ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Research has become a professional obligation. But an obligation becomes a source of pleasure when it is inspired and supported by good examples. It was Dr. R. Venkataratnam, M.A., Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, Madurai-Kamaraj University, who suggested the absorbing theme of this work. When I went to him time and again for guidance, he gave me of his time and insight ungrudgingly with constant encouragement and deep interest. I owe to him an infinite debt of gratitude.

Prof. V. Sankarasubramanian, Department of English, Madura College (Autonomous), Madurai, read through the thesis critically and helped me lot with valuable suggestions and comments. I am very much thankful to him.

I record my gratitude to Dr. T.K. Oommen, Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for his valuable suggestions in the course of my discussions with him.

My sincere thanks are due to Professors V.B. Singh, Rameshray Roy and Bashiruddin Ahmed at the Centre for Studies of Developing Societies, New Delhi, for their many suggestions.
The assistance and co-operation extended by the officials of the libraries of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Jawaharlal Nehru University and the University of Delhi are gratefully acknowledged.

I am thankful to Thiru V. Gopalaswamy, M.A., B.L., M.P., M.K. Party, and all other office-bearers at the state and district level of the party for having helped me in the conduct of the interviews and for giving me valuable information relevant to my work.

Heartfelt thanks are due to the respondents for their gracious co-operation.

I also record my gratitude to Thiru S. Chockalingam, M.A., M.Phil., Department of Sociology Madura College (Autonomous), Madurai, for help in the preparation of the thesis, and to Thiru V. Janardhanan for the immaculate typing of the thesis.