanks to lab mates **Mamata Deb, Archana Yadav, Lekshmi Pillai, Hardik Purohit, Harshita Sharma** who all made my journey comfortable by adding the flavour of fun and cheerfulness in scientific research work. I would also like to thank my other colleagues, **Bhumi Thakkar, Chandni Valodkar, Ankur Upadhyay** for their support and light moments spent during tea breaks.*

*I would like to express my deepest gratitude to **Sunil Sir**, for constant support and co-operation in giving final shape to thesis and for*

*making me understand the important aspects of formatting and critical softwares.*

*I thank my husband, rightly called as better half, **Amol Sule**, for his constant support and love throughout the journey of highs and lows. He always kept my research work on top priority and walked hand in hand with me like a headstrong pillar. He was the one who assured me that I can do my best and achieve the goal after such a long gap in studies after marriage. Thanks to my loving sisters **Ulka Bhide**, **Neha Shouche** and their extended families to shower love, care and blessings on me always.*

*Furthermore, I would like to thank my Grand Father in law and Grandmother in law **Madhukar Sule** and **Nanda Sule**, for always showering blessings, showing interest in my work, and giving critical comments on the posters and presentations during the entire research. I am deeply grateful to the members of entire **Takalkar**, **Athavale**, **Sule** and **Pradhan** family. Thanks to my loving cousins **Shashank**, **Shweta**, **Amol**, **Vishal**, **Rohan**, **Pankaj**, **Ameya**, **Prajakta**, **Aditya**, **Shreya**, **Onkar**, **Shivangi**, **Pranav**, **Akshit**, **Nandini**, **Arpit**, **Manva** and **Udit** who were always there to lighten my mood and make me smile.*

*I feel very lucky to have invaluable jewels called "Friends": **Vaidehi**, **Vatsal**, **Surbhi**, **Kalyani**, **Vatsal**, **Pranad** and **Deepanshi** who were always ready to listen to me at any odd times. I feel obliged to have supportive neighbours, **Mehta's** and **Shukla's**, who not only showed interest in my work, but also provided crucial feedback,*

*All the words in the lexicon will be worthless, if I fail to express my extreme sense of gratitude to pillars of my life, **Aai-Baba** (parents and in-laws) for giving life to the dream that you had foreseen and converted to reality by providing all the supportive framework and never made me feel alone in this journey.*

*Last but not the least, thank you to all those who have contributed directly or indirectly, to make me achieve this goal.*

*Sule Rupa Amol*