ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and obligation to Dr. M. Chandrasekaran, Lecturer in Microbiology, Department of Applied Chemistry for suggesting the problem, valuable and patient guidance, discussions, critically going through the manuscript and endless support throughout my research career. His continued interest, constant encouragement and timely advice will always be remembered.

I am extremely thankful to Prof. K. L. Sebastian, Head, Department of Applied Chemistry and Prof. Paul A. Vatakencherry, former Head of the Department for their kind co-operation and encouragement. I am also expressing my sincere gratitude to all of the faculty members for their continued interest, co-operation and encouragement.

I am very much indebted to Dr. V. K. Griffin, Department of Food Science, University of Arkansas, USA and Dr. J. G. Zeikus, Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, Michigan State University, USA for their stimulating suggestions and study materials.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Mrs. Prema, Scientist, Fermentation Section, RRL Trivandrum; Dr. Sridhar, Biochemistry Division, CMFRI Cochin and Dr. B. K. Lonsane, Fermentation Technology and Bioengineering discipline, CFTRI Mysore for their creative suggestions and encouragement.

I wish to thank the authorities of IISc Bangalore, RRL Trivandrum and CFTRI Mysore for their kindness in providing the library facilities.
The help extended by the authorities of NCL, Pune for providing the reference strains is gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues, Mr. T. Ravikumar, Mr. C. Mohandas and Miss V.K. Ananthalakshmy for their interest and constant encouragement. The endless support, affection and timely help extended by my friends are remembered with great appreciation and deep sense of gratitude.

I am very much indebted to Miss Renu S. for her sincere and timely help and constant encouragement. Also I am expressing my thanks to Mr. Ajayakrishnan, Department of Electronics and Mr. P.G. Sankaran, Department of Mathematics and Statistics for their timely help for processing the data.

The financial assistance extended to me in the form of research fellowship (Dr. K.S. Krishnan Research Fellowship) by the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India is gratefully acknowledged.

I wish to thank the authorities of Cochin University of Science and Technology for providing necessary facilities.

I am thankful to the administrative and technical staff of the Department of Applied Chemistry for their timely help and co-operation.
I would like to extend my gratitude to Mrs. V.K. Sumathy and Mr. K.P. Sibiraj for their excellent work of typing this thesis.

Finally, I am very much indebted to my beloved parents, brother and sister for their love, patience, interest and encouragement.

Nandakumar, M.P.