

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.

Praises and thanks to the God, the Almighty, who bestowed me with a healthy mind and a healthy body and his blessings throughout my research work to complete the research successfully.

I am utmost grateful to my guide, Dr. Nandita Baxi for giving me the opportunity to work under her able guidance and accepting the guideship with absolutely fascinating subject of food microbiology. Her perseverance and love for perfection is truly contagious and inspiring. Thank you Ma'am!!

I thank the University Grant Comission, New Delhi, for providing me with a five-year research fellowship.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness and profound sense of gratitude to Prof. H. R. Kataria, Dean, Faculty of Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara for his kindness, hospitality and understanding and for all the help and advice received from him. Without you this wasn't possible sir.

I take this opportunity to thank Prof. G. Archana, Head, Dept. of Microbiology, for her constant support and for her valuable and timely suggestions regarding my PhD work. I would like to thank Department of Microbiology and Biotechnology Centre for providing me with the facilities and infrastructure necessary formy work. Here, I also express my gratitude to Late Dr. J. Manjrekar for being highly supportive and co-operative during my initial phase of Ph.D, his love and passion for quality work would always inspire me. I would thank Prof. Vyas, Prof. Ingle, Dr. Pushpendra Singh and Dr. Ratika Srivastava for sharing their practical and honest views on matters of PhD and life. A special thanks to Mr. Milind Nandedkar for his continuous support and life lessons. I am fortunate to have been acquainted with them.

PhD is a life changing experience both personally and professionally; nonetheless there are people from family and friends without whom this journey wouldn't be possible to cover. I was grateful to have them in my life. This acknowledgement section would be incomplete without the mention of the two in my life, Woh to Abhi Aisa he na- Juliya and Awww-Shubhangi. 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 mere Deviya!!

I would thank Ms. Shivani Rawal and my other colleagues from the department for their timely help and suggestions and the concern that they always had for me.

I thank Mr. Shirish Nagarkar and Mr. Pravin and for going that extra mile to help me with the complex dealings of administration. I also thank Dr. Harsukh and Mr. Talati for issuing laboratory requirements and his words of encouragement. I thank Ms. Seema, for issuing the glass wares and distilled water as and when required. I thank Nilesh bhai and Jayesh bhai for keeping my documents safe and up to date.

I take this opportunity to thank my mentor during post-graduation, Ms. Priyanka Jokhakar. Her way of teaching was the one which made research interesting to me and developing scientific aptitude and motivated me for research in life sciences.

A special thanks to Khushali Das and family and unforgettable Nilesh! Your qualities like calm nature, ever smiling face, pleasing personality and a positive and practical approach towards life are worth imbibing. Those sleepless nights making presentations with your add-on guidance and scolding will always be remembered. Thank you for being there always khush!

I express my affectionate thanks to ever ready for help even late night I pm presenting my lovelies, Naisarg and Manasi for their constant support, motivated speech and encouragement. Their endless efforts in correcting my manuscript without which the manuscript wouldn't have seen the light of the day.

I am thankful to Akanksha, Rashid, Swapnil, Chintan, Chirag, and Midhun for treating me as your own family member. Your encouraging words kept me going!!

I am highly thankful to Dhosa aunty for treating me like your own daughter and making your place a second home to me in Vadodara.

I owe a lot to all of you. I Love You !! #prachifam ♥

This thesis was not possible without the support of my loving parent. 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!

Prachi Ilaben Rajeshkumar Gandhi