ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am greatly indebted to my research guide, Dr. P. Manimohan, Professor, Department of Botany, University of Calicut, for introducing me to the fascinating world of fungi and for his excellent guidance, inspiration, encouragement and continuous support throughout my doctoral programme. I feel privileged to be associated with him in my life and I am proud to be his student.

My special words of thanks should also go to my beloved teacher, Prof. K. M. Leelavathy, formerly of University of Calicut, for her advice, support, motivation, personal help and critical examination of the final draft of my dissertation. It is a great privilege to be associated with a person like her during the formative years of my life and career.

I am grateful to Dr. John E. Thoppil, Professor and Head of the Department of Botany and the former Heads of the Department, Prof. K. M. Jayaram and Prof. M. Sabu for providing the laboratory and library facilities for this study.

I would like to thank Dr. A. K. Pradeep, Asst. Professor & In-Charge of Calicut University Herbarium, Department of Botany, University of Calicut, for helping me in getting a few type specimens on loan from Kew Herbarium and also for facilitating deposition of type specimens of some Inocybes in other herbaria.

I owe my sincere thanks to Dr. C. K. Pradeep, Scientist, Mushroom Research Lab, Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute, Palode, Thiruvananthapuram for sharing his literature on Inocybe.

I express my heart-felt gratitude to my teacher Prof. P. V. Madhusoodanan, formerly of University of Calicut, for his constant support and encouragements.

I am particularly indebted to Dr. T. K. Arun Kumar, Asst. Professor, Department of Botany, Zamorin's Guruvayurappan College, Calicut, for introducing me to the methods and tools of molecular phylogenetics.
I owe my profound thanks to Dr. I. Rajan, former Research Scholar, Department of Biotechnology, University of Calicut, for sharing his expertise in the methods of molecular biology and for his unconditional support.

I accord my sincere thanks to Dr. Ratheesh Chandra, former Research Scholar, Department of Botany, for his immense help in acquiring some important literature.

I extend my warmest thanks to Dr. K. N. Anil Raj, my colleague in the lab for his immense help, assistance and support during the study. Together we developed the molecular phylogeny protocols in our lab.

I am thankful to Mr. V. Adnaan Farook, my labmate, for giving some of his valuable collections treated in this dissertation and also to Dr. M. A. Dollymol, former Research Scholar of our lab for her encouragement and help during this study. Jayesh P. Joseph, Research Scholar, MSSRF, Wayanad, is greatly acknowledged for his extensive help in exploring various forests of Wayanad District.

I greatly acknowledge Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) for providing financial support in the form of Ph.D. fellowship (Grant No. 001/FSHP/2011/CSTE). I am also grateful to The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Kerala Forest and Wildlife Department, Govt. of Kerala for granting permissions (Permission Order Nos: WL. 10–4937/12, dated 12-08-2012 & No. WL10- 4937/2012, dated 03-10-2013) for collecting fungal specimens from the forests of Kerala.

A special thanks to my friend, Ms. K. P. Smisha, Research Scholar of the Botany Department, for her support and friendship. My special thanks to my sisters and brothers-in-law for their support and care. In this connection, Ms. Remya Ramakrishnan, my sister in law, is greatly acknowledged for her care, love and encouragement. I am extremely thankful to Mr. T. Athul Nath, my nephew, for accompanying me in most of the collection trips to the forests and for extending timely help whenever required. My heart-felt gratitude goes to my beloved brother, Mr. K. P. Jayaraj, for his eternal support and understanding of my goals and aspirations. His infallible love, support and encouragement has always been my strength. I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards my
mother. Words are inadequate to express my deepest gratitude to her for her unfailing love, affection, patience and support. Here I remember my father; I wish he was here with me now. This achievement would have made him the happiest person.

K. P. Deepna Latha