Acknowledgements

My journey for Ph.D has been a very memorable and overwhelming experience. The whole journey of compiling a PhD thesis is almost like living a lifetime and it is difficult to summarise what has been the real learning experience during the course and who all to thank in this wonderful journey. To be honest, this intriguing journey has been instrumental in teaching me what life is all about and hence would like to express my thanks to some of the wonderful people without whom I would have probably never reached this point.

First of all, my gratitude is due to my mentor Prof. Suman Kapur. It is hard to say what I have not learnt from her both professionally and personally; be it working on my Ph.D topic itself which has been the real learning experience, writing papers and proposals, giving talks, working in a group as a valuable team member, staying up in lab till someone drags you out, or to stay focussed and deliver. One thing which I have learnt from her in these years is once committed you have to deliver. To work with her has been a real pleasure for me with heaps of fun and excitement. She has listened to me as mentor and simultaneously corrected me when required. Her ability to select and to approach compelling research problems, high scientific standards, and hard work set an example. She has been a great mentor throughout my Ph.D. career; she has oriented and supported me with promptness and care, and has always been patient & encouraging.

My sincere gratitude to my co-supervisor Dr Rajesh Kumar Thaper and Ranbaxy Research laboratories for helping me with his valuable advice and raw material required to conduct my thesis work.

My special thanks are due to Dr Kumar Pranav Narayan and Dr. Punna Rao Ravi for being my DAC members. My sincere gratitude to them for their valuable suggestions and motivation throughout. I am pleased to be a student of Dr. Vidhya Rajesh during my course work and thankful to her for her support as ARD in-charge. Dr Jayati Ray Dutta and Dr. Palash Mandal deserve special thanks for being a member of my Doctoral Research Committee. My special thanks are due to Dr Vadrevu Ramakrishna, Dr Sankar Ganesh and other faculty members of Biological Scienecs Department and department as a whole at Hyderabad campus.

My very special thanks are due to my family for tirelessly supporting me through all the life changing events and yet motivating me to move ahead and succeed. To mention explicitly and specially I would like to thank my parents; thanks for making me what I am, thanks for preparing me to face life and thanks for being there. You have taught me about hard work and self-respect, about perseverance and being independent. Mom, especially, thanks for being the role model of patience, resilience, strength and character. Thank you for showing me the reality at times when it was much needed. Dad, thank you for being there as a pillar of support, for letting me do it 'my way' and for encouraging and inspiring me to reach for my dreams. I am really proud of both of you and I love you so much. My

family is not complete without mentioning my awesome sister, Sheenu and my brother, Sahu. You are the ones who have helped me to remain focused and finish my studies. Thank you for believing I could do it and for not letting me not do it, for understanding and being wonderful and thank you for those big unforgettable moments of unexpected support. Thank you for doing my part of family responsibilities during this period so I could focus on my things.

In these years, I have also had the chance to deepen some friendships, to build new ones and to meet people in these years. I want to thank all my friends who put up with me through the whole Ph.D process and helped me with personal challenges, in particular Deepika Mam, Thank you for those occasional motivating calls, talks, gossips and your unconditional support!

My thanks would be incomplete without mentioning the super awesome Genomics team: Sruthi, Mr Rao, Rupak, Madhu maam and Chinmayi for all the help, love, encouragement and support. My special thanks to Anuradha mam for the fun and the encouraging discussions on and off the lab. I am eternally grateful to my dear friend Padma. In you I have found a life-long friend who always stood for me in the times of need. I am thankful to Pavan and Pooja mam for their valuable company. Thank you for all the discussions, suggestions and homemade food. Thanks to our old colleagues Sribash, Krishnaveni, Rosaline, Gaurav, Shweta and Susan for making our lab a welcoming place to work. Words are not enough to express my gratitude for you all. Thank you all for your love and support. I would also like to thank Urvashi Mam for her endless support and help. Thanks for always being so cooperative, teach me to tackle new problems and how to develop techniques to solve them. You really taught me a great deal about the professional and personal life. Thanks for always being there for me.

Very special thanks is due to Chhavi. Thanku so much for being a lovely friend. Her smile, motivation, unconditional love and support made me strong at hard times. Thanks for being an entertainer whenever I felt bored. I have always cherished our useful as well as useless discussions about anything and everything in the world. I am very thankful to my friends outside the lab who made life at campus much easier. As we used to say it, it was our "summer gang" I would really like to express my thanks to Sonal, Jiten, Asim, Tarana, Anshima, Ashish, Priyanshu, Soniya. It was indeed a pleasure to have you guys around. I am also indebted to the students I had the pleasure to work with. You have been an invaluable support day in, day out, during all these years. Worth mentionable thanks to Rashi, Subramanyam, Punita, Apoorva, for the awesome help and company. I am also thankful to all the fellow scholars in the department who are always ready to help in every possible manner. Also a special mention to my wonderful first degree friends especially Amrita, Sneha, Kriti and Pranavi for all the amazing moments and fun. My special thanks to my hostel in charges, Anita maam and Sunita di for their love, concern, care and support. Sunita di special thanks to you for opening the hostel gate at late night without any complaints. My thanks cannot be complete without acknowledging our three technicians, Ramakrishna bhaiya, Imitiya bhaiya and Ali bhaiya. I am grateful to each and every person who helped me achieve my goals.

(Shivani Gupta)