ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Jacob Chacko, Professor, Department of Chemical Oceanography, School of Marine Sciences, Cochin University of Science and Technology, my supervising teacher, for his invaluable and inspiring guidance, encouragement and support throughout the course of this study.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr. N. Chandramohanakumar, Professor and Head, Department of Chemical Oceanography, School of Marine Sciences, Cochin University of Science and Technology, for his invaluable support, use of laboratory space and equipment, advice and encouragement during the course of the study.

I am very grateful to Dr. S. Muraleedharan Nair, Lecturer, Department of Chemical Oceanography, Cochin University of Science and Technology, for his inspiration, support and keen interest in the course of the research work.

My sincere thanks to Dr. C.H. Sujatha, Lecturer, Department of Chemical Oceanography, Cochin University of Science and Technology, for her inspiration and great enthusiasm in the research work.

I am grateful to Prof. Dr. P.G. Kurup, Director, School of Marine Sciences and Prof. Dr. R. Damodaran, Dean, School of Marine Sciences for their keen interest and cooperation in this study.

I would like to record my gratitude to the Cochin University of Science and Technology for facilitating my study.

I sincerely thank Dr. A.V. Saramma, Reader, Department of Marine Biology, Microbiology and Biochemistry and Mr. Joydas, Research Scholar, for their assistance in getting digital images of the Cochin backwaters.

I greatly appreciate the selfless support and encouragement accorded by Dr. V. Babu, Mr. P.V. Joseph, Dr. P. Unnikrishnan, Dr. (Mrs) Lizen Mathews, Dr. P.A. Krishnakumar, Mrs. Geetha, R., Ms. Resmi, T.R., Mrs. Anu Muraleedharan, Ms. Rini Sebastian, Mrs. Shaly John, Sister Janet Augustine, Mr.
T. Narayanan, Mr. N.S. Kalesh and all the research scholars in the Department of Chemical Oceanography, and colleagues in the School of Marine Sciences, and thankfully acknowledge their wholehearted cooperation at every stage of this work. Special thanks to the office staff of the Department of Chemical Oceanography for their cooperation and assistance during the study. I am very grateful to the boat-crew of "Flying Fish", Messrs K. Dinesh and M.A. Suresh for their cooperation and assistance during fieldwork.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the Government of India for awarding me a fellowship under the Indo-Kenyan Cultural Exchange Programme.

I gratefully acknowledge the Government of Kenya for sanctioning the fellowship and providing additional financial support. I sincerely thank Dr. J.M. Kazungu, Director, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), for the facilities, material and moral support that were crucial for the successful completion of the study.

I greatly appreciate the help from Mr. H. Ong’anda for digitising the map of the study area, Mr. J. Kamau for helping with the analytical work, the former Librarian Mrs. J. Mwobobia for the literature and all my colleagues at the KMFRI who in one way or another assisted in the research work.

The research work was partly supported by a grant from the International Foundation for Science, Stockholm, Sweden, and I gratefully acknowledge the support.

Special thanks to Dr. J.P. Villeneuve for the donation of reference standard materials and internal standard from the Marine Environmental Laboratories of the International Atomic Energy Agency (MEL-IAEA), Vienna, which greatly helped in initiating the research work.

Last but by no means least, I am immensely indebted to my father, Mr. Shadrack N. Bedwin, my mother the Late Mrs. Margaret Kuvuna Nzaka and all family members and friends for their inspiration, and material and moral support throughout the study.