

## *Acknowledgements*

*I express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Mariamma Vincent Panikulangara, former Head, Department of Culture and Heritage, for the unstinted support she gave me while working on the thesis. I am extremely grateful for her scrupulous and perceptive comments on the study, and also for the stimulating discussions held on each chapter included in the thesis. But for her aid, this work would not have materialized.*

*I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my former colleagues of the Malayalam Department of Cochin College, namely Mrs. Bhanumathy Pillai, and Dr. K.N. Unnikrishnan, for their invaluable assistance in the choice of the theme of study, as well as study materials. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Margaret George, former Principal, Govt. Arts College, Tripunithara, for her enlightened observations and insights, which were of great help to me in my work.*

*My heartfelt thanks are due to the Management of Cochin College and the UGC for having awarded me a Teacher Fellowship under its XI<sup>th</sup> plan, which was of great help to pursue my studies in this regard.*

*Special thanks are due to my family members for the indispensable support they gave me throughout the programme of study. Thanks are also due to all my friends and colleagues, especially my friends at Madurai for all the encouragement and support they gave me.*

*Above all, I thank God Almighty for all His mercies and unfailing grace, without which this work would not have been possible.*