Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Prof. L. K. Maheshwari, Vice-Chencellor, BITS, Pilani for providing me this opportunity to pursue the off-campus PhD program of the Institute. I express my gratitude to Prof. Ravi Prakash, Dean, Research and Consultancy Division (RCD), BITS, Pilani for his constant official support, encouragement and making the organization of my research work through the past few years easy.

I thank Dr. Hemanth Jadav, Mr. Dinesh Kumar, Ms. Monica Sharma, Mr. Sharad Shrivastava, Mr. Gunjan Soni, Mr. Amit Kumar and Ms. Sunita Bansal, nucleus members of RCD, BITS, Pilani, without whose cooperation and guidance, it would not have been possible for me to pursue such goal oriented research during each of the past few semesters. I also thank the office staff of RCD whose secretarial assistance helped me in submitting the various evaluation documents in time and give pre-submission seminar smoothly.

I warmly thank my Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC) members, Prof. Satyabati Mishra (BITS) and Prof. Anil Kumar Bhat (BITS), who spared their valuable time to go through my draft thesis and were audience to my pre-submission seminar in order to provide several valuable suggestions that helped in improving the quality of thesis.

I express my deep felt gratitude to my Ph.D Supervisor, Prof. Dr. A. P Ghosh (Director, BIMM, Pune), for the faith and interest in my topic and, his guidance and encouragement at every stage. I heartily thank Dr. Debasis Mallik (SPJIMR, Mumbai), my friend and colleague for all the help offered in Statistical Analysis part. His command in Statistics had been hugely instrumental in materializing this work.

<div align="right">
Anuradha. N

2004PHXF443P
</div>

Mumbai

October 2009