ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A PhD thesis is a test of perseverance. One cannot endure the challenges and roadblocks encountered in this path without passion for one's work.

I am utmost grateful to my guide, Dr. Mrinalini Nair for giving me the opportunity to work under her able guidance and accepting the guideship of a student like me with absolutely no background of this difficult yet fascinating subject of molecular biology. Her perseverance and love for perfection is truly contagious and inspiring. I simply cannot thank her enough for her efforts in writing and correcting the manuscript without which the manuscript wouldn't have seen the light of the day. Thank you Ma'am!!

I thank the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi, for providing me with a five-year research fellowship.

I thank Prof. Paulo Visca, Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy; Prof. Laurance Rahme, Department of Surgery, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, USA; and Dr. Elisabeth Sonnleitner from Max. F. Perutz Laboratories, Vienna, Austria, for plasmids pHERD30T, pUCP18-RedS and pME6013 respectively as their kind gifts.

I take this opportunity to thank Prof. G. Archana, Head, Dept. of Microbiology, and Dr. J. Manjrekar, members of my doctoral research committee, for their valuable and timely suggestions regarding my PhD work. I would like to thank the former Heads, Prof. Anjana Desai and Prof. T. Bagchi, and Prof. G. Archana, current Head, Department of Microbiology and Biotechnology Centre for providing me with the facilities and infrastructure necessary for my work. Here, I also express my gratitude to Late Prof. Chattoo for allowing me to use the facilities at the Genome Research Centre as and when required. His love for science and passion for quality work would always inspire me. I would thank Prof. Anuradha Nerurkar and Dr. Devarshi Gajjar for sharing their practical and honest views on matters of PhD and life. I am fortunate to have been acquainted with them. I thank Prof. Ingle, Prof. Vyas, Dr. Nandita Baxi, Dr. Pushpendra Singh, Dr. Rajesh Patkar and Dr. Ratika Srivastava for their scientific suggestions and constant encouragement.

PhD is a lonely experience, nonetheless there are people from family and friends who make your experience much less daunting and turn around your day just when you need it the most. I have been very fortunate to have such people in my life. This acknowledgement section would be incomplete without the mention of the two "pretty devils" in my life, Hasmat and Niralee. The time that we have spent together in lab and otherwise and the memories that we created are priceless. Thank you for your support and patience in dealing with me when I was in the worst and happiest of my moods. Thank you for everything girls!!

I would also like to thank my lab seniors Dr. Soshina Nathan, Dr. Mahima Pandor, Dr. Sandip Patil and Dr. Manikandan K for their suggestions and guidance in the experimental work.

A special thanks to Dr. Priya Jishnu! Your qualities like calm nature, ever smiling face, pleasing personality and a positive and practical approach towards life are worth imbibing. Thank you for being there always! I would thank Dr. Hashim Reza, Ms. Hiral Shah, Mr. Akhil Thakker, Mr. Divya Purohit and Ms. Khyati Mehta for their help during the experiments and honest suggestions and inputs regarding the same. I would always cherish the time I spent with you. It was a pleasure meeting you all.

I thank my contemporaries and colleagues from the department for their timely help and suggestions and the concern that they always had for me.

I thank Mr. Nitesh Bhatt and Mr. Shirish Nagarkar for going that extra mile to help me with the complex dealings of administration. I also thank Mr. J.K. Nair and Mr. Varghese for their help with the administrative issues. I would thank Dr. Harsukh Tank for issuing laboratory requirements and his words of encouragement. I thank Mr. Panchal for issuing the glass wares and distilled water as and when required.

I thank Thomas Ma'am for providing the laboratory materials as and when needed. One can't thank her enough for the yummy food and the motherly affection that she showered on all of us. Thank you Aparna Ma'am for the constant support that you have been!

I thank Mukesh bhai, Chiman bhai, Girish bhai and Ramesh Bhai for keeping the labs clean and maintenance of the labs.

This thesis was not possible without the support of my loving parents, sister, my husband and my in-laws. You believed in me when I was occupied with self doubt. Thank you for reminding me that success belongs to those who never quit!! Words are not enough to express my feelings of gratitude towards you!

Finally I thank the almighty God who bestowed me with a healthy mind and a healthy body to accomplish what I wanted and fulfil my dreams.

Anuja Malgaonkar