ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me to learn during my research period. I acknowledge with gratitude the big debts that I owe to them all for their contribution to the study.

I gratefully acknowledge my guide, Dr. (Mrs.) Sandhya Kiran Garge for her Supervision, advice, counseling, guidance, and inspiring support from the very early stage of this research as well as giving me extraordinary experiences throughout the work. Above all and the most needed, she provided me unflinching encouragement and support in various ways to enrich my growth as a student and a researcher.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge Prof. Arun Arya (Head), Department of Botany, Prof. M. Daniel and other teachers of the department and my sincere thanks to Prof. Nikhil Desai, (Dean) Faculty of Science for supporting my research and providing me resources to conduct the field works in Rajpipla. Thanks are also due to all the non-teaching staff of my department.

I am grateful to the forest department of Rajpipla, Gujarat, Shri.S.M Patel (then DCF), Dr. Sasikumar (DCF), and other field staff for supporting fully throughout fieldwork.

I wish to express my warm and sincere thanks to Dr. Shiv Mohan and Dr. Anup Das for their valuable advice and friendly help.

Collective and individual acknowledgments are also owed to my colleagues Miss. Usha Joshi, Mrs. Alpana Revdandekar, Miss.Preeti Baria, Miss. Ramandeep Malhi and Miss Kinnary Shah, at Ecophysiology and RS-GIS Lab, who somehow refreshed, helped, and made memorable journey, and also

for giving me such a pleasant time when working together. It is a pleasure to convey my gratitude to them all in my humble acknowledgment. My special thanks to Ms. Usha Joshi, who was always there to accompany me for my field studies and surveys which was always learning and fun experience with her. Special thanks also need to be mentioned for my near and dear friends with whom I shared some joyous moments.

My parents along with my Dear brother Mr. Haren Mudaliar and sister Ms. Harshidi Mudaliar deserve special mention for their inseparable support and prayers.

Last but not the least, the one above all of us, the omnipresent God, for answering my prayers for giving me the strength to overcome all the difficulties and bringing in the best in me.

ASHWINI MUDALIAR

Department of Botany Faculty of Science The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda Vadodara-390 002 Gujarat

India

29 JUNE 2012