Acknowledgement

It gives me immense pleasure to present my thesis before the academic community and to express my gratitude to all those who helped and supported me in this endeavor. First of all, I am deeply indebted to my supervising teacher, Dr. Joy Varkey, for his encouragement and help to sustain and develop the interest in research. His gentle and invaluable guidance, constructive comments and timely intervention have been vital in shaping my research and its accomplishment. His dedication to research and scholarly attributes were a source of inspiration to me in the completion of the study.

I would like to place on record my heartfelt thanks to the Manager, Mar Raphael Thattil, the Auxiliary Bishop of Thrissur Archdiocese, the Principal, Dr. P. O. Jenson and the staff of St Thomas’ College, Thrissur, for their support and valuable help in the completion of the research. I am profoundly grateful to them for relieving me of my duties in the College.

I am thankful to the Director of Institute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IRISH), Nirmalagiri, Rev. Dr, K. S. Mathew, Assistant Director, Dr. T. K. Sebastian and all the staff of the IRISH for providing me an opportunity to pursue my research at the Centre and their devoted support and encouragement in the course of my research. I am extremely indebted to IRISH for availing the facilities in the Centre and completing the study.

My thanks are due to my friend and colleague, Dr, N.J. Francis, Head of the Department of History, Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit, Kalady, for his constant support and encouragement to sustain and develop the interest in research and completing it.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and co-operation staff of the libraries of St Thomas’ College, University of Kerala, University of Calicut, Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, Kerala State Archives, Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikkode Regional Archives and Tamil Nadu State Archives.
I acknowledge my sincere thanks to the University Grants Commission and the Government of Kerala for granting me a fellowship under the Faculty Development Programme of the UGC to complete my research.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Pauly Manjaly for their technical assistance and help for the completion of the thesis.

There are many individuals to whom I owe a personal debt of gratitude for their direct and indirect help, advice and constructive suggestions. I thank them all in special way.

No words would suffice to express my indebtedness to my parents, my wife, Alphonsa, my daughters, Rose Maria and Riya Maria, brothers, sisters and friends who helped me in many ways to complete my study successfully. Last but not least, I thank the God Almighty, for the successful completion of this thesis.

George Alex