ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am profoundly indebted to my supervising teacher Dr. K. Anil, Associate Professor in Zoology, Sree Narayana College, Kannur for his invaluable and inspiring guidance and support throughout the course of this study.

Sincere thanks are due to, the Manager, M.E.S. Trust and Dr. Hussain Randathani, Principal, M.E.S. College, Valanchery for granting me permission to carry out the research work.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. K.N. Kamalasanan, Principal, S.N College, Kannur, Dr. P. C. Salim, former Principal, S.N. College, Dr. M. V. VasanthaKumar, Head of the Department of Zoology, Dr. G. Anilkumar, former Head, Dept. of Zoology, all the Staff and research scholars of the Dept. of Zoology for providing valuable support and advice during the course of the study.

I express my sincere gratitude to A. Baby, former Principal M.E.S. College. Ponnani, Dr. Suresh and other staff of the Department of Aquaculture, MES College Ponnani, for providing necessary facilities.

The help and assistance offered by Dr. S. Bijoy Nandan, Associate Professor, Dept. of Marine Biology, Microbiology and Biochemistry, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Dr. S. Sushama N.S.S College, Ottappalam, Dr A. Bigukumar, Dept. of Aquaculture, University of Kerala during the period of my research is gratefully acknowledged.

I acknowledge with thanks the invaluable co-operation, timely help and encouragement rendered by my colleagues of the Department of Zoology, M. E. S College, Valanchery for the successful completion of the research work.

The financial assistance received from the University Grants Commission, New Delhi under the Faculty Improvement Programme is gratefully acknowledged. All the academic and administrative assistance extended by the authorities of Kannur University is also gratefully acknowledged.

I am grateful to my family members, especially to my husband, friends and all those who assisted me in sampling and analysis during the study period, for their blessings, timely help, understanding and constant encouragement.

Above all, I thank the Almighty to whom I trace for all the blessings in my life.

M. Zeenath