PREFACE

The great tea industry of Assam attracted and fascinated me since my childhood. Growing up at Jorhat in Upper Assam surrounded by tea estates, I loved the beauty of the greeneries of the tea estates and its vastness and peculiar lifestyle awed and mystified me. I was eager to know about this large plantation industry of Assam with the glorious past and be associated with it. Hence, I decided to study Tea Technology in both my graduate and post-graduate levels. So, it was quite obvious that I chose to take up an in-depth analysis of the tea industry of Assam since its beginning for my Ph. D. study.

Being associated with the industry as an Advisory Officer of Tea Research Association for long and having worked in various tea cultivating areas in North-East India, I tried to understand the various facets of the tea industry. As a writer also, it always inspired me. I put my sincere efforts and hard works into this research study, the preparation for which actually started much earlier to my registration in the esteemed Gauhati University, Guwahati.

It was my privilege to have the valued guidance of Dr. D. Bharali, Retd. Professor, Department of Commerce, Gauhati University, Guwahati for this research work. I shall ever remain grateful to him for his wise counsel, kind help and meticulous care throughout the period of the study. Dr. C.K. Barua, Retd. Professor, Department of Botany, Gauhati University, Guwahati, the co-guide of this research work put forward valuable suggestions and encouraged me all the time. I am indebted to both the guide and the co-guide and shall ever remain so.

In fact it is my father, journalist and writer, Mr. Prafulla Chandra Borua who has been my source of motivation, encouragement and inspiration in pursuit of this higher study as ever in my life. My mother's all pervasive soothing and comforting presence is always with me.

My wife, Mrs. Tapti Baruah, had to take great troubles during the course of this study as I had to devote my time after office hours to it. I thank her for bearing all these. My sons Abhiraj (Sunny) and Apratim (Leo) are the God's greatest blessings in my life. I take this opportunity to express my whole hearted affection to them.

I remember with gratitude the valued guidance of the Faculty members of the Department of Commerce, Gauhati University at various stages throughout the period of the study.
I am grateful to my employer, Tea Research Association, for allowing me to carry out this research work in spite of heavy official duties and responsibilities.

I am also thankful to Director of Higher Education, Govt. of Assam, for awarding me P.G. Research Scholarship for the research work.

Finally, I wish to thank all those who had helped me all throughout this research work directly or indirectly. I regret that I cannot put their name in record due to paucity of space.

GUWAHATI

(PRADIP BARUAH)