ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I bow before "THE ALMIGHTY" who blessed me with health and confidence to undertake and complete this work successfully.

I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Dr. Rani Mary George, Principal Scientist, Madras Research Centre of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, 68/3, Greams Road, Thousand Lights, Chennai for suggesting this topic, excellent guidance and encouragements throughout the period of this study with maximum sincerity.

It is my privilege to express my heartfelt gratitude and sincere thanks to Dr. S. Lazarus, Prof. and Head (Rtd.), Institute for Coastal Area Studies, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Rajakkamangalam, Kanyakumari District for his kind counseling, invaluable guidance and whole hearted support throughout my study period.

My profound respect and deep sense of gratitude to Dr. M. Devaraj, Former Director of CMFRI, Cochin for permitting me to conduct my work at CMFRI, Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram and for sparing his precious time in going through my thesis inspite of his multifarious responsibilities. I am thankful for his valuable suggestions and useful discussions.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Mohan Joseph Modayil, Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and Mr. K. Prabhakaran Nair, Former Officer-Incharge, Vizhinjam Research Centre of CMFRI, Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram for providing Institutional facility.

I am extremely thankful to Mrs. S. Jasmine, Senior Scientist, CMFRI, Karwar, Karnataka, Dr. A.P. Lipton, Principal Scientist, Dr. T.T. Ajith Kumar, Technical Assistant and my Co-Scholars Miss. R.S. Priya and Miss. P.S. Anitha, Vizhinjam Research Centre of CMFRI, Vizhinjam, Trivandrum for their generous assistance, moral support, constructive criticism and constant encouragement during the period of this work.
I would like to thank Miss. B. Valentin Bhimba and Mrs. G. Anita Mary, Research Scholars, Institute for Coastal Area Studies, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for their reprographic preparation of this thesis in a very attractive form within a very short duration which enabled me to submit at the university.

I am extremely thankful to Mr. S. Prakash and Mr. K. P. Srinivasa Kumar, Research Scholars, Institute for Coastal Area Studies, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Dr. A. N. Rajan and Mr. E. Ajith, Mylacode, for their kind and useful help in the field sampling.

Words are insufficient to express my deep sense of thankfulness to Mrs. Suseela Bai John, P.G. Assistant, Government Higher Secondary School, Agasteeswaram, Dr. L. Rajesh, Veterinary Surgeon, Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Kerala and Mrs. Saroja Rajesh, Lecturer, N.I. College of Engineering, Kumaracoil, Thuckalay for their kind help and constant encouragements throughout my research work.

Thanks to all the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Institute for Coastal Area Studies, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Rajakkamangalam, Kanyakumari District and Vizhinjam Research Centre of CMFRI, Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram.

I wish to express my thanks to Bright Xerox and Computers for providing computer facility. I express my sincere and profound thanks to Thangam’s Computer Education and Raja Studio, Nagercoil for their keen interest, expert advice and invaluable helps in taking photographs and the neat execution of the thesis.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my parents for their good advice, constant, sincere, wholehearted and never ending supports to complete this work. Finally I express my deep sense of gratitude to my sisters, brother and brother-in law for their continuous and sincere encouragements, valuable helps and co-operation throughout my study.