ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is extremely indebted to her supervisor Dr. J. Kumar, Reader, Crystal Growth Centre, Anna University for his inspiring guidance, stimulating discussions, valuable suggestions, constant encouragement and scholarly advice to carry out the present investigation.

The author expresses her immense depth of gratitude to Prof. P. Ramasamy, Director, Crystal Growth Centre for his support and encouragement. The author is very much grateful to Prof. C. Subramanian who introduced her to the field of Crystal Growth and for his beloved guidance.

The author places her deep sense of gratitude to Prof. R. Dhanasekaran and all the staff members of Crystal Growth Centre for their assistance to successfully complete this work.

The author is thankful to her Doctoral Committee members, Dr. (Mrs.) Nandita Das Gupta, Dept. of Electrical Engg., I.I.T., Chennai and Dr. K. Govindarajan, IGCAR, Kalpakkam for their valuable suggestions to carry out her work.

The author is very much thankful to Prof. K.N. Bhat and Mr. P.R.S. Rao, Dept. of Electrical Engg., I.I.T. Chennai for extending their facilities and immense help during the course of the work. The author expresses her thanks to Dr. A. Subramaniam, Dr. Sampath Kumar, I.I.T., Chennai, Dr. K.L. Narasimhan, TIFR, Mumbai and Dr. V. Pandian for useful discussions.

The author expresses her deep sense of gratitude to Prof. B.M. Arora, TIFR, Mumbai; Dr. K.G.M. Nair and Mr. P. Magudapathy, IGCAR, Kalpakkam; Dr. D. Kanjilal and Dr. K. Asokan, NSC, New Delhi.

The author is grateful to her colleagues Mr. K. Sankaranarayanan, Dr. J. Arokiaraj, Mr. M. Udhayasankar, Dr. S. Arulkumaran, Dr. N. Dharmarasu, Dr. G. Sasikala, Mr. N.V. Giridharan, Mr. P. Jayavel, Mr. M. Senthil Kumar, Mr. M. Ashok and all crystal growers for their help.

The author expresses her thanks to her beloved friends Ms. Premila Mohan, Ms. K. Meera, Ms. N. Kejalakshmi, Ms. C. Vijila, Ms. D. Mangai, Ms. P. Malai Selvi and Ms. S. Boomadevi for their constant encouragement and immense help.

The author is grateful to CSIR, Govt. of India for the award of a Senior Research Fellowship and to DST, Govt. of India for the research fellowship.

The author finds no words to express her sense of gratitude to her parents, sisters and brothers who constantly encouraged her to pursue higher studies.

R.R. SUMATHI