ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, the author offers his sincerest gratitude to his supervisor, Dr. A. S. S. Sekar, M.E., Ph.D., Professor and Head, Department of Civil Engineering, Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering & Technology, Karaikudi, who was abundantly helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance throughout his thesis.

The author is grateful to Prof. A. Mala, Principal, Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering & Technology, Karaikudi, for permitting to carry out research work.

The author would like to thank the Doctoral Committee members Dr. T. Meenambal and Dr. S. T. Ramesh for their encouragement, advice, support and constructive ideas during the course of the research.

The author express my sincere thanks to Dr. V. Arutchelvan, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Annamalai University, Chidambaram for his help throughout this research period.

The author sincerely thanks to Mr. C. Subramanian, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering & Technology, Karaikudi for helping soft computing techniques.

The author thanks to Laboratory staffs of Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering & Technology, Karaikudi for technical assistance offered throughout the duration of his research.

Finally, the author thankful to God almighty for reasons too numerous to mention and my wife who have been a moral support for their valuable suggestions and constructive ideas without which this work would have been impossible.

C Elangoovan