I thank and bow before God Almighty who gave me the opportunity to pursue my dreams of completing the PhD. His mercy has been with me throughout my life and even more in this study for a timely completion. Words are not enough to thank God as He gave me strength to fulfill the desire of my heart.

I take this opportunity with immense pleasure to express my sincere and deep sense of gratitude to my supervising guide and mentor, Dr. M.C. Dileepkumar (Former Head, Post Graduate and Research Department of Commerce, The Cochin College, Kochi,) for his endurance, motivation and meticulous guidance throughout the course of my doctoral research. I solemnly submit my honest and humble thanks to him for realizing my dreams into reality.

I am thankful to Dr. Biju P. Thampi, (Principal, The Cochin College, Kochi.), Dr. M. Geetha (Head of the Post Graduate and Research Department of Commerce, The Cochin College, Kochi) and former Principals of The Cochin College, Kochi, for giving me permission to do research in the Centre and providing me with the requisite facilities for the successful completion of this work.

I remember with gratitude Dr. K.R. Jaya (Former Principal, The Cochin College, Kochi) Dr. C.A. Geetha (Former Head, Post Graduate and Research Department of Commerce, The Cochin College, Kochi.) for their motivation and help through out my work.

I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Reji M.A. (Principal, St.Peter’s College, Kolenchery), Dr. Helaney M.Y (Former Head, Post Graduate Department of Commerce and Research Centre, St. Peters College, Kolenchery ), Dr. Santha S. and Dr. Sreeja Sukumar K, (Faculty members, Post Graduate Department of Commerce and Research Centre, St. Peters College, Kolenchery) for kindling me to pursue the doctoral research.

My Special thanks are also due to Dr. R.Vasanthagopal (Faculty Member, IMK, University of Kerala,) and Dr. Saji T.G. (Faculty Member, Sri C. Achutha Menon Government College, Thrissur,) for their guidance and sincere support.
I also extend my gratitude to all the teachers in the Post Graduate and Research Department of Commerce, The Cochin College, Kochi for facilitating my requirements from the Centre. A special mention is also endorsed here to Smt. Haripriya B.B, my bosom friend and Faculty Member at the Post Graduate and Research Department of Commerce, The Cochin College, Kochi and Smt. Bindu C, my beloved teacher at the Department of Commerce, S.N. College, Cherthala for their relentless support and assistance.

I express my hearty thanks to the growers of pepper and cardamom (particularly at the data collection stage), officials of Krishi Bhavans in Idukki and Wayanad Districts and authorities of Spices Board, Kochi for supporting me with valuable inputs. I also take this opportunity to thank Smt. Reji K, (Statistician, Marketing Section, Spices Board, Kochi) for providing me with necessary data in time.

I also acknowledge thankfully the services of the authorities of Spices Park, Puttadi, Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode, Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Kerala Agricultural University in Ambalavayal, Wayanad, Cardamom Research Station of Kerala Agricultural University in Pambadumpara, Idukki and the Indian Cardamom Research Institute, Myladumpara, Idukki.

I express my sincere appreciations to the librarians of Spices Board, the Indian Institute of Spices Research, The Cochin College, University of Kerala, the Mahatma Gandhi University, the Kerala Agricultural University, the Centre for Development Studies and Cochin University of Science and Technology for helping me to get requisite material for references during the course of the research work.

Thanks are due to Dr. Rajeev B. for his valuable help in applying statistical tools for the study and also to Mr. Binoop Kumar for helping me in setting the final report.

I am indebted to my cousins Joel George and Jeffin George for their assistance and also for accompanying me in the field survey. I am also thankful to my uncle, Joy Kinalath who introduced me to the cultivators.
I am eternally grateful to my beloved parents E.M. Joy and Saly Joy for their unconditional love, endurance and encouragement and they also have been selfless in giving me the best of everything. My sincere gratitude to my brother, Mathew Joy and his family for their support. My in laws and relatives are always my well-wishers and I am thankful to them for their emotional support and prayers.

My words have no bounds in extending a big thank to my husband, Raju Kurian M., for his enduring love, patience, and constant support for my academic endeavours over the past several years which has enabled me to complete this thesis. My daughter, Gracelyn, has grown up watching my studies and she had to suffer a lot in her childhood. I am grateful to her for giving me much happiness and keep me with hope in the middle of hardships and frustrations during the tenure of my study.

I also acknowledge all my teachers, friends, relatives and my well-wishers for their prayers and goodwill in every way. I once again thank all to whom I have indebted in the journey of this research task.

Felice Joy