

Acknowledgements

Obtaining a PhD has long been a dream of mine. This dream could not have come to fruition without the support of many of my well-wishers to whom I shall remain eternally grateful. Here, I would like to acknowledge their invaluable support in aiding this achievement.

I wish to incorporate *Sahadharminī* (companion soul) and *Bandhu-Mithradhikal* (relatives and friends) into the classical quartet of support pillars — *Matah* (mother), *Pitah* (father), *Guru* (teacher), *Deivam* (God) — commonly attributed as reasons for one's success in ancient Indian scriptures such as the Vedas, Shastras, Charitras, Itihasas and Purāṇas. Whilst making this personal amendment, I would like to de-emphasise any connotations of hierarchy amongst these support pillars, since they all play equally important roles in one's life.

During these four years, the level of support accorded by my wife Parvathy Chittur Subramanianprasad cannot be described in mere words. She voluntarily shouldered the affairs of responsibility within the family so that I could focus solely on my research. At this prime of her youth, she has sacrificed so many material comforts and happily lived a relatively austere life by humbly accepting the financial constraints that are part and parcel of a student's life. In the same vein, I owe a lot to my parents Shri Gopalakrishnan P. K. and Smt. Ananthalakshmi G. It has been ten long years since I departed from Indian shores in pursuit of higher studies. During all those years, despite ill-health and missing my presence at home, they have always urged me to carry on and complete my studies. Many a time, I have hopelessly felt as being incomplete owing to my failings to fulfil basic duties of a son towards his parents, the least of which is spending quality time with them. However, my parents have always brushed aside their physical and financial difficulties to put my success above rest.

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Although my interaction with them has sadly been on the wane in recent years, I am lucky to be a recipient of the blessings of my thatha (Shri Hariharan S) and patti

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(Smt. Parvathi Hariharan), my affectionate grandparents, who have lived a life of humility, adhering to time-honoured traditions whilst seeming to have an endless reserve of love to bestow. Although I regret not having had a deeper relationship with him, I am immensely fortunate to have benedictions of the noble soul and towering figure, Acharyan Shri C R Krishna Iyer, affectionately known as 'thathanna', who has recently attained the lotus feet of Lord Guruvayoorappa. Though I have not yet attempted to imbibe the spiritual hints bequeathed by him, I hope to be a worthy beneficiary of its legacy with passage of time.

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