ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my research guide Dr. K. Sivakumar, Assistant professor, CAS in Marine Biology, Annamalai University for his dedicated help, advice, inspiration, encouragement and continuous support throughout my Ph.D., work. I have learned a lot from him and without his help, I could not have completed my research work successfully.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to Prof. K. Kathiresan, Director and Dean, CAS in Marine Biology, for his kindness and providing me with necessary facilities to complete my research work.

Special thanks are due to my beloved mentor, Prof. L. Kannan, Former Vice-Chancellor, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, for his remarkable guidance, valuable suggestions, encouragement and help which made me feel confident to fulfill my desire, and to overcome every difficulty.

I offer my profuse thanks to Prof. T. Balasubramaian, Former Director and Dean, Centre of Advanced Study in Marine Biology, for having provided me with necessary facilities to carry out my research work.

Sincere thanks are expressed to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India for providing me with financial support in the form of a research fellowship through the research project entitled “An inventory of microbial diversity and ecology of the coastal wetlands of the Neil and Havelock islands”.

My sincere thanks to Dr. C. Raghunathan, Zoological Survey of India, Port Blair, the Andamans for providing with logistic support, during the field collections.

I convey my sincere thanks to Prof. S. Ajmal Khan, Prof. N. Veerappan, Prof. M. Srinivasan, Dr. S.T. Somasundaram, Dr. M. Kalaiselvam, Dr. P. Anantharaman and Dr. S. Jayalakshmi, Associate Professors and Dr. T. T. Ajithkumar, Dr. T. Thangaradjou, Dr. B. Deivasigamani, Dr. M. Thangaraj,
Dr. M. B. Bahdul Haq and Dr. Ann Suji, Assistant Professors of the Centre, for their kindness, encouragement and timely help.

I thank Prof. Dr. Olivia J. Fernando and Dr. P.S. Lyla, Associate Professor and Dr. A. Saravanakumar, Assistant Professor, wardens of the Kayal illam, Centre of Advanced study in Marine Biology, for their parental care throughout my doctoral study.

I wish to thank my dynamic seniors, Dr. V. Karuppan, Dr. G. Vijayabaskara Sethubathi, Mrs. C. Aarthi Karthi and Mrs. K. Kamala; my colleagues, Mr. R. Gobalakrishnan and Mr. P. Sivasankar and enthusiastic juniors Ms. Maryam Salah, Ms. Rashmi R. Rao, Ms. Nalini Singh and Ms. Priyanka for their encouragement and support.

I express my grateful thanks to my friends, Ms. J. Ishwarya, K. Nathinidevi, Ms. M. Suja, Ms. V. Maharani, Ms. Pon. Subhashini, Ms. R. Lavanya, Mrs. K. Vanitha, Mrs. K. Girija Karthik, Ms. Suriya, Mr. V. Sekar and Mr. S. Balakrishnan for their affection and moral support.

My thanks are also due to my lovable friends, Ms. Annukumari, Mrs. B. Sasirekha, Mrs. P. Gowthami and Ms. C. Mary for their kind co-operation.

I also thank the lab assistants, Messrs. Karthick, Arun, Prasanth, Kanagaraj and Bharathi for their timely help on various occasions.

I wish to thank all my teachers, senior research scholars, friends and colleagues who have helped me in one way or the other in my research work.

Thanks are also due to all the staff of the Library and ENVIS and the Technical staff and Office staff of the Centre for their help and co-operation.

My heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Meenakshi Kannan, Mrs. Nirmala Sivakumar and Master S. Darshan for their affection, timely advice and moral support.

I whole heartedly, thank my grandfather Mr. G. Rajagobal and grandmother Mrs. R. Guna for their blessings which strengthened my efforts to carry out my research successfully.
Last but not the least I would like to thank my family: my lovable parents Mr. C. Subramaniam and Mrs. S. Vijaya Subramaniam, for supporting me with their prayers and encouraging me throughout my life. My little brother, Mr. S. Jayaprashanth, my sweet sister, Ms. S. Atchaya and all my family members for their moral support throughout my educational career.

(S.POONGODI)