ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research was carried out under the valuable guidance of Dr. P. K. B. Nayar, Retd. Professor of Sociology, University of Kerala and Dr. L. Prema, Professor of Home Science, Kerala Agricultural University. I express my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to them for their expertise and constructive criticism, encouragement and help during the entire course of my study and preparation of my thesis. I also wish to place on record my sincere thanks to Dr. Kumari Bhagavathy, Professor of Psychology, Government College for Women, Trivandrum, for helping me in the development of the tools for the study. I would also like to record my thanks to Dr. Saraswathy P., Professor of Statistics, Kerala Agricultural University, for her help with the statistical analysis.

I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Sri C. E. Ajithkumar, Junior Computer Programmer, who helped me in the computer analysis.

My sincere gratitude is due to the Sociology Department of the Kerala University, and the Home Science Departments of Government College for Women, Trivandrum and Kerala Agricultural University, for their valuable co-operation, help and encouragement during the entire course of my study.
The Kerala University Library, which has a vast assortment of literature on latest studies, was really helpful in my study and I acknowledge my sincere gratitude to the Librarian of the Kerala University Library.

I gratefully acknowledge the co-operation rendered by Government Public Analysis Laboratory, Directorate of Health Services, Corporation of Trivandrum and various Consumer Protection Organisations, for their sincere help in the data collection.

I am grateful to Indian Council of Social Sciences and Research (ICSSR) for the financial assistance given to me which enabled me to complete my study.

Finally I wish to express my gratitude to all the members of my family for giving me constant encouragement in completing the work at the earliest.

V. GIRIJA DEVI