ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Uma Shankar, Department of Botany, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, for providing me the opportunity to work on an interesting topic for this research venture. His guidance, full support and motivation throughout the course of my Ph.D. programme allowed me to remain strong and persistent for fulfilling the task. No words are enough to thank you sir for your time, dedication, words of encouragement, presence and understanding.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the Dean, Prof. A. K. Misra, School of Life Sciences, Department of Botany, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. His suggestions, encouragement and constructive criticism pushed me to excel in whatever I do.

I extend my respectful gratitude to the Heads of Department of Botany (Prof. N. K. Chrungoo, Prof. M. S. Dkhar and Prof. N. Venugopal) for providing access to all the facilities in the Department during my research tenure.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Project Advisor, Prof. K. N. Ganeshaiah, University of Agricultural Sciences, GKV, Bangalore, for his timely help and guidance during the study period.

I gratefully thank the major funding support from the networked project coordinated by Prof. Uma Shankar with grant from the DBT, New Delhi vide grant no. BT/PR7928/NDB/52/9/2006 DT. 29.09.2006. I also acknowledge receiving the Non-NET Fellowship from the University Grants Commission through NEHU.

I would like to thank the Chief Wildlife Warden, PCCF, CFs and DFOs, Range Officers of the Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Assam, Guwahati, for granting permission and support to field work.

The study made use of data banks provided for free by several international agencies such as WorldClim (http://www.worldclim.org), SRTM (http://srtm.csi.cgiar.org/), Maxent (http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~schapire/maxent/), DIVA-GIS (http://www.diva-gis.org), Q-GIS, GoogleEarth (www.google.com/earth),
CIESIN (http://www.ciesin.org/), Bhuvan-NRSA (http://bhuvan-noeda.nrsc.gov.in/theme/thematic/theme.php), ENVIS-WII (www.wii.gov.in) and CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security website (http://www.ccafs-climate.org/), I also thank the Head, Department of Geography, NEHU for admitting me for a training on ERDAS-Imagine and ArcGIS and providing access to their GIS Laboratory.

I have also had unflinching support from all the research scholars of the Ecosystem Research Laboratory, Department of Botany, NEHU, namely, Dr. Biswarupa Ghosh, Mr. Kitboklang Nongrum, Ms. Mildonna Swer, Mr. Amit Kumar Tripathi, Mr. Souravjyoti Borah, Mr. Koushik Majumdar (TU), and Ms. Idaiarilin L. Synrem, and my friends namely Mr. Shrawan Kumar, Mr. Santosh Kumar Sharma, Ms. Archana Ojha, Dr. Bibhuti Das, Dr. Sujit Das, Dr. Pramod Prashad, Mr. Amit Kumar Arora, Mr. Nikhlesh Kumar, Mr. Prafull Kumar, Mr. Dheerendra Narayana, Ms. Mautishree Das, Dr. Gajendra Gupta, Mr. Mrinal Hatimuria, Mr. Nitin Ghoshal and Mr. Abhishek Das for their constant cooperation and support.

I extend my sincere thanks and greatly indebted to Smt. Shilpi Agrawal for their affection and support all through my research periods.

I am greatly indebted to my family for their affection and support all through my research tenure and yet keeping faith in me. Their emotional support and blessings cannot be forgotten easily. I am very blessed to have the destiny of love of my family.

Above all, I am thankful to Lord Shri Kashi Vishwanath for giving me the strength to complete this endeavor, for his blessings in everything that I was able to do.

Devendra Kumar

Dated,
26.08.2013