Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to undertake this research study and to persevere and complete it satisfactorily. Without his blessings, this achievement would not have been possible. I have taken lot of efforts in this work and undertaking this Ph.D. has been a truly life-changing experience for me. However, it would not have been possible without the kind support and help of many individuals and organizations. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them.

I am highly indebted to my guide Dr. Daulat Ram Saini for his excellent guidance, continuous support, for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, constant supervision and for always demanding a high quality of work in all my endeavours. He inspired me greatly to work during tough and challenging times. His willingness to motivate me contributed tremendously to my work. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis, whilst allowing me the room to work in my own way. He has immensely helped me to expand the perspective of my thinking and working abilities to a great extent. I am obliged to him for being my supervisor.

Furthermore, I express my deepest gratitude with much appreciation to the crucial role of Prof. (Dr.) D. S. Bhatkhande (Head, Chemical Engineering Department). He is the one who gave me courage, confidence and motivation during my hard times. I could not have imagined having one more better mentor for my doctoral work. I attribute the level of my work to his encouragement and efforts and without him this thesis, too, would not have been completed or written.

I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Rajesh M. Jalnekar (Director), and all the Deans of Vishwakarma Institute of Technology for their valuable support and contribution to motivate me for research work. I am also very grateful Dr. S.P. Kamble (Sr. Scientist, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune) for his valuable suggestions, guidance and help during the work. Additionally, I would like to thank my all progress review committee members for their important suggestions. Thanks to their encouragement, perceptive comments, and hard questions. I take pride in acknowledging the insightful guidance of Dr. A.B. Pandit, and sincere thanks to Dr. Dipak V. Pinjari for his valuable support during my summer research fellowship work at Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai. I am also very grateful to my Ex- colleague Rahul Karyappa and my Ex-student Aditya Deshmukh for providing me the research papers as and when needed. I
greatly acknowledge the help provided by Ms. Chavan, Admission Section, Savitribai Phule Pune University during the submission of documents time to time. I would also like to acknowledge the Department of Physics and Central Instrumentation Facility, Savitribai Phule Pune University for providing characterization facility at academic rates. My special thanks are also due to my colleagues in chemical engineering department, Prof. Manik Deosarkar, Prof. Hemlata Karne, Prof. Priya Nakade. Prof. Shrikaant Kulkarni, my best friend Mr. Vivek Nighojkar and entire staff who encouraged me and helped me in whatever way they could. Special mention also goes to Aniruddha Deshpande for his inspiration and motivation. I would also like to acknowledge the help and support extended by my lab mates Prof. S. R. Shirsath and Prof. Sunita Raut. Many thanks also to Mr. Ravindra Badhe, Ms. Medha Kulkarni and Dnyanesh Kunjir for their excellent administrative support. I will forever be thankful to my students Kartik, Pankaj, Sumit, Pritam, Akshay, Omkar, Shrutkirti and Tanmay for helping me in whatever way they could during my tenure of work.

My acknowledgement would be incomplete without thanking the biggest source of my strength, my family. I especially thank my hard working parents Aai and Dada who invested everything for my better future and encouraged me to follow my dreams. Thanks to my elder brother Bhooshan for his advice and support. I owe a debt of gratitude to my beloved wife Harshali who provided unconditional love and care. She was the one who had a biggest dream of my doctoral degree in her life. Thanks for always believing in me and encouraging me to follow my dreams. Thanks are also due to my small kids Manakarnika and Vardayini who sacrificed their childhood because of my long lasting absence when they were immensely needing me. There are no words to convey how much I love my family members and this accomplishment would not have been possible without them. These past several years have not been an easy ride, both academically and personally. I truly thank all of you for sticking by my side, even when I was irritable and depressed. A very special thanks to all my best friends Valmik, Vasu, Amol, Sachin and Vaibhav for helping my family during this period.

Many thanks to all of you and my apologies if I have missed anyone here unintentionally. Thank you.

Chetan Vasantrao Kapadnis