

*More than fifty millions of years ago, long, long, long  
before man built his first crude hut, a bizarre, intricate form of  
life began construction of the world's greatest edifices - the  
coral reefs.*

*-Faulkner & Chesher*

# *Acknowledgements*

*In order to bring forth the complete research work, a number of officers, researchers and well-wisher deserve sincere thanks. Hence, this is a small effort to express the attitude of gratitude to all of them for being with me at various stages of the long research journey.*

*At this moment of accomplishment, First and foremost, I would like to pay my deep sense of gratitude to my guiding teacher and Head of the Department of Zoology – The M. S. University of Baroda, Prof. Pradeep C. Mankodi. Few words cannot describe the constant support and guidance I received from him throughout the study. His light and peaceful nature, encouraging words and constructive suggestions reflect the extract of his experience and knowledge which made my ways easy from the initial stage of the work to up to the final shape of the thesis. At the time of weakest phase of work, he performed the role of mitochondria and recharged with the power of provoking thoughts. Thank you sir, for finding me eligible to work under your guidance.*

*I thank to all the faculties of department of zoology for their direct and indirect support during the study. I thank Dr. Geeta Padte, for the support during the initial phase of work. I thankfully acknowledge Prof. Kauresh Vachhrajani for his suggestions during the work.*

*I am thankful to Government of Gujarat for sanctioning the project. I am thankful to Shri Dinesh Mishra, PCCF (HoFF), Shri S. C. Pant PCCF Wildlife, Shri Punamchand Parmar Principal Chief Secretary, Forest and Environment Department, GoG. I pay my thanks to Shri Yogendra Pal Singh, then Deputy Director (WL), MoEF and Shri S. K. Goyal, then PCCF (Wildlife), Chief Wildlife Warden, GoG for providing Permission for the sample collection.*

*I am thankful to Marine National Park and Sanctuary for providing necessary permissions to carry out the research work. I extend my thanks to Mr. Shyamal Tikadar, IFS, CCF, Director, MNP & S, Mr. M. M. Bhalodi, DCF, MNP & S, Mr. R. D. Kamboj, IFS, CCF, Ex-Director, MNP & S, Mr. P.H. Sata, DCF, Ex-Dy. Director, MNP & S, Mr. B. H. Dave, as well as all other Range forest officers, Foresters and forest guards of the MNP & S who have supported directly or indirectly for the field study.*

*I am thankful to Mr. Bharat Pathak, IFS, Addl. PCCF and Director, GEER Foundation for providing necessary permissions, support and encouragement throughout the study. I am thankful to Mr. S. P. Patel, Dy. Director (Research and Development) GEER Foundation and Mr. B. M. Joshi, Dy. Director (Ecological Education) GEER Foundation for the gentle attitude at the time of my official duties. I thank Mr. B. M. Rabari, Ex-Dy. Director GEER Foundation for providing great field support during the initial field visit.*

*I owe a great deal of appreciation and gratitude to Dr. C. N. Pandey, IFS Ex-Director GEER Foundation for providing the opportunity to carry out doctorate on the office project, providing necessary permissions and constant encouragement to work in the field of marine biodiversity. I also thank Mr. B. R. Raval, Ex-Dy Director, for his support in coral studies.*

*I thank to Director, Birbal Sahni Institute of Paleobotany, Lucknow, for allowing the age estimation of the reef samples. A special thanks to Dr. C. M. Nautiyal, Scientist In-charge Radiocarbon Lab, it was a great opportunity to work with such an experienced scientist whose field guidance, rich with his years long experience and the interpretation of radio carbon dating results, elucidate the ways to bring forth the final analysis of the research. I also thank Dr. Ravi Bhushan, Scientist, PRL for his technical comments for the study.*

*I find a full support system in my university seniors and colleagues who are always ready to run and provide necessary guidance and quick cooperation, hence I pay my deep sense of*

*gratitude to Dr. Chandresh Dave, Dr. Nayruti Bhattji, Dr. Hitesh Kardani, Dr. Ankita Parikh, Dr. Khushali Pandya, Ms. Kinjal Parikh, Mr. Kangkan Sarma, Ms. Pinal Shah, Mr. Parth Tailor, Ms. Nevy Thakkar and Mr. Manthan Tailor.*

*I thank my seniors and colleagues Dr. Ketan Tatu, Dr. Harshad Salvi, Mr. Rakesh Patel, Dr. Dishant Parasharya and Dr. Sandeep Munjapara, for their valuable suggestions and critical comments in order to develop a perfect research attitude. I am thankful to my colleagues Mr. Yashpal Ananad, Ms. Pradnya Khanderao, Mr. Tushar Kotiya, Mr. Maulik Patel, Mr. Jigar Joshi for their sincere support in office and cooperation during the toughest field days. I am thankful to Ms. Sweta Rajpurohit for the strong support to take initiatives and managing the active coordination to overcome field difficulties. I also thank Mr. Sunil Panchal for the excellent photographic documentation of samples during the study. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Mehul Joshi for his graphical skills and Mr. Jignesh Suthar for his active computer support. I am thankful to Ms. Vaishali Parmar for her laboratory support during the analysis of coral samples and Mr. V. K. Charel for administrative procedures. I heartily acknowledge Mr. Ramanbhai and Rameshbhai, Lab-attendant, GEER Foundation who worked restlessly to prepare the samples for sending to BSIP, Lucknow. I am thankful to all the colleagues of GEER Foundation for their direct or indirect contribution in the study.*

*I am extremely thankful to the hard working Boatmen, Mr. Junus Hussain Sanghar, Mr. Amar Hussain Sanghar and their team who made these backbreaking marine expeditions possible as well as keeping us relaxed even in the uncertain natural extremities in the mid-sea. I also thank to Krishna diamonds for the technical field support during the sample collection.*

*It's my fortune to gratefully acknowledge the support of some special individuals. I express my appreciation to Dr. Virag Vyas for being a connecting link between me and my guide, thank you Viragbhai to introduce me with such a great guide and continuous remind to complete the work at the earliest. I take this opportunity to acknowledge a special friend,*

*Ms. Upasana Banerji for always being beside me to share the happy and hard moments of the research and constant energising suggestions for the betterment of my work. I am expressing my heartily thankfulness to Mrs. Mina Patel for her generous care and the motherly feeling during my stays at Baroda for the thesis work, thank you aunty. I am thankful to a great motivator and my professional guide Ms. Yatri Baxi, sometimes soft and rarely candid if required who helped me overcome hurdles in the research work. I also thank Ms. Nandini Raychaudhary for the technical discussions and knowledge sharing with me. I am thankful to Ms. Nilam Trivedi, Ms. Rujuta Patel, Ms. Vijaya Makwana and Ms. Vashali Solanki for their moral support during the study period. I also thank Dr. Richa Pandey and Ms. Reshma Bobda for encouragement and proper guidance during the initial phase of the study.*

*I fold my hands to show a deepest sense of gratitude to the most respectable person in the world for me—**my Mother** whose continuous inspiration strengthen my determination to work, whose prayers made me stronger as well as cultivated purity and patience at the time of helplessness. In fact it was her dream to make me capable of achieving this goal. I thank my Father for providing me freedom to uninterrupted studies and keeping me updated with the latest news on my field of research. I am thankful to my lovely, extremely supportive and very understanding younger sister Ms. Kinjal Joshi for her supportive words, care and positive attitude throughout the study. My innocent brother, Shyamal Joshi kept me providing entertainment and inspiration to be on the right way of life. I am thankful to my aunty Minaben and cousin Shivangini for her constant remind and care for my work completion.*

*I thank to all the friends and well-wishers from the bottom of my heart for being a part of this work either directly or indirectly.*

*- Devanshi Joshi*