ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was rather late in my academic career that I realized the importance and value of research. Once I fell for it, I began to love it and as a matter of fact, enjoyed doing it. This refreshing and enriching intellectual odyssey would not have been possible but for the support, help and guidance of several persons, whose services I wish to acknowledge here.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my guide and supervisor Dr. P. Ravilochanan, Reader, Post graduate and Research Department of Economics, A.M. Jain College, Chennai. But for his personal accompaniment, scholarly guidance, timely corrections and suggestions and inspiring support. I could not have completed this thesis satisfactorily.

My sincere thanks go to the members of the Doctoral Committee: Dr. R. Vaidyanathan, Reader, A.M. Jain College, Chennai and Dr. P. S. R. Murthy, D. B. Jain College, Chennai for their valuable support and suggestions.

I acknowledge gratefully the support of Prof. J. Srinivasan, Prof. P. S. Ganapathy and Dr. P. Narasimhan, all former Principals and Prof. A. P. Selvarajan, the present Principal of A.M. Jain College, Chennai, who admitted me and permitted me to register my Ph.D. research under Dr. P. Ravilochanan.

My sincere thanks to Prof. Sethuraman, Head of the Department of Economics and other faculty members of economics and commerce departments, A.M. Jain College, Chennai for their guidance and inspiration.
With gratitude and admiration I acknowledge the wonderful help rendered by Dr. K. Raman, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Statistics, Loyola College, for his unforgettable help in analysing the data by strengthening my knowledge of statistics and by supplying the statistical tools in a thorough going fashion.

I owe sincere thanks to Prof. Muthusamy, (Retired) of St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, who inspired me and guided me to pursue scholarly research.

Chennai Corporation education department authorities deserve special thanks. Sincere thanks to Mr. Dharmendra Yadav, IAS. Deputy Commissioner of Chennai Corporation for giving permission to undertake the study and all the officials of Chennai Corporation education department for their cooperation.

I thank Rev. Fr. D. Jeyaraj, S.J., my former provincial and Rev. Fr. P. Francis Xavier, S.J., the present Provincial who permitted and encouraged me to do my doctorate.

I gratefully remember the encouragement and help rendered by the following persons:

- Rev. Fr. L. X. Jerome, S.J., the former Rector of Loyola College and Rev. Fr. B. Jeyaraj, S.J., the present Rector.
- Rev. Fr. V. Francis, S.J., the former Secretary of Loyola College and Rev. Fr. Peter Francis, S.J., the present Secretary.
- Rev. Fr. Ignacimuthu, S.J., the former Principal of Loyola College and Rev. Fr. Joseph Xavier, S.J., the present Principal.
- My fellow Jesuits of Loyola College Community, Chennai.
• Special thanks are due to Rev. Fr. Xavier Alphonse, S.J., the Director of MCRDCE and his co-workers Mr. Johnson, Mr. Jyothi, Mr. Senthil and Miss. Suganya for their continuous and constant help and logistical support in completing the thesis; Rev. Fr. Tagore for reading the manuscripts in making the necessary corrections.

• Mr. Clint, Loyola Alumni Association who was with me right from the beginning of my research, helping me to complete the work and student friends Mr. Jeyaseelan, and Mr. Vinodh and Mr. Arul for their support. Mr. Paul John my friend for lending his timely help.

• Finally my family members, friends and well wishers especially Mrs. Joyce Rajan and Mr. Rajan who unceasingly offered me support in this mammoth research project.

5th April, 2004

[S. Peter]