Acknowledgement

I take this opportunity to express my profound sense of gratitude and sincere thanks to Dr. V. Sivakumar M. Sc., Ph. D., Reader, Department of Zoology, V. O. Chidambaram College, Tuticorin for his abiding interest, hearty encouragement, efficient guidance and invaluable comments. I remain much beholden to him, for his sagacious, unflinching, untiring, prolific inspiration instilled to me which culminated in the materialisation of this thesis.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Late R. Palaniappan, Head, Department of Microbiology, Sri. Paramakalyani College, Alwarkurichi, for his invaluable suggestions and constant encouragement during the course of study.

I am extremely thankful to Thiru A. P. C. V. Chockalingom, President and Thirumathi Subbalakshmi Chockalingom, Secretary, APC Mahalxmi College for women, Tuticorin for granting permission and providing all the facilities to carry out the work in their institution.

I would like to express my thanks to Prof. Ilampirai Manimaran, Principal, APC Mahalaxmi College for women Tuticorin for her constant encouragement and kind support during the course of study.

I wish to express my deep sense of indebtedness to Dr. P. Natarajan, Former Head, Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram for introducing me into this topic.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr. J. Edwin, Head, Department of Zoology V. O. Chidambaram College, Tuticorin for granting permission to make use of all facilities in the Department.

My sincere thanks extended to Dr. R. D. Thilaga, Lecturer Selection Grade, Department of Zoology, St. Mary’s College, Tuticorin for her constant encouragement and magnanimous support throughout my study period.
I remain thankful to Dr. K. C. John, Director SAILS, Mahathma Gandhi University, Pathanamthitta for his constant help, kind encouragement and useful discussions during the entire course of study.

I am very much thankful to Dr. S. Ranjith Singh, Head, Department of Zoology Sri. Paramakalyani College, Alwarkurichi for his assistance in the histopathological studies, Dr. S. Madaswamy, Head (Retd.) Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil, for his help in the microphotographical aspects of this study, Dr. K. Sriraman, A. D. Tamil Nadu State Fisheries, Nagapattinam for his assistance in the statistical part of this work and Dr. S. Kulandaivelu, Department of Plant Science, Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai for the assistance in scanning electron microscopic studies, and Dr. S. Ajmalkhan, Reader in Marine Biology, CAS in Portonovo for his assistance in material collection.

I am very much thankful to my colleagues in the Department of Biology, APC Mahalaxmi College for women Tuticorin and my friends and well wishers of the Department of Zoology, V. O. Chidhambaram College, Tuticorin for the constant encouragement.

I am extremely thankful to Miss. V. Seema, Miss. S. Senthamarai, Mr. S. Ramachandran and Mr. S. Murugesan for the kind co-operation and help in various ways in the completion of my work.

I thank Mr. S. Subbiah, Lab Assistant, (Retd.) for the help rendered by him at every stages of my research.

I also thank Y. Philip, Our Computer Centre, Punalur for his timely co-operation during the documentation of this thesis neatly.

The financial assistance of University Grants Commission, (New Delhi) is also duly acknowledged here with.

I remain ever thankful to my family members for their untiring support for the effective completion of this work.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for enabling me to successfully complete this programme.

N. S. Vijayalakshmi.