ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the very outset, I express my thanks to God almighty who has blessed me with a healthy spirit and required skills to complete this thesis work.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mentor-advisor, Dr. Manzoor Koyakutty, Professor, ACNSMM for his guidance, caring, patience, and support throughout my work. Not only has his many advices in academia helped me to evolve into a scientist, but his wisdom in life also taught me valuable lessons to become a better person. Without his encouragement and support, I would not have been able to achieve what I have accomplished as a PhD student.

The thesis work presented here wouldn’t have been possible without the immense support and encouragement from Dr. Shantikumar V. Nair, Director, ACNSMM, for supporting all our ideas and properly scheduling the work till the completion of my PhD thesis. I am also grateful for the precious opportunity he gave me to be a part of the exciting integrated nanotechnology and biomedical science laboratory.

I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Deepthy Menon, Associate Professor, for her understanding, encouragement and personal attention which have provided good and smooth basis for my Ph.D. tenure. She had been a pillar of strength with her tremendous insight and constant guidance and support from my ‘Day 1’ at ACNSMM.

I would also like to specially thank Prof. C.N.R. Rao, and Dr. Leela Srinivas, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore, India for collaborating with our team for the nanotoxicological evaluation of ‘graphene’, the wonder material of 21st century.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Seema Nair and for her valuable suggestions and guidance in my microbiology related experiments.

Dr. Ullas Mony and Dr. R. Jayakumar requires special mention for their constant support and encouragement throughout my work.

I owe my gratitude to Dr. A. K. K. Unni, Dr. Reshmi and their team in central animal lab facility, AIMS for their immense help in animal studies.
I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Anil Kumar TV, Scientist, Laboratory for Confocal Microscopy and Experimental Pathology, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology for his valuable help in my animal studies.

I also thank all faculty members of Amrita Centre for Nanosciences who gave generously of their time and expertise.

In addition, many of my colleagues have also supported me during the six years of pain and sweat. Briefly, I would like to mention Dr. Prasanna Lakshmi, Dr. G Siddaramana Gowd, Girish C.M, Dr. Vijay Harish, Anusha Asokan, Giridharan L.M, Sidharth Swaroop, Aparna R.S, Chaitanya K, Binulal N.S, Sudheesh Kumar P.T, Praveen Govind, Sanoj Rejinoold, Ramesh N, Archana PR and all the past and present Nanotoxicology lab members and thank them for their friendship and support.

My heartfelt gratitude to Sajin P. Ravi, Sarath S and Sreerekha P.R. for all the help with those ‘not-so-friendly’ equipments. My dissertation is full of amazing, colorful images because of the above people who juggled with those ‘not-so-friendly’ SEM, Confocal microscope and the FACS respectively.

My work wouldn’t have gone forward without the financial support from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Govt. of India under the project ‘Nanotoxicology and Nanomedicine’ (Grant No. BT/PR9357/NNT/28/ 104/2007), Department of Science and Technology (DST), under Centre grant No. SR/S5/NM-51/2005 and the Nanosciences and Nanotechnology Initiative (Prof. C.N.R. Rao Committee).

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Mata Amritanandamayi Math, Kollam, India for providing substantial infrastructure support for research in integrated nanotechnology and biomedical science.

I would not be who I am today without my family. I am more than grateful for their unceasing love and support.

Last and the most. I dedicate my thesis to Parwathy, my better half, with whom I am excited to start my new life. Words fail me to express my appreciation for her, whose dedication, love and persistent confidence in me, has taken the load off my
shoulder. The one who stood with me through all my high and lows, giving all the encouragement and support to get through the frustrating days, and to share the joy and celebration of the good ones.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody who was important to the successful realization of thesis, as well as expressing my apology that I could not mention personally one by one.

Abhilash Sasidharan