ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to Dr. (Mrs.) R. Kumuthakalavalli, Reader, Department of Biology, Gandhigram Rural Institute-Deemed University, Gandhigram, for giving me the chance to begin my scientific career, for her invaluable guidance and constant encouragement throughout the period of my study.

I would like to sincerely thank Prof. Thilagavathy Daniel, Head, Department of Biology, Gandhigram Rural Institute-Deemed University, Gandhigram, for her inspiration and keen interest shown in my work.

It is pleasure to thank Dr. A.S. Krishnamoorthy, Associate Professor, Department of plant pathology, TNAU, Coimbatore, for his sincere suggestion, continuous encouragement and for sparing his invaluable time for useful discussion.

I express my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Rev. Dr. S. Ignacinuthu, S.J., Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras, Chennai and Rev. Sr. T. Philo for their continuous prayer, encouragement and moral support through the course of my study.

I thank Dr. A. David Ravindran, Reader, Department of Biology, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram, Dr. M.R. Rajan, Senior Lecturer,
Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram and Mr. S. Ravanappa, Lab-technician for their encouragement and help.

I thank Shri. M. Perumal, Attender and K. Manikandasamy, Lab-assistant for their invaluable help and cooperation.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Joseph Dorairaj, Reader, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram, for going through the manuscript.

My heartfelt thanks to Shri. K.M. Rajasekaran, Senior Lecturer, Madura College, Madurai, Dr.K.P.Ilango, Lecturer, Department of Chemistry, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram, Dr. N.S. Pradeep, Junior Scientist, TBGRI, Palode for their valuable suggestion and encouragement.

I am very much indebted to my friends Mr. N Karmegam, Mr. S. Karuppusamy, Mr. G. Sundararajan, Mr. J. A. John Paul, Mr. K.P. Vinodkumar, Mr. V. Vinodkumar, Mr. A.S.S. Raj, Mr. P. Gubendran and Mr. Selvin Daniel for their continuous help and encouragement.

I thank the Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi, for the grant of Project Assistant post through a major project.

I am greatly indebted to my parents, brothers and my wife for their support, sacrifice and encouragement during the course of study.

Above all I thank the Almighty who have given me the strength and wisdom for the completion of this work.

(R. LAWRENCE XAVIER)