

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to the following people, without whom it would not have been possible to carry out this PhD work.

First and foremost, I express my profound gratitude to my internal guide Prof. R Venugopal of Fuel & Mineral Engg. Dept. and Dean (A&R), ISM Dhanbad, for his masterly guidance throughout this research work. It has been a treasured opportunity to work under his supervision.

I am equally grateful to my external guide, Dr. Debashish Bhattacharjee, Director, RD&T, Tata Steel IJmuiden, for his invaluable advices and support in many aspects of this work. He very much supported me during my secondment, for pellet test work, to Tata Steel IJmuiden, The Netherlands.

I express my sincere thanks to Mr. Mark Denys, Chief (R&D and SS) and to R&D Dept., Tata Steel for providing the opportunity to carry out this work.

I am really grateful to Mr. Priya Ranjan Prasad, Chief (Agglomerates), Tata steel, for his friendly approach and have deep regard of his insight about the agglomeration process.

I wish to sincerely thank Prof. A K Lahiri, IISc, Bangalore and Mr. Ashok Kumar, Chief (RMIMTG), Tata Steel, for their critical technical reviews and for always providing new approaches.

I can never forget Prof. TC Rao for his teachings, continuous encouragement and support towards this PhD work.

I am thankful to Prof. Sumantra Bhattacharya (HOD), Prof. T Sharma, Prof. Nikkam Suresh, Prof. N. R. Mandre, Prof. V. K. Gupta and Asst. Prof. S. Soren of Fuel & Mineral Engg. Dept and Prof. A.S Venkatesh of Applied Geology Dept., ISM Dhanbad for their helpful suggestions during this research work.

I am always thankful to Dr. P.K Banerjee, Dr. Vilas Tathavadkar, Dr. S Mohan Rao, Mr. Surajit Sinha, Mr. Ujjal Chakraborty and Mr. Pradeep Choudhary for the consistent help provided and Dr. Tamal Ghosh, Dr. Amitabh Shankar, Mr.TK Sandeep Kumar and B Chenna Rao for their technical support.

I am thankful to Dr. Tim Peeters (Dept. Manager, Iron Making), Dr. Willemijn Huslage, Mr. Willem De Boer, Ms. Elisa Bot and Ms. Jolanda Laanbroek of RD&T, Tata Steel Ijmuiden, for their continuous support during test work at MLY and PFI, RD&T, Tata Steel Ijmuiden, The Netherlands. Thanks are also due to Mr. Donald Mittertreiner & Ms. Phung Thi Kim Phan of MLY; Mr. Gert Jan Ruiter & Mr. Jaap Bessem of PFI for conducting the pellet test work.

I am also thankful to all the foreign and Indian examiners for examining and recommending this PhD thesis, especially Prof. R.J Singh, NIT Jamshedpur for the Viva-Voce examination.

I am always thankful to Shri. S Satheyya master (famously known as Drill Master), ZPPH School, Rajavommangi, EG District, AP, for all his teachings and mentoring since my childhood.

I would like to express my deep thanks from the bottom of my heart to my parents (Shri Satyanarana and Smt. Leelavathi), my brother (Shiva Prasad), my cousin (Chakradhari) and my maternal uncles (Shri K Venkataratnam and Shri M S Bhaskar Rao), who are always present when I need them.

I express my sincere thanks to my lovely wife Sarita for her motivation, patience, sacrifices and forever love throughout this period. I also thank my lovely daughter Sai Sanjana and my cute son Sai Saketh, who are the beautiful gifts from the god, for bearing me during this course of work.

Finally I dedicate all my efforts and glories to the God Shirdi Sai Baba.

(Srinivas Dwarapudi)