ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"Humility is the acknowledgement that without God you wouldn't have made it thus far"

My foremost thanks to the Almighty God whose grace has sustained me to reach this level in life. It has been a long journey. Many obstacles stood the way, yet the almighty God sort me through, turning every failure into successful and enjoyable moments. I hope it would continue to serve as a beacon in all my future endeavors.

“A teacher can tell you what she expects of you. A teacher, though, awakens your own expectations”

I am deeply indebted to my research supervisor, Dr. M. Prashanthi Devi for her guidance and support in countless ways. I have been amazingly fortunate to have an advisor who gave me the freedom to explore on my own and at the same time the guidance to recover when my steps faltered. She taught me how to question thoughts and express ideas. Her moral support and blessings ensured the successful completion of the thesis.

“A single conversation with a wise man is better than ten years of study”

Besides my advisor, I also extend my gratitude to my Doctoral Committee Members Dr. M. Ravichandran, Professor, Department of Environmental Management, Bharathidasan University and Dr. K.K. Kavitha, Assistant Professor, Department of Environment and Herbal sciences, Tamil University for all their careful reviewing and insightful comments, but also for the hard question which insighted me to widen my research from various perspectives. Their detailed reviews and constructive comments greatly improved the thesis.

I take this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF), Government of India, New Delhi, for providing financial assistance in the form of Junior and Senior Research Fellowship which buttressed me to perform my work comfortably. I also thank Dr. M. Manivel, former Professor and Head, Department of Geology, Bharathidasan University, for taking initiatives in my fellowship.

I express my gratitude to my faculty members Dr. R. Mohanraj, Professor and Head and Dr. N.D. Shrinithivihashini for their moral support and timely help throughout my research period. I feel worthy to record my thanks to Dr. S. Rajakumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Marine Biotechnology, Dr. K. Prabhakaran, Assistant Professor, E V R College, forgiven their time and expertise to fine tune my work. I thank them for their contribution during literature collection and their good-natured support.