Working for my Ph.D. has been a wonderful and often overwhelming experience. Whether it was to do with my working on the topic of TB vaccines or writing papers and proposals or delivering seminars or working in a group or staying up until the birds start chirping...it all has been a great enriching experience.

I am indebted to many people for making this long but fulfilling voyage to the completion of my Ph.D., an unforgettable experience.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Anil K. Tyagi. I could not have asked for a better role model, inspirational, supportive and patient, taking up new challenges every day, tackling them with all his grit and determination and always thriving to come out victorious. Your unflinching conviction towards science will always motivate me. Sir, you made me believe that nothing is impossible, one just needs to keep the stakes high, to me professionally, you are "perfection personified". You made me realize what I had only heard, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". I thank you for your guidance and all the thought provoking discussions, brainstorming sessions and comprehensive understanding to help me sail through the initial fumbling. The joy and enthusiasm you have for research and teaching is contagious and motivational for me. Not only scientifically, but I would like to thank you sir, for your inexorable care and unconditional support. You have been a fatherly figure to me...Thank you sir!

My special words of thanks should also go to Prof. V. K. Chaudhary, Prof. P. C. Ghosh and Prof. D. P. Sarkar for always being kind, helpful and motivating. I would also like to thank Dr. Suman Kundu, Dr. Alo Nag and Dr. Suneel Kateriya for setting up an excellent and lively scientific environment in the department and for providing every possible help and valuable suggestions as and when required. I thank Subrata sir for all his unconditional blessings. I would also like to thank Dr. J. S. Tyagi at the Dept. of Biotechnology, AIIMS, New Delhi and Dr. Hemalatha Reddy, S.V. College, New Delhi for their valuable suggestions. I extend my thanks to Dr. H.K. Prasad and his group, at the Dept. of Biotechnology, AIIMS, New Delhi, for providing encouraging and constructive support. I am grateful for their thoughtful and detailed discussions. Special thanks to Rakesh sir and Vibha ma'am, for their unconditional love and personal interest in my well-being. A very special thanks to Raman sir and Amit Sir for their valuable scientific inputs and guidance. I really thank Raman sir for his constant support, encouragement and valuable suggestions. A sincere thank is due to Aparna ma'am for her constant love and support. I would also like to acknowledge all the teachers I learnt from since my childhood, I would not have been here without their guidance, blessings and support. A special thanks to Navleen ma'am and Shalini ma'am. Thank you ma'am!

My acknowledgements will never be complete without the special mention of my lab seniors who have taught me the lab culture and have lived by example to make me understand the hard facts of life. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge two of my wonderful seniors-cum-friends; Ruchi and Bappa who have provided a rich and fertile environment to explore new ideas. I am highly indebted to them for training me in animal experiments. The enriching discussions with them have helped me expand my thinking. After going to USA for their post-doctoral assignment they have been my sole source of research articles, which they sent generously and happily, even at the shortest notice possible. In Ruchi, I found a friend and a companion, the time spent with her will always linger on
Acknowledgements

in my memories. I really thank her for being there for me in all the ups and downs both at professional and personal ends. I owe a lot to Bappa for all his philosophical talks, for letting me enjoy varieties of foods and for those lunch-time-laughters. I warmly thank Vikram, for his valuable advice, constructive criticism and extensive discussions around my work. I will always cherish the scientific and non-scientific discussions that we shared often. I am also indebted to Vineet not only for all his useful academic suggestions but also for being there to listen to me whenever I needed an ear. With Vineet, I never had a “true professional overlap” but time spent in discussing science with him has been phenomenal. I will always miss you and cherish the time spent with you. Only 2 little words direct from the heart ‘thank you’ reddy brother for being there in my life.

To my dear comrades in the lab, thank you for making my journey a memorable one. I really thank each one of you as you all are different and taught me about “life” in your own unique way. I express my heart-felt gratitude to Garima. Her scientific inputs, personal helps and friendly nature has always made me feel at ease with her and I could always look up to her for any support during the course of my Ph.D. I extend my sincere word of thanks to Rupangi, who has always been there as a friend in need. I have a long association with her as we both had joined the lab together. I would never be able to pay back the love and affection showered upon me by her. Thank you Rupangi for being a wonderful friend. With you, I have laughed, cried, felt anguish, had arguments and celebrated. You have introduced me to my strengths and weaknesses. Time spent with you will always be remembered. It is a personal pleasure to have a close association with both Prachi and Ritika. Both are extremely hardworking and bright. I have fond memories of the time that I have spent with Ritika during work and have immensely enjoyed scientific and non-scientific interactions with her. Delightful chats with Prachi on any topic are simply unforgettable. Special thanks to all of you for scrupulous proofreading of my manuscripts and thesis. I would also like to thank Priti who has been extremely caring and affectionate towards me and has always extended her helping hand without fail. She is a meticulous worker and an inquisitive soul. I would also like to thank all the new members and juniors in the lab—Akshay, Praveen and Tannu for all the love that they have showered upon me. I could not have asked for more than what I got from them. Thank you all. A special thanks to Sandeep for helping me out with the animal experiments. Your sincerity towards work was of fundamental importance in accomplishing the experiments. One thing that I have learnt from you is how to enjoy life. I must acknowledge that you have a great sense of humour to lighten up any mood.

A special mention of Bahadur Singhji, Devender and Jeevan is required for helping untiringly. I extend my due respect and thanks to Bahadur Singh ji, his immense experience and proficient assistance has helped in accomplishing the animal experiments with ease. Special thanks to BSLIII staff, Ramesh, Virender and Shankar, for providing round the clock supervision of the facility. Special thanks to Rajiv sir and Navin ji for their valuable suggestions regarding the complex intricacies of formatting on computer. The help provided by Babanand ji, Mahender ji, Ramesh ji, Simon, Rameshwar, Varun, Sandip and other members of the office is gratefully acknowledged. Help provided by Poonam ma’am and Anju ma’am in Distributed Information Subcentre is highly acknowledged.

Now I am acknowledging all my friends in the department who in their own unique ways brought a smile on my face and a whiff of fresh and enriching air: Ghalum sir, Shailendra sir, Ranu, Nikhil, Manendra, Pooja, Vinodh, Ajay, Nimisha, Payal, Charanpreet, Kapil, Amit, Manish, Sheetal, Sunita, Peeyush, Mayank, Meenakshi, Sunandini, Vaibhav, Rince and Neha. I would especially like to acknowledge Amit for his selfless help and support in all odds. Thank you Amit. Amit and Manendra are highly acknowledged for their unconditional help in
formatting my laptop and providing me with the necessary softwares in time. It was a pleasure to interact with all the bright and enthusiastic MSc students of the department- Mehak, Rajini, Pragya, Aakriti, Ridhima, Chandini, Niraj, Priyanka, Shikha, Neha, Parul, Usha, Shalini, Kaamini. They were the source of a friendly and cheerful environment in the department.

I would also like to acknowledge my cousins and friends outside the lab for their unconditional support and motivation, which inspired me to give my best. Samta, Ankur, Paras, Khushbu, Kanupriya, Abha, Aastha, Shikha, Meeta, Johit, Priyam, Vineet, Paritosh… the list is endless… thanks to one and all. My special gratitude to Ankur, Johit and Samta for being there for me in thicks and thins of life, I find myself lucky to have friends like them in my life. I have fond memories of the time spent with Paritosh. I have known him from past few months but I must confess that he has been a stress burster for me. Apart from all scientific talks, we shared long talks about “life”. I will always appreciate his calmness, perseverance and lively nature. I would also like to shower my blessings to three of the kids in my family- Akshat (Sai), Dia and Aditi. They have always brought a smile on my stressful face. Love you kids.

For me, University of Delhi South Campus (UDSC) is a home away from home. You have been like a surrogate family, bearing the brunt of the frustrations and sharing, the joy of the successes. I owe you a sense of gratitude. I also take this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Government of India, New Delhi, for providing financial assistance in the form of Senior Research Fellowship which enabled me to perform my work comfortably.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the people who mean a world to me, my babaji, my mother, taiji, tauji, my brothers and sister. I would not have contemplated this road if not for my parents, who instilled within me a love for creative pursuits, science and knowledge. I don’t imagine a life without their love, support and blessings. Words cannot express how grateful I am to you, “my babaji” for all the sacrifices you’ve made on my behalf. Your prayer and everyday blessings for me was what sustained me thus far. I dedicate my thesis to you babaji. I record my sincere acknowledgement to my mother. I would not thank you “ma’ because it is too small for all that you have done for me. Your unconditional support, silent sacrifice and encouragement to pursue my interests are incredible. You were always there for me, constantly supporting and believing in me. I sincerely owe you my life for your untiring patience and meticulous care. I love you momy! A special thanks to my tauji and taiji for showing faith in me and giving me liberty to choose what I desired. My sister and jiju have also been the best of friends along this journey. Special thanks to my tauji and jiju for taking me back home whenever I got late in the lab. Lastly, I am penning down one hard fact of my life that I missed my father for not being there physically in my stride but the blessings from his departed soul has always encouraged me to move ahead and never give up. I hope that I have made you proud…!

I thank the Almighty for giving me the strength and patience to work through all these years so that today I can stand proud with my head held high. Thank you, Lord.

I pray to God to bless me in all the turns of my life…!

July, 2013

Priyanka Chauhan