Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my guide, Dr. Ravi Shankar Singh. His guidance and patience made this dissertation possible. His instruction and insight from the formative stages of the research through the final stages provided valuable direction to my work.

I am also thankful to the members of my committee, Dr. K. K. Shukla, Dr. A. K. Tripathi, and Dr. Ashokji Gupta for their encouragement and advice on my research, as well as Dr. S. K. Singh who served as the DPGC Representative on my committee.

Special thanks are due to Dr. R. B. Mishra, Dr. Rajeev Srivastava, Dr. Vinayak Srivastava, Dr. Bhaskar Biswas and Dr. Ravindranath Chowdary C, who have given me their constant support and advice. I am also grateful to my friends, Subhash Chandra Patel, Dharmendra Prasad Mahato, Sumit Jaiswal and Ali Imam Abidi. As a friends, they continuously encouraged and supported me in many ways and made my graduate life more enjoyable and memorable.

Most of all, thanks to my family who were always there when I needed them. My parents never lost trust in me and always prayed to God for me. They were always supportive throughout my research and gave me unconditional love. I dedicate this dissertation to my family.