ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to my mentor and research guide, Prof. Dr. U.Kamachi Mudali, Associate Director, Corrosion Science and Technology Group, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, for his valuable guidance, scholarly inputs, unconditional support and consistent encouragement throughout the research work. I consider it as a great opportunity to do my doctoral programme under his guidance and to learn from his research expertise.

I acknowledge with sincere thanks Dr. P.R. Vasudeva Rao, Director, IGCAR for the academic support, direction, and the facilities provided to carry out the research work. Words of gratitude are due for Dr. T. Jayakumar, Dean, HBNI-IGCAR and Director, Metallurgy & Materials Group for the immense support, positive disposition, valuable suggestions and encouragement especially during the course work and at various phases of the research work, which has made this feat possible.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the doctoral committee members Dr.B.P.C.Rao (Chairman), Dr. S.Rangarajan (Member) and Dr.C.Mallika (Member) for the valuable evaluation, inspiration and timely suggestions which helped to improvise the research work. My sincere thanks are also due to Dr. M. Sai Baba, Associate Director, Resources Management Group and Convener, Engineering Sciences Standing Committee and all the faculty members of Homi Bhabha National Institute, for the informative lectures and support rendered during the course work.

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude is extended to Dr.G.Sasikala, Head, MMS, MTD, Dean, Academic, Engineering Sciences, HBNI for all the support rendered.
I would like to pay my high regards and gratitude to Dr.N.Parvathavarthini, CSTG for the valuable scientific discussions, affection, moral support, blessings and encouragement that helped in successful and timely completion of the thesis.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Dr.M.G.Pujar, CSTG, for the valuable discussions, timely help and words of encouragement and support during the course of my research work.

I am grateful to Dr.S.Ningshen, CSTG, for the help, direction and encouragement rendered for the successful presentation of the thesis. I take this opportunity to extend a special thanks to Mr.A.Ravishankar, CSTG, for the valuable discussions, kind help and support during the period of course work, comprehensive viva, synopsis and thesis presentation.

I wish to extend my deep sense of thanks and gratitude to Mr.T.Nandakumar, CSTG, for all the support rendered throughout the period of research work.

I acknowledge all colleagues of CSTG and all my good friends and well wishers, for the encouragement and help at various phases of the research work. Words are short to express my deep sense of gratitude to my friends, Mr.Marriappan (MTD), Mrs.B.Sasi (NDED), Mr.Sivakumar (MPD), Mrs.Prasanthi (PMG), Mrs.S.Kalavathi (CMPD), Mrs.S.Sumathi (WSCD) for the valuable discussions during course work and research work.

I am indebted to my husband, Dr. A.Suresh, and my two sons, S.Ashish and S.Anish, whose prayers, patience, sacrifice, perseverance and support helped me sail through challenging tasks, especially during the course work, and made my dream come true. I’m indebted to my sons for sacrificing their precious time of care and guidance I should have
given, during their crucial stages of education. I sincerely thank Lord almighty for blessing me with an excellent family. My thanks are due to my late father-in-law, my mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, brother-in-law and their spouses for their prayers and support. I take this opportunity to thank my brothers and my sister for the care, affection and prayers that helped me get going. Not the least, I thank their spouses for all their help and care.

Most importantly, I would extend my deepest debt of gratitude to my late mother, Mrs. P.N. Malathy and my late father, Mr. I.R. Narayanan Pillai for being with me all through. Above all, I thank Lord almighty, for the all time blessings that has helped me accomplish my goal.