ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest debt of gratitude is to my supervisor, Dr. Yogesh Sharma, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, firstly, for warmly encouraging me to take the initiative step in a largely uncharted field, and secondly for the considerable time he gave and spent sympathetically on the thesis, and for his incisive comments and suggestions there on. My gratitude is also due to Prof. Rajat Dutta, and Ms. Pachuaul Joy, Assistant Professor for going through my chapters and providing invaluable suggestions.

I cannot conclude this note without acknowledging the debt of gratitude I owe to a number of persons who extended help in various ways, and institutions in connection with the present work.

I am particularly indebted to my colleagues and friends for the direct help and cooperation received from them at the different stages of work. No word is sufficient enough to acknowledge my gratitude to all of them. I express my great obligations to Kishor, Rajeev, Benarji, Rajib, Samir, Mohandas, and Surendra for type-setting, and Homen, Vishal, Mohsin, and Raju for reading the chapters and providing constructive criticism, and Bahrun, Abdus, Amit, and Niranjan for translating some of the Assamese and Bengali texts. I also acknowledge my sincere gratitude to Sohaib for the arduous task of editing the manuscript.

As for the institutions, in particular, I would like to mention and thank the staff of the National Archive of India, New Delhi; Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi; Teen Murti Library, New Delhi; Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, New Delhi; Delhi University Library, New Delhi; Dr. Ansari Library, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; K. K. Handiqui Library, Gauhati University, Gauhati; Kamarupa
Anushilan Samiti Library, Gauhati; History and Antiquarian Library, Gauhati; Manipur University Library, Manipur; and Agartala University Library, Agartala, for unearthing patiently century old rare books and for their ready and courteous cooperation.

I express my gratitude to my parents and sisters for providing sustained moral support and for enduring the time I spent away from them, both physically and otherwise.

I also acknowledge most gratefully the University Grant Commission for providing me the financial assistance (JRF) without which this research would have been difficult to accomplish.

The spellings of some of the names of places and persons particularly in the Muslim and British accounts were extremely idiosyncratic and wildly inconsistent. I have, however, retained some of these spellings where I have reproduced direct quotes or extracts. In all other cases, I have standardized the spellings of proper nouns. All said and done, despite best efforts, some errors might have remained, for which I own responsibility.

New Delhi, August 2003

Syed Ahmed