I wish to place on record my deep gratitude and indebtedness to Dr. K.C. John, Principal, Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta, under whose supervision this work was carried out. My sincere thanks are due to him for suggesting the problem, for valuable guidance and encouragement rendered to me throughout the course of this investigation.

Thanks are also due to Prof. K.G. Padmanabhan, Reader (Retd.), Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, for his timely help and valuable suggestions at various stages of the preparation of this thesis.

I also remember with gratitude Dr. J. Vigverberg, Netherlands Institute of Ecology, The Netherlands, for the valuable encouragement given to me in completing this work.

I gratefully acknowledge the helpful attitude and research facilities provided by the Department of Zoology, Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta and the financial support received under JRF from the Mahatma Gandhi University.

Jero. G. Varghese