ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of so many people in so many ways. This is an excellent opportunity to thank all of them.

I am grateful to my parents, husband, children and other family members for their love, wishes, support and encouragement given by them during my work.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. S. Kumuda, former Principal of Bharathidasan Government College for Women (Autonomous), Puducherry for being instrumental in starting the doctoral programme in Home Science and thereby providing us an opportunity to pursue doctoral degree. I am also grateful to the former Principals of Bharathidasan Government College for Women (Autonomous) Dr. N. Soundaravalli, Dr. S. Varalakshmi, Dr. Souriapragasamme and the present Principal Dr. Sasi Kanta Dash for having permitted me to undertake the study.

I take immense pleasure to thank Dr. Josephine Nirmala Many, Head of the Department of Home Science, Bharathidasan Government College for Women (Autonomous) for the help rendered in completing the study.

I cannot find words to express my gratitude to my guide Dr. (Mrs.) V. Raji Sugumar, Research Guide, Post Graduate and Research Department of Home Science, Bharathidasan Government College for Women, Puducherry and Associate Professor in Home Science, Avvaiyar Government College for Women, Karaikal, for her valuable suggestions and constant encouragement. The special pain and care she took to see my thesis was completed successfully are worth mentioning. The unflinching guidance with her enthusiasm and zeal has given this thesis a good shape. I would like to relish my thanks for her sustained interest.
I acclaim my gratitude to Dr. K. V. Raman, Director of Health & Family Welfare Services, Government of Puducherry for rendering permission to conduct the study in Government Primary Health Centres in Puducherry.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Praveen T.K., Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacology, JSS College of Pharmacy, Ooty (for animal study), Dr. S. Kanchana, Professor & Head, Home Science College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Madurai (for nutritional analysis), Dr. D. Velmurugan, Professor & Head, Department of Crystallography and Biophysics, Madras University (for bio-active compound analysis), Thiru. K. Mohan, Principal Scientist, Indian Institute of Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry, Chennai (Molecular wt. analysis) and Dr. Meena, Scientist In-charge, Centre for Soil, Plant and Water Analysis, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi (for Soil & plant analysis) for their professional expertise in enhancing the worthiness of this study.

I am grateful to Dr. C. A. Ravi, Director, The Zusaanli Acupuncture & Ayurvedic Hospital, Cuddalore for his professional advice, dosage prescription and guidance in the conduct of human samples study making the study more relevant.

I sincerely thank Dr. R. Vishnu Vardhan, Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, Pondicherry University who patiently went through the large set of data and suggested opt process accordingly to proceed with the statistical analysis for the study.

My special thanks are due to Thiru T. Sridhar, Statistical Officer, Directorate of Health & Family Welfare Services, Government of Puducherry, being my well wisher, for his guidance, help and constant motivation to pursue my work with greater enthusiasm.
I immensely thank the Almighty for blessing me with good health, strength and association of above mentioned generous and resourceful personality to finish this Ph.D dissertation, for without his special grace nothing is possible.

- S. VIMALAVALLI