ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to Dr. Manu Thomas Mathai, Associate Professor, Dept. of Zoology, MCC, for his exceptional guidance and freedom he has imparted during the course of work. He has been a source of constant encouragement and support.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the doctoral committee members Dr. Moses Inbaraj, Associate Professor, Dept. of Zoology, MCC and Dr. Sudharsanam, Associate Professor, Dept. of Advanced Zoology & Biotechnology, Loyola College, whose critical comments and constructive ideas helped immensely to add meaning to the research and direct it in the right way.

I like to thank Dr. R. W. Alexander Jesudasan, Principal, MCC and the Head, Dept. of Zoology, MCC for providing necessary facilities to carry out the research work. Thanks to Dr. Narasimhan, Associate Professor, Dept. of Plant Biology & Plant Biotechnology, MCC, for his encouragement, guidance and imparting his knowledge on plant taxonomy and diversity in Madras Christian College campus. My gratitude to Mr. Leslie Lawrence, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Plant Biology & Plant Biotechnology, MCC, for enlightening me on the nuances of microscopy and digital photomicrography.

I like to express my warm and heartfelt thanks to my seniors Dr. Anulin Christudhas & Dr. Laltanpuii for their words of advice, help and support. Thanks to my fellow researchers Mr. Murali Shankar, Sis. Tensy Sheeba T. J., Mrs. Shalu Thomas, Mr. Narasimmarajan, Ms. Soreiphy Mungkung, Mr. Saravanan, Mr. Madhu, Mr. Prabhu, Ms. Bincy and the M.Sc., students who extended a helping hand when necessary. I would like to express my extended gratitude to Mrs. Chitra for helping me with the molecular techniques and DNA barcoding.

Thanks to Mr. Sam Thomas (M. Phil., Research Scholar, 2010-2011) for accompanying me in the field and sharing his knowledge on spiders. He also added some rare spiders to the collection during his stay in the campus.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Ganesh Vankhede, Indian Society of Arachnology, Amravati, for allowing me to use the facilities at the Arachnology museum and sharing their literature collection. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Atul Bodkhe, Dr. Hippargi, Ms. Seema, Ms. Rajoria, Mrs. Priyanka Hadole for their hospitality during my visit to the Arachnology museum.

Thanks to Dr. Krushnamegh Kunte, National Center for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, for kindly allowing me to use the microscope facility and for helping in depositing some of the type specimens. Thanks to Dr. B.A. Daniel, WILD/Zoo outreach organization for his hospitality during my visit to their organization. His encouraging words and his experiences in the field have been useful.
I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Jerzy Prószyński (Poland) for help in identifying Salticids, invaluable inputs, encouragement and for replying my every query patiently. Thanks to Mr. M. Freudenshuss, for extending his help in obtaining the photographs of the type specimen deposited in NHM, Vienna, Austria.

Thanks to Dr. Gajbe U. A., Arachnologist, ZSI for his help in identifying Araneomorph spiders. Thanks to Dr. Robert Raven and Dr. Manju Silliwal for their help in identifying Myagelomorphs and sharing literature. I would like to thank Dr. Peter Jäger, Dr. Christa L. Deeleman-Reinhold, Dr. Barbara Baehr, Dr. Tamas Szüts, Dr. Wanda Wesołowska, Dr. Rudy Jocque, Dr. Dinendra Raychaudhuri, Dr. Souvik Sen, Dr. Samson, Dr. Matthew M. J., Dr. Sunil Jose, Dr. Karthikeyani R., and Dr. Sanjay Molur for sharing rare literature.

I am grateful to Dr. Theresia Matthews, Associate Professor, Loyola College, who has been a source of encouragement by offering me a copy of the book, ‘Spiders and their kin’. Thanks to Dr. Ignacimuthu, Director, Entomological Research Institute, Dr. Siva Sankaran, Dr. Gabriel Paulraj, Mr. Parandhaman and Mr. Nagoor Meerasa Mohammed for their friendly interactions.

Thanks to Mr. Zeeshan Mirza and Rajesh Sanap, Research Scholars, NCBS, Bangalore, for sharing their experiences in the field and enlightening on the finer techniques in preparing maps and scientific line drawings.

I am much obliged to Mr. Job Daniel J. R. for patiently accompanying me on field trips and kindly assisting during collection. Thanks to Mr. Antony, Francis and Harish for their expertise in photography and editing. Thanks to Mr. David Wesley and Mr. Javed Ahmed for their help in language corrections.

I am thankful to my friends Mr. Britto Thomas and Mr. Raja Franklin who have been among the first ones to initiate the interest on studying spiders. Mr. Arul Thomas, dear friend and entrepreneur who has been a great encouragement and financial help. Special thanks to my uncle Mr. Job Das for helping me obtain literature.

I am ever grateful to my parents (David and Udaya Prasanna), brother (Brainard), grandparents (Jesudas and Sarojini Devi) and my wife (Kumari) for their unconditional love, unfailing support and their undaunted faith in me.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for His unfathomable mercies and grace which has brought me thus far. To Him be all the glory since “With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding” – Job 12:13.

John Caleb T. D.