PREFACE

The thesis deals with the comparative biology of three important weeds of north eastern hill areas of India which come up usually after slash and burn agriculture (locally called Jhum) and form an important component of the first 5-6 years of secondary succession. When the Jhum cycle (the intervening fallow period between two successive cropping of the same site) gets reduced to 4-5 years as in the present case, this weed along with a few others form part of an arrested succession where the community is maintained more or less permanently at this weed stage. Hence this study is considered important and it is hoped to contribute to the basic understanding of the ecology of this weed.

The thesis starts with a general introduction followed by chapters on different aspects of the weed, ranging from field distribution, growth and adaptation and seedling establishment and competitive behaviour of different natural species populations in marginal habitats when they may occur naturally. Each of the chapters have been written in the form of papers for publication and hence some overlapping in writing could not be avoided. The thesis ends with a section on "Literature Cited".