ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the preparation of this dissertation I have received generous help from several sources. It may not be possible for me to mention all of them. I will be, however, failing in my duty if I do not express my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to my guide Dr. P. J. Philip, former Head of the Department of Economics, Principal, St. Thomas College Kozhencherry and research guide in the Economics Research Department of Marthoma College, Thiruvalla, but for whose expert guidance, whole hearted support, patient help and the valuable comments, this work would never have come to light. Dr. K. Narayanan Nair, Fellow and Programme Co-ordinator of Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development (KRPLLD), and Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram was instrumental in initiating me to this topic of study and his suggestions and timely comments were of immense value to me.

I am highly indebted to Dr. P. R. Gopinathan Nair, former Professor and Head of the Department of Economics, University of Kerala, Kariavattom, Thiruvananthapuram and Programme advisor of KRPLLD, Centre for Development Studies, for his expert advise and valuable suggestions for the inter-disciplinary analysis part of the thesis. My sincere thanks to Dr. K. Ramachandran Nair, former Professor and Head of the Department of Economics, University of
Kerala and member of Programme Advisory Committee of KRPLLD, Dr. M. Kunhaman, Professor of Department of Economics, University of Kerala, Dr. K. N. Harilal, Centre for Development Studies, Dr. Thomas Issaac, Member of Legislative Assembly, Mararikulam, for their assistance and valuable comments at the various stages of my study.

I acknowledge with thanks the assistance given by KRPLLD, for granting me a project, which was greatly instrumental in the completion of my dissertation work. I record my appreciation for the facilities provided by the Economics Research Department of Marthoma College, Thiruvalla, its former principal Professor Jacob Kurien and present Principal Dr. Abraham George, for the good conduct of the study. I am also thankful to my students in the Post Graduate Department of Economics, St. Thomas College Kozhencherry, who have assisted me in the collection of data. I place on record my gratitude to Sri. Radha Chandran former President of Mezhuvely panchayat and member Smt. Omanakunjamma and farmers of the study area for their co-operation and support for the application of PRA tools in the study. My colleagues especially Mr. Oommen Zachariah, Mr. Thomas George and Dr. Roshin George gave me moral support. I also record my appreciation for the facilities provided by St. Thomas College Kozhencherry, the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram and Department of Politics, University of Kerala.