ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to many people who helped me finish my Ph.D. First and foremost, I would like to convey my sincerest gratitude to my guide, Dr. K.K. Pandey, who has supported me throughout my Ph.D. with his patience and immense knowledge, and yet permitted me the freedom to work at my own. This thesis would not have been possible without his encouragement and support. In the midst of my personal responsibilities, there had been times, when I felt that I had taken an impossible task and will never be able to finish my Ph.D. on time. But then, his encouraging words have worked like miracle to me. He has not only been my guide, but whenever needed has also played the role of a friend and a guardian. Be it be any moment of the day, he was always there for me.

I am beholden to my co-guide, Dr. P.K. Sahoo, who is an expert in the area of biofuels. Despite his busy schedule, he always found time to answer my questions, and always helped me to understand the various technical problems related to my work. He has always encouraged and helped me find alternative ways, whenever I used to get stuck with a problem.

I would like to convey special thanks to the authorities of my university, especially the Chancellor, Dr. S.J. Chopra, the Vice-chancellor, Dr. Parag Diwan and the Dean, Dr. Anirban Sengupta, for giving me an opportunity and a platform to carry out my Ph.D work.

I sincerely thank my Head of Department, Prof. S.K. Pokhriyal, who in spite of being loaded with many a responsibility, did his best not to let them come across to me, as he very well understood that it could affect my work. I was always free to tell him when I could take up a task and when not.
Critical comments and advice of the Faculty Research Committee members of my college especially, Dr. Tarun Dhingra, Dr. D.K. Punia, Dr. Manvinder Singh Pahwa and Dr. Neeraj Anand helped me improve my work and make it better.

Inputs from Mr. Rakesh Gupta, from Jatropha Van Vikas Sansthan, helped me a lot to meet the first objective of my work. He has got immense knowledge on Jatropha, and was always willing to share it with me and spend time, whenever I needed his help.

Many thanks to Dr. S.P.S. Narang, for patiently reading each and every line of my entire thesis and helping me improve it by suggesting constructive changes. Not only this, he has also been like a father figure to me and was always there to listen to my problems and help me whatever ways he could.

In my daily work I have been blessed with a friendly and cheerful group of office mates, Ms. Neha Grover, Mr. Geo Jos Fernandez, Mr. Karan Kapoor and other Ph.D scholars. In the midst of the hectic schedule, the short breaks and discussions with them helped me a lot to get peped up, thus, enabling me to get back to the work with the same enthusiasm.

Heartiest thanks to my parents Mr. Ram Bilas Mishra and Mrs. Purnima Mishra, and my parents in law Mr. Deoki Nandan Chaturvedi and Mrs. Pushpa Chaturvedi, who deserve special mention for their support and prayers. They have always inspired me and have taken care of the family issues when I used to be away due to my Ph. D work. Special thanks, to my younger sister Ankita, who spent a lot of time taking care of my five pets, in my absence. Looking at the kind of affection she has for them, I could be rest assured that I could not have found a better person to take care of my pets, and thus, could concentrate on my work unhindered. I know it is off the track but I dare not stop myself from thanking my pets, Gini, Donna, Amy, Balloons and Brownie. They are like my family
members, and they will never understand how helpful they had been to me during my work. In spite of tensions, when I used to be with them, their playful behavior and their innocence always helped me to relieve me of my understandable tension. Even a small thought of them across the day, be it be any place, brings smile on my face and refreshes me.

I am extraordinarily fortunate in having Vivek as my better half. Words fail me to express my appreciation to him. His love and confidence in me, has taken the load of my shoulder. He has most patiently understood my absence, and in spite of busy schedule, has spent long time on phone, listening to my work related problems. We are a couple who, because of my work, in the two years of our married life could only spend a few days with each other. Despite this, he has never complained and was always there to encourage and support me in all possible ways he could. One simply could not wish for a better half than him. If I were to be asked as to who is the strongest emotional anchorage in my life, then it is Vivek.

Last but not the least, one above all of us, the omnipresent God, for giving me strength and courage to handle both my personal and professional fronts equally well, and not letting me give up.

Ms. Namita Pragya

2\textsuperscript{nd} of January, 2013, Dehradun