ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“For I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” Jeremiah 29:11

I would like to thank God for the opportunity provided to do a PhD at the right place and for His appointed guide and co–guide who have been my constant guardian angels.

My mentor, Dr G. Sridharan, for his training - both in scientific and moral, his willingness to stick his neck out for me even at times when I did not appreciate it, for his patience with me and for making me feel like his son (and for his example on how to be a son).

Dr Rajesh Kannangai for his guidance, support, his trust in me and the freedom I enjoyed with work.

Prof N. Srinivasan, IISc Bangalore, for his guidance and discussions for work related to molecular modelling carried out in his laboratory using his computer facilities.

My friend, Agnel, for constant support and inputs for several aspects of the in silico work

My sincere thanks to Dr Priya Abraham and Dr Asha Abraham for the guidance and valuable support

My Appa and Amma for the values you inculcated. For your love, support, time and patience through the various stages of my work.

Mr Jaiprasath Sachithanandham, for his friendship and for cheerfully offering to help me in ways that I cannot recollect here. For all the lunches, coffees and junk food we had and times that you took on more than your fair share in the work and didn’t make me feel bad.

My brother,Yak, for being a constant source of support and encouragement.
To Ansu, Su, Neena, Abie, Tony and Gecha for making a big difference in my life at Vellore and making me feel a part of their family.

To my cousins Nikhil, Gina, Deepak, Ashish, Diya, Divya, Keerti, Nitin and Aleena for those amazing times of laughter and happiness.

To Mimie and Tasha for those relaxing times only a dog can give.

For Tabs, my future life partner, who came at the divinely appointed time to help me finish my work.

Mr Prasana and Nithyandam for space to write my thesis and their cheerful presence.

The staff in the Virology department for making me feel at home.