ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

No researcher exists in a vacuum; no researcher is untouched, in one way or another, by family, friends and associates, besides the overriding supervisor. While it is not possible to name all those who helped to make this study a reality, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the support and assistance of several special individuals.

Foremost is my supervisor Dr. K. Sham Bhat, Professor and Head, Department of Economics, Pondicherry University, whose forbearance, sense of commitment, encouragement and motivation have been inestimable to me in the completion of my work.

I thank Dr. V. Nirmala, Prof. P. Ibrahim and Dr. P. Muthiyam, faculty members of the Department of Economics, Pondicherry University for their encouragement.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my former teachers, at St. Joseph’s College, Devagiri, Calicut, Mr. K.T. Thomachan and Mr. Binoy John for their supportive encouragement.

My heartfelt thanks are due to Dr. M.V. Kanakaraj, the Ph.D. and the M.Phil Scholars and all of my Juniors in the Department of Economics, Pondicherry University for their timely assistance and encouragement in all spheres of my academic activity.
I will be failing in my duty if I am not acknowledging the hostel inmates of Pondicherry University, who have nurtured a family atmosphere and extended all sorts of help.

The family members of Prof. K. Sham Bhat owe much respect for their forbearance during my visit to his house.

No words can express my deep sense of gratitude to my father Mr. C. Ravindran and mother P. Pankajam for their constant encouragement and support throughout my learning.

I am very much thankful to the Librarian and assistants of Pondicherry University Library, all members of the staff of Pondicherry University Computer Centre, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research Mumbai, Institute for Financial Management and Research Chennai, and Madras School of Economics Chennai, for the library assistance offered to me.

I sincerely express my gratitude to Dr. P. Bhaskaran Nair, Faculty Member, Department of English, Pondicherry University, for undertaking the painstaking task of reading the manuscript under his busy academic schedule.

Mr. D. Venkata Ramana Moorthy, Office Manager, Department of Economics, Pondicherry University has extended all assistance without any hesitation throughout my stay. Let me acknowledge sincere thanks to him.

Last but not the least, my sincere thanks are to Mr. Ratheesh and Mr. R. Saravanan for their adroitness and promptness in executing all the computer work.