ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Words are hardly enough to express my deep sense of gratitude and heartfelt thanks to my research supervisor Dr. R. Sundaresan Reader (Rtd), Department of Economics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, for his able guidance, valuable suggestions, continuous inspiration, constant motivation, kind cooperation, and cheerful patience throughout the course of my research. His receptive outlook, unrelenting enthusiasm and positive approach will forever remain a source of academic inspiration.

I am grateful to the Principal, University College and Dr. Pushpakumari, Professor and Head, Department of Economics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, for their kind help in providing all the facilities to carry out my research work.

I am thankful to Dr. P. Cyriac Mathews former Principal, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, for his guidance and directions.

I also take this opportunity express my sense of gratitude to Dr. Philip Samuel, Associate professor of Dept. of Statistics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram in giving final shape to the quantitative aspects of this thesis.

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. R. Raveendran Pillai and Dr. Surendra Nair Associate professor and other faculty members, Dept. of Economics, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, for their constant encouragement.

It is my immense pleasure to thank my fellow researchers Mr. R. Anil Kumar, Mr. A. Anil Dr. S. Thamaripandiyan, Dr S. Dhanya and Dr B. Deepa for their timely help.

I take this opportunity to thank the authorities of the University of Kerala awarding me the fellowships.

I wish to acknowledge Mr. Parthasarthi, Dr. V. Vishvanathan, Dr. R. Ravi Mr.K. Balachnadran, Dr. Swaminathan, Dr. S. Vijayakumar, Dr. V. N Mathurarayan, Dr. V. Pradeep, Mr. Bruno Cruz, Dr. P. T Kingston, Dr. R. Selvaraj, Dr. P. Velmurugan, Mr. K. Krishnamurthy, Mr. Duraikumar, Mrs Devikala and Dr. Laukmanul Hakeem for their help during ups and downs and providing me congenial environment during my stay in the hostel.

It is with a deep sense of reverence that I register my indebtedness to my parents, my wife and parent-in-law who gave me support and encouragement in this endeavor.

S.KASI