

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Undertaking this PhD has been a truly life-changing experience for me and it would not have been possible to do without the support and guidance that I received from many people. First and foremost, I pray and thank to almighty God for showering his divine blessings and giving me an inner strength and patience during this journey.

I pay obeisance unto the lotus feet of my supervisor, **Professor Manoj Kumar Soni** for their valuable guidance, excellent direction, everlasting encouragement, and inspiration given to me without which the present work would not have been possible. I feel indebted to him for not only teaching me each and every aspect of the art of doing research but also other important aspects of life. Without his trust and constant support, 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 at the Institute. I owe my sincere thanks to **Prof. M. 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. Kuldip Singh Sangwan**, Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Pilani Campus and **Prof. Pratik N Sheth**, Associate Professor, Department of Chemical 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.

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

My gratitude knows no bounds for **Dr. Naveen Sharma** for his unstinting guidance, many valuable suggestions, and kind help at various stages of the work. I also would like to thank my friend **Mr. Sombir Sharma**, for his constant support and suggestions. I would also like to thank **Dr. Sharad Shrivastava**, **Dr. Nikhil Gakkhar**, Dr. Vijaykumar Sonawane, Mr. Vivek Tiwari, Mr. Santosh Saini, Mr. Ramesh Kumar and students, Mr. Samayak Samar, Mr. Aravindan and Mr. Harssh Mathur, who have all helped me during my PhD journey. 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. My sincere thanks to all those persons whom I miss to acknowledge, who had directly or indirectly helped me to accomplish this task.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family; to my father, **Sh. Udmi Ram** and my mother, **Mrs. Bhagwani Devi**. I also thank my uncle **Sh. Ramavtar Sharma** and aunt **Mrs. Bimla Devi**. I am deeply indebted to all the pains taken by them to make my dream come true. My sincere thanks to my loving brothers and sisters; **Mr. Ishwar Singh**, **Mr. Krishan Kumar**, **Mrs. Sunita**, and **Mrs. Manju**. 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 **Himanshu Baloda** and daughter **Sneh** 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** 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.

Sunil
April 2021