Acknowledgement

I express my deep gratitude and respects to my guide Prof. (Dr.) S. Sugunan, Department of Applied Chemistry for his keen interest, valuable guidance, strong motivation and constant encouragement during the course of my work. I thank him for his constructive criticism and useful suggestions apart from invaluable guidance given to me. He boosted me to explore this vast topic in an organized manner and provided me with all the ideas of research-oriented venture.

I am grateful to Prof. (Dr.) K. Girish Kumar, Head, Department of Applied Chemistry and to Prof. (Dr.) M.R. Prathapachandra. Kurup, former Head of the Department, for providing me the necessary facilities.

I am indebted to Dr. B. Viswanathan, Head, National Centre for Catalysis (NCCR) IIT Madras for the interesting discussions, motivation and inspiration that triggered me for this thesis work. I am thankful to Dr .B. Sreedhar, (Scientist IICT Hyderabad), friends of IISc Bangalore and NCL Pune for TEM-SAED, TG-MS, XPS, SEM, and XRF studies. I am grateful to former Head of Chemistry Department, Kerala University Prof. (Dr.). P. Indrasenan and his crew for initial TG-DTG analysis and for kinetic simulations. I extend my special thanks to my friends in STIC, CUSAT for their timely help in providing analysis results.

I take this opportunity to thank all the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Department of Applied Chemistry for their help and goodwill on all occasions. I take this opportunity to convey my hearty admiration to all my teachers from my school days to post graduation level.
All my lab buddies at the Physical Chemistry Laboratory made it a convivial place to work. I am deeply indebted and profoundly grateful to Dr. Ramanathan, who has been my senior, for his immense assistance and valuable suggestion during the initial stages of my research work. In particular, I would like to thank Reshmi for her friendship and help in the past four years. All other folks had inspired me in research and life through our interactions during the long hours in the lab. I also thank all my friends in the department and in CUSAT for their help and support in one way or other, which made my work much easier.

Many other people provided valuable remarks, invited me to give presentations, or asked me to join program committees or otherwise help to organize workshops and conferences. Among these are Dr. V.R. Nair, Dr. K.K.A. Rashid, Dr. P. Unnikrishnan and Dr. V. Babu.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family for their unflagging love and support throughout my life; this dissertation is simply impossible without them. I am indebted to my father, for his care and love. I cannot ask for more from my mother, as she is simply perfect. I have no suitable word that can fully describe her everlasting love to me. I feel proud of my brother, for his talents. He had been a role model for me to follow unconsciously and has always been one of my best counselors. Words fail me to express my appreciation to my husband Mr. Joseph Thomas whose dedication, love and persistent confidence in me, has taken the load off my shoulder.

Be assured that those that were not mentioned are not the lesser, because amongst them is also the greatest.
The financial support granted by CSIR, New Delhi is gratefully acknowledged.

Last but not least, thanks are to God for my life through all tests in the past four years. You have made my life more bountiful. May your name be exalted, honored, and glorified.

Bolie Therattil