ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Hope” is the things with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I’ve heard it in the chillest land
And on the strangest sea,
Yet never, in extremity
It asked a crumb of me.

Emily Dickinson

The completion of this research was made possible by the support and guidance of several people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr A.K. Tiwari of ICFAI University Dehradun for supervising my PhD thesis and making valuable comments and suggestions for me to act upon. His kind guidance and encouragement drove me to complete the project on schedule and of good quality.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr T N Shaw and Dr P R Bhattacharyya for supporting me with their valuable suggestions; to Dr V. Nagi Reddy and Dr. Sudeepto Bhattacharya for their advice and encouragement during this; to Dr S C Deorani and Shri P K Dash for providing me with the opportunity to work on the PhD thesis, and to my fellow scholars and my many friends for their faith in me in completing the study. I would also like to thank the people who participated in this research.
I must thank my brother-in-law Dr. Amar dev Sharma, dear sister Bindu, and cute niece Khyati for their help, inspiration, love, affection and encouragement without which my dream would not have fulfilled.

I am dedicating this endeavour whole-heartedly to my loving parents (Shri Kishori Lal Gautam, and Smt. Vyasa Gautam), my beloved better half (Ms. Aparna Gautam), and Almighty’s invaluable gift, my son (Aarsh Gautam) for their silent support in whatever I chose to do in life. Last but not the least, I thank the Almighty for leading my way and all the credit goes to Him.

[VIKAS GAUTAM]