ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is indeed a great pleasure to undertake this PhD thesis. Honestly, it has been a life-changing experience for me. It would not have been possible without the support and guidance that I have received from many people. Firstly, I pray to Almighty God to show his divine blessings on me and give me inner strength and patience during this journey.

I express deep gratitude from my heart's core to my supervisor, **Prof. Manoj Kumar Soni** for his affection, valuable guidance, excellent direction, everlasting encouragement, and inspiration given to me without whom the present work would not have been possible. I feel indebted to him for teaching me each aspect of the art of doing research and other essential aspects of life. Without his trust and constant support, the successful achievement of this work would have remained a dream.

I am grateful to **Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya**, Vice-Chancellor, and **Prof. S. K. Barai**, Director, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus for giving me the opportunity to pursue my research work. I owe my sincere thanks to **Prof. M. B. Srinivas**, Dean, Academic – Graduate Studies & Research (AGSR) and **Prof. Jitendra Panwar**, Associate Dean, AGSR for their official support and encouragement.

I am highly indebted to my Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC) members **Prof. Dr. Kuldip Singh Sangwan,** Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Pilani Campus and **Prof. H. O. Bansal,** Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics Engineering, Pilani Campus for their insightful comments and encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge **Dr. Venkatesh K. P. Rao**, Convener, Departmental Research Committee, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering Department, Pilani Campus, who has provided valuable comments during the departmental seminars.

Furthermore, I thank **Prof. M. S. Dasgupta**, (Head of Department) and the entire faculty and staff of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, BITS-Pilani, Pilani Campus for their kind and moral support and assistance.

My gratitude knows no bounds for **Dr. Suvanjan Bhattacharyya, Dr. Sharad Shrivastava**, **Dr. Nikhil Gakkhar**, Sunil, Aniket Lad, Harsh Sharma, Vyom Chaturvedi, Vishal Viswanathan, Naveen Sharma, and Gaurav Rathi for their unstinting guidance, many valuable suggestions, and kind help at various stages of the work. I cherish all the moments spent with my friends and highly talented research scholars. I have learned a lot from each

and every one. I thank them for always being there for me and making my time memorable. I wish them a very bright future.

I am grateful to Mr Pravin Chorghade, who supported me for my overall development. I express my gratitude to Mr. Anil Sardana, MD, Tata Power now MD, Adani Transmission, a great leader, my Mentor, Philosopher, and guide.

In April 2013, I underwent Bypass surgery. During this crisis period, many friends helped me. I am grateful to them. After 3.5 months of my bypass surgery, I have appeared for PhD qualifying examination, I am very much grateful to Dr Manoj Kumar Soni Sir for his concrete support. I am thankful to Alfa Ibrahim (MIS Officer and My TA), Abdulyassar Murtala Haruna (Asst. MIS Officer) Sadiya Abdulmumeen Aliyu (DEA/PA)

My sincere thanks to all those I miss to acknowledge, who directly or indirectly helped me accomplish this task.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, to my father, Late Shri Pundlik Harchandshet Sonawane and my mother, Late Smt Nirmala Pundlik Sonawane. My father taught me "Life is a learning process and learning is a lifelong process!" Thank you for giving me the confidence and courage to make the choices I have made. I would also thank my parents-in-law. My sincere thanks to loving brother and sisters and their family members, Mrs Pratibha & Vijay Gangurde, Mayuresh and Saurabh, Mrs. Sangita & Nitin Saundankar and Mr Nitin Pundlik Sonawane and Mrs. Shubhangi. Their constant love and care empowered me to accomplish my thesis and also ignited me to take more challenges in my life. My special thanks and love go to my son Nishant and daughter Vaishnavi for being the light of my eyes and the joy of my heart. My words fail to express my gratitude and appreciation to my wife Mrs. Savita Vijaykumar Sonawane (Gayatri) for all that she silently endured during the difficult times and way she always supported me and stood by my side with unending patience during the period of this work.

Regards from core of my heart,

Vijaykumar Pundlik Sonawane, April 2021