Acknowledgement

I owe my deepest gratitude to my Research supervisor, Dr S Anandan, MD., DD., Professor and Head, Department of Dermatology, SRU for constant support, encouragement, invaluable suggestions, optimistic attitude and inspiring me throughout the study.

I thank my research Co-guide, Dr T S Lokeswari, Ph D., Professor and Head, Department of Biotechnology, SRU, who was supporting me in all possible ways throughout my study. She provided the leadership and organizational skills, as well as knowledge and guidance that made the progression of my thesis possible.

I profusely thank Mr VR Venkataachalam, Chancellor, SRU for providing me this opportunity to carry out research in this medically important area. I consider it a privilege for having had the opportunity to pursue my research at the Department of Biotechnology of the esteemed Sri Ramachandra University.

I express profound thanks to the Doctoral committee members, Dr (Mrs) Mallika, Professor & Head, Department of Microbiology, SRU and Dr P Ambikapathy, MD., D.C.H., Assistant Professor, Institute of Social Pediatrics, Stanley Medical College and Hospital, Chennai. Dr P Ambikapathy’s support by providing samples and data analysis of the patients, suggestions and encouragement to complete my thesis are gratefully acknowledged.

I express my sincere gratitude to Dr Mary S Mathews, M.D., Professor and Head, Department of Clinical Microbiology, Christian Medical College, Vellore who offered training in Mycology in her Department.
I respectfully thank former Assoc. Professor, Dr Jagannathan Ramesh, Ph D., Department of Biotechnology for suggesting the use of FTIR spectroscopy to analyse patient samples and for providing the analysis of this data in the present study.

I express my gratitude to Dr P Venkatesan, Assistant Director, Department of Statistics Tuberculosis Research Center, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Chennai for expert advice and guidance for statistical analysis.

I would also like to thank the former Deputy Registrar Mrs Mallika Jacob for being a constant source of inspiration and encouragement.

I wish to thank the students of Biotechnology, the interactions with whom proved very useful in my research. I would like to thank all the faculty especially, Dr S Chitra and Mr Y Babu who shared their time to shape my thesis.

I express my appreciation to my coworker Mr RN Sivanandan, Department of Biotechnology, Sri Ramachandra University, for his excellent technical support and timely help to shape my thesis. My special thanks to my best friends, Ms N Gayathri Shanbhag and Dr VG Premkumar, who shared the ups and downs of my research life.

I would like to thank all my well wishers and friends S Akshaya, Dr Arul, Dr Satish, Dr Ravi, and Dr Murali at the PGIBMS, University of Madras for their support during this work.

Above all, the constant encouragement, selfless contribution, whole hearted support of my beloved mother D Lakshmi and father KP Dhanapal is counted as my blessings. My brother Babu and Srinivasan; my sister Senthamariselvi and uncle Kumar, who patiently tolerated, sacrificed and shared their love and affection during the course of the work is especially acknowledged.