Acknowledgements

This work is the output of the timely guidance, inestimable inspiration and whole-hearted co-operation of my supervising teacher Dr. M Abdul Khadar, Professor, Department of Physics, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram during the course of my research. It gives me immense pleasure to place on record my sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to him.

It gives me special pleasure to thank Professor M A Ittyachen, Director, School of Pure & Applied Physics, Mahatma Gandhi University for providing the facilities to carry out my research work. He has been very kind and a source of encouragement during my studentship at the School of Pure & Applied Physics.

I greatly thankful to the Executive Director, Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET) for permitting me to continue my research after joining C-MET. The constant help and encouragement of Mr. P Sasidharan, former Scientist-Incharge, C-MET, Thrissur is gratefully acknowledged. Prof. S. Devanarayanan, Head, Dept of Physics, University of Kerala was very kind in allowing me to use the facilities of his department for which I am grateful to him. The help rendered by RSIC, IIT Madras and RSIC, NEHU, Shillong is gratefully acknowledged.

I always remember with thanks the helps and encouragements I received from my colleagues and seniors. To them I owe a great deal not only for kind encouragement but also for the blunt criticism I deserved. It is not possible to write all their names in this page. I am grateful to Mr. Joshy Jose for his constant help and valuable discussions. I always remember with thanks the help rendered by Mr. Vijoy P S, Mrs. Sindhu A Kartha and Mr. Jugan J. A special thank you to Dr. C Arunan for his constant encouragement, love and affection I enjoyed during my long association with him. I remember with utmost gratitude the help and encouragements I received from Dr. Cyriac Joseph and Mr. Dileep Kumar. A word of thanks to Dr. R Ratheesh, Scientist, C-MET for his whole-hearted co-operation and encouragement.

I have benefited from the goodwill and help of a number of friends. All were very kind and considerate at different phases of my research work. Dr. John K Varughese, Dr. Biju P R, Mr. Gin Jose, Mr. Pradyumnan P P, Dr. Prince Xaviour, Dr. Satheesh K Nair, Mr. Mikki V Vinodu, Mr. Vinu Krishnan.......My sincere thanks to all other friends of School of Pure & Applied Physics and its sister Schools. I remembe the helps and co-operation from the teachers and staff of School of Pure & Applied Physics and staff of Mahatma Gandhi University Library. Acknowledgements are also due to the staff of C-MET for their whole hearted co-operation and encouragement for completing this work. My special thanks to Mr. K Sasidharan, C-MET for the excellent drawings of some of the figures. Thanks are also due to my friends at the Department of Physics, University of Kerala. I always remember with thanks the helps I received from Mr. Vinod Chacko, Dept of Geology, University of Kerala.

Sankaranarayanan Potty