ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude and obligation to my revered supervising teacher, Prof. P.R. Sudhakaran, Head, Dept. of Biochemistry, for his inspiring and wise counsel, scholarly interpretations, tolerant indulgence, and unfailing help throughout the course of my work without which this thesis would not have been in the present form.

I am grateful to all my teachers, Prof. T. Rajamohan, Prof. Annie Abraham, Prof. N.R. Vijayalekshmi, Prof. K. Saraswathy Devi, Prof. S. Leelamma, Dr. R.V. Thampan, Dr. M. Indira and Mr. Sunil V. Paul for their help and deep affection. I am also thankful to other teaching staffs of the Department.

I extend my thanks to Prof. C. Rajamanickam, Visiting Professor in the Department and Prof. N.K. Balasubramanian, Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries for their well wishes.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Oommen V. Oommen, Head, Department of Zoology, University of Kerala and Dr. P. Sreejith for the help extended by them for oxygraphic analysis. I am also thankful to Ms. Divya (Department of Zoology) for the help received in using the Leica image analyzer. I wish to extend my thankfulness to Prof. Prabha Balaram and Mr. N.K. Hareendran, RCC, Thiruvananthapuram, for the help received in carrying out FACS analysis. My sincere thanks to Ms. Gauri R. Barde and her supervisor Urmila M. Thatte, T.N. Medical College and B.Y.L. Nair hospital, Mumbai, for the help received in standardizing CAM assay.

My heartfelt thanks to my colleague, Mr. M.S. Kiran for his unwavering support and well wishes. I would also like to thank all my labmates.

I extend my thanks to the doctors and nursing staffs of Geeethanjali hospital, Anadiyil hospital and Cosmopolitan hospital, Thiruvananthapuram for their sincere cooperation in obtaining umbilical cord for the study.

I would also wish to thank all the non-teaching staffs including office staffs and animal house staffs. Veterinary doctors, Dr. B. Jayachandran and Dr. Suja Mary Koshi, Mr. Subramanian Chettiyar and Mr. Sathyasenan deserve special mention for their valuable help extended to me.

I place on record my heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Rejiya C.S., for her moral support, sincere well wishes and encouragement throughout. I am also thankful to Mr. Cibin
T.R. for the critical reading of the draft of the thesis.

I am indebted to my father, late Mr. G. Raveendran Nair, without whose advice, influence and confidence showered upon me, I wouldn't have appeared for the CSIR national eligibility test and carried out my research work. I remember with gratitude the love, constant support and encouragement from my mother, Mrs. G. Indira Bai; my sister, Mrs. Raji; my jeeju, Mr. K. Radhakrishnan Nair and Sai and Unni.

I owe much to my fiancé, Sameer Kumar, who was a source of inspiration in all my efforts, for the compassion, tolerant indulgence, constructive criticisms, enthusiastic encouragement and appreciation.

I am grateful to the staffs of the Spectrum Graphics, Thiruvananthapuram, especially Vimal for the help received in compiling the thesis in the final form.

Financial assistance from CSIR in the form of JRF and SRF and infrastructural support from DST-FIST and UGC-SAP is gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to take this opportunity to recollect the warm support of each and everyone in the successful completion of this work.

Above all, I thank “God”, the Almighty without whose blessings this would never have been completed successfully.

Viji R.I