ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I bow my head before the infinite compassion of Holy Providence, who blessed me and enabled me to complete this research work successfully.

Next I am deeply indebted to and am very grateful to, Dr. Rajan Gurukkal, Hon. Vice-Chancellor of M.G. University, Kottayam for the successful completion of this study. My indebtedness to Dr. Rajan Gurukkal is beyond words. In fact, I would not have been able to carry out the research work properly, without his constant guidance, encouragement, support and all sorts of help. I acknowledge with great gratitude and respect the persistent interest he has shown in the progress and completion of this work, his willingness and good mind to spare his valuable time for sharing various aspects of my research work.

I am also very much indebted to Dr. T. S. Girish Kumar, Director, School of Social Sciences, M.G. University, who encouraged and helped me in completing this work.

Then, I must place on record my heart-felt gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. Raju S., whose insightful and ingenious guidance helped the study to obtain its present form.

I feel deep sense of gratitude and obligation to P. Radhika, Dr. Sanal Mohan, and all the other teaching faculty of School of Social Sciences, for their valuable help and inspiration for completing this work.
I remember with gratitude the help rendered by the librarian and staff of the following institutions: Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Mahatma Gandhi University Library, Kerala University Library, School of Social Sciences library, Cochin University of Science And Technology Library, Kottayam Public Library, etc. for helping me with reference materials.

I have been greatly benefited for my discussions with my friend Dr. Martin Patrick whose valuable suggestions and incisive comments and encouragement were highly beneficial for my study.

Next I gratefully remember the co-operation and help provided to me by the presidents, secretaries, members and office staff of the 74 grama panchayats and 11 block panchayats, district as well as, the resource persons associated with the IX five year plan in Kerala.

Special mention should be made of the kind help and love I received from the whole office staff of the School of Social Sciences.

My thanks are also due to the management of BCM College, Kottayam, for selecting me for the research programme under the Faculty Improvement Programme of the U.G.C. Special mention should be made of the constant encouragement, by Dr. Sr. Karuna, Principal, BCM College, which also provided inspiration for me to complete the work.

I am grateful to my husband and beloved children, sisters and brother, who were sources of support and inspiration in my efforts, and helped me at all stages.
Although they are not physically present now, I express my great thanks to my late parents and my beloved elder sister, who from heaven, blessed me to fulfill this work.

I am also thankful to the School of Social Sciences Computer Centre and Minitek Computers for their sincere services in connection with word processing and related works.

And I owe my sincere thanks to all informants, for their helps.

Gresamma Mathew