ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my great pleasure to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. K. T. Damodaran, Reader in Marine Geology, School of Marine Sciences, Cochin University of Science and Technology, for his constant encouragement and guidance throughout the study. It was his deep interest and inspiration that made this work possible at all. I gratefully acknowledge his constructive criticism which gave me the confidence to pursue the study.

My sincere thanks are also due to Dr. Y. L. Dora, Director, School of Marine Sciences, Professor P. N. K. Nambisan and Professor N. R. Menon, for encouraging me throughout my research career.

I am highly indebted to all my friends who helped me in various ways while carrying out this work. I also extend my thanks to Shri K. V. Chandran, Cochin University of Science and Technology, for typing the thesis.