ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is my immense pleasure to acknowledge many people, who helped me tremendously during the difficult, challenging, yet rewarding and exciting path towards my Ph.D. Without their help and support, none of this work could have been possible.

First, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. R. Nedunchezhiyan, Principal, Sri Ranganathar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Athipalayam, Coimbatore, for his guidance, encouragement, motivation and continued support throughout my academic years in the Anna University of Coimbatore, India. Working with him has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life.

I am also thankful to my Doctoral Committee members namely Dr. T. Purusothaman, Associate Professor, Government College of Technology, Coimbatore, and Dr. G. Sudha Sadhasivam, Professor, PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore, for providing valuable comments and suggestions during the period of this research work.

Last but not least, I am forever indebted to my mother, children and wife. They all have been a great source of inspiration to me. None of this would have been possible without their love, support, and continuous encouragement. I fervently thank the SNS College of Technology, Adithya Institute of Technology and Sri Ramakrishna Engineering College for permitting me to carry out the research work and their continuous support during the period of this research work.

This work is dedicated to my parents, my wife and my children.

SAKTHIVEL A