PREFACE

Darjiling Himalaya suffers from a vicious cycle of development process. Along with a burgeoning population growth there has been a great variety of environmental problems which have been the foci of a number of multi-disciplinary and problem specific studies. The study area, Darjiling P.S, is one of the environmental hazard prone areas not only in the north-east India but also in the country as a whole. Human interference in this virgin land started in the first phase of British rule when they selected this area for health resort and tea plantation. Since then the pressure of population in these areas had been increasing day by day. With decline in tea industries in recent decade, tourism is gaining importance as an economic booster. But tourism has its share in polluting and degrading the environment. With rapid deforestation, frequent landslides and growing change in land use pattern, the study area lies virtually on the threshold of environmental disaster. The present study is thus a quest for understanding the recent situation and highlighting the major environmental and developmental issues of the area and suggesting possible remedial measures so as to arrest further deterioration of the environment.

My research journey literally began five and half years back though the present research idea was implanted in me by my teacher Professor Subash Ranjan Basu during my post graduation days in early nineties. Throughout these years the inspiration and encouragement given to me by him is a memory I want to cherish. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartful thanks and gratitude to him for his guidance in this long journey never seemed to be monotonous.

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(Paramita Majumdar)