ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My humble, silent and sincere thanks giving ever and ever to the Almighty for HIS Infinite Grace and Mercy that have continued to light up every footstep with blessings and strength.

I express my profound sense of reverence to my guide Prof. Sahab Dass, Department of Chemistry, D.E.I for giving me the privilege of working in his research group. In this group, I gained invaluable experience in synthesizing various nanostructured metal oxides and familiarized myself with the equipments, various characterization techniques and photoelectrochemical applications of these materials. He has been an exemplary mentor who is patiently guided and imparted invaluable knowledge to me during the last 3 years. I am grateful for many opportunities he had provided me from having the opportunity for participation in the international conferences held at United States of America (AIChE Annual Meeting 2012 in Pittsburgh & MRS Fall Meeting in Boston) and also motivated me for writing a review article on my research topic. Also, he was always encouraging with new ideas that made my days spent in the lab particularly rewarding. He had helped me to grow both academically and personally. I would look forward to having discussions with him as he would always provide me valuable suggestions. I am sincerely grateful for his constant encouragement and support throughout my research work.

Also, I am extremely indebted to Prof. Rohit Shrivastav, Department of Chemistry, D.E.I. and Prof. Vibha R. Satsangi, Department of Physics and Computer Sciences, D.E.I. for their critical and constructive suggestions which have always been useful in improving my skills. Their help during the experiments and in reviewing and strengthening the manuscripts has been indispensable for this Thesis. They provide a productive direction and gave me advice when I struggled during experimentation. From them, I learned the spirit of research - to be productive, patient, novel and to never give up even when the experiments seem to fail at first.

My deep sense of gratitude goes to Prof. V. G. Das, Director, D.E.I.; Prof. Anand Mohan, Registrar, D.E.I.; Prof. V.P. Bhatnagar, Dean, Faculty of Science, D.E.I. and Prof. L. D. Khemani, Head, Department of Chemistry & Dean, Faculty of Science,
D.E.I. for providing me all the necessary facilities and being a source of inspiration to me throughout. I am also thankful to all the other teachers of the Department of Chemistry, D.E.I., for lending me timely support, valuable cooperation and kind encouragement during my research period. Grateful thanks are also due to the supporting laboratory staff of the Department of Chemistry, Mr. Uma Shankar and Mr. Vansh Narayan for always being there with a helping hand and for providing constant services.

I would like to express my heartiest thanks to Dr. (Mrs.) Mrinal Pai, Scientist ‘F’, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, whose inspiring guidance and fruitful discussions at the early stage of my research work helped me to plan the experiments and in analyzing the results. I gratefully acknowledge invaluable cooperation provided by Dr. Raj G. Pala, Assistant Professor and Dr. Dinesh Deva, Research Scientist at IIT, Kanpur for their help in providing the facility of scanning electron microscopy for thin film samples. I wish to tender my humble thanks to the active co-operation and invaluable support offered by Dr. D. K. Avasthi, Head, Material Science Section, Dr. Ambuj Tripathi, Scientist and Mr. S. A. Khan, Scientist, Inter University Accelerator Center, New Delhi for their help in characterization (SEM and EDAX) of the samples and analyzing the results.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance provided by University Grants Commission, New Delhi during my Ph.D. work. It has been a great help and enabled me to remain focused and concentrated in the academics.

I would be failing in my duty, if I do not express my grateful thanks to Prof. (Mrs.) Soami Pyari Kaura, who always motivated me by her kind and generous behavior to achieve my goal.

I am grateful to all the members of my research group for their moral support, best wishes and unforgettable days we spent together. I wish to thank them all for their active co-operation and invaluable support inside and outside the lab. I wish to specially acknowledge the unconditional and invaluable support provided by Dr. Jaya Shrivastava, Dr. Anjana Solanki, Dr. Poonam Sharma, Dr. Vidhika Sharma, Dr. Pushpendra Kumar, Ms. Nirupama Singh, Mrs. Deepti Singh, Mr. Rajneesh Kumar and Mrs. Tripti Pachauri who shared with me the stressful times and
supported me with their knowledge, friendship, spiritual support and for being a wonderful human being. My appreciations and gratitude to them are beyond all known words.

Lastly and most importantly, I would like to give deep sense of gratitude and profound reverence to my family for their incessant love, continuous support, advice and encouragement throughout my entire life. My parents, Mr. C. L. Choudhary and Mrs. Radha Choudhary have been my support system and my mentors in various aspects of life. I would specially like to thank my mother for always being there, at every step of all my endeavours, sharing my successes and helping me to overcome my fears and failures. I am equally thankful for the sincere encouragements and inspirations provided by my in-laws by their love and best wishes during my Ph.D. studies. I wish to thank for the support I received from my lovely sister, Dr. Vineeta and brother, Aashish who have always helped me in seeing the lighter side of things and provide me their relentless moral support. My heartfelt special thanks to my lovely nephews, Aditya, Sunil and niece, Bhawna for their encouragement, inspiration and also the affection shown to me.

Finally, my heartfelt special thanks to my husband, Dr. Shabd Prakash for his unwavering understanding and support. He was always there to cheer me up when experiments went wrong, to inspire me when life became overly frustrating and to celebrate with me when things finally went right. It was only due to his understanding, patience and sincere cooperation that this task could be well managed and completed in time. I appreciate the support extended by greatest blessing of my life, my beloved daughter, Shreya, who has made my life full of joy with her innocent talks and refreshing me everytime with her lovely smile.

There are numerous people I would like to thank for getting me to this point, not only to the end of my Ph.D. thesis, but to where I am in life today. Hopefully I can express my gratitude to you all in person. At the end, I would like to thank all those people who contributed in various ways to the success of my Ph.D. study and made it a memorable experience for me.

May 2013 (Surbhi Choudhary)