ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I thank the Lord Almighty with eternal gratitude, who enabled me to undertake and complete this research. I thank Him for giving me the courage, wisdom and strength to go through the inevitable ups and downs in the process of my research, which was a constant reminder to me of His unfailing love and the need for me to trust Him more and move on in my research endeavour.

I avail this opportunity to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. Mrs. Patricia Trueman, MSc., PhD., Professor and Head, Department of Biotechnology, Sree Sastha Institute of Engineering and Technology, Chennai, for graciously accepting to be my guide, which I deem it my privilege. I will always remember her for her immense knowledge, motivation, continuous support and encouragement which helped me to complete this study. Her calmness, confidence and personal concern in tackling any hurdle associated with my research gave me the assurance to face and tide over impediments effectively.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance and help of several individuals who in different ways contributed and extended their valuable support and assistance in the preparation and completion of this study.

I feel highly indebted to Dr. S. Balasundari, Associate Professor, Fish Processing Technology, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kattupakkam, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), for first of all making me aware of the scope of research in this area during my initial informal conversations with her and from then on extending her unconditional support in terms of valuable suggestions, research material, contacts, laboratory facilities and organizing demonstrations at KVK for women entrepreneurs. I will always remember her for her exceptional human qualities in helping me progress with my work even during her most demanding personal circumstances.

I extend my thanks to Dr. K. Rathnakumar, Dr. Indra Jasmine and Dr. Jeya Shakila, Associate Professors, Department of Fish Processing Technology, Fisheries College and Research Institute (FCRI), Thoothukudi, TANUVAS, for their research assistance and permission to use the laboratory facilities at FCRI.

My heart felt thanks to Dr. V. Baskaran, Senior Principal Scientist, Department of Biochemistry and Nutrition, Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, for his incessant support in helping me with the in vitro analysis of calcium and phosphorous bioavailability from fish wafers at CFTRI.
I thank Dr. Niraimathi Anandhan, Research consultant, who helped me with the statistical analysis, interpretation and report writing. Her late in the night detailed telephonic conversations with me to help me improve upon my presentation showed her dedication and is gratefully remembered.

My special thanks to Dr. Nithya Maloney Bright and family who shared their residence with me during my frequent research based visits to FCRI, Thoothukudi and to Mrs. Yamunadevi for all the help and support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family members for their support and encouragement throughout the study period. A special word of mention, with respect and appreciation, for my father Mr. S. N. Kulasekaran, an engineer by profession, who used all his expertise in the construction and positioning of the solar tent.