ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have the privilege to express my sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to my Research Guides Dr C M Sarma, Professor and Head, Department of Botany, Gauhati University and Mizoram University (Retd) and Dr K K Bhattacharjee, Reader and Head, Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University for their valuable suggestions, over all guidance and continued supervision from the very formulation of the idea of the present research till its submission in the present form.

I am grateful to the Head and faculty members, library and non-teaching staff of the Departments of Botany and Folklore Research, Gauhati University for providing me necessary facilities and help during the period of my study.

It is my pleasure to express my gratefulness to University Grants Commission, Govt. of India, for awarding me Teacher Fellowship and the authority of B P Chaliha College for granting me leave to avail of the same for pursuing the research work.

I am thankful for the encouragement and cooperation received from Principal, Vice-principal, my colleagues in the Department of Botany and other teaching and non-teaching members of B P Chaliha College family for helping me to pursue and complete the present research work.

It is not possible for me to extend my thanks individually to all the persons I interviewed, as it would make a long list of almost six hundred persons. I am very much thankful to them for sparing their valuable time sharing their views with me during the interview and also showing me some new dimensions and relevant additional information. Some of my friends, acquaintances, students, relatives and some other interested persons, whom I met during field study, extended their unstinted cooperation particularly those residing in the remote villages. A few names are worth mentioning namely G Choudhury, J Rabha, S J Sangma, Rasmi Boro, Joyshree Seel, S Momin, A D Shira, Dr R C Roy, Balen, Pulak, Kamal, Bimal, Niku, Miku, Utpal, Prasenjit, Pranamika, Dipika, Babati, Matu, Bhatti, Bhakat, Pradip, Prabhat, Biren, Nc and Dk.
I am also thankful to the help rendered by the library staff of K K Handique Library of Gauhati University, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati; Institute of Advanced Studies in Science and Technology, Guwahati; Indian Council of Historical Research, North East Regional Centre, Gauhati University; J N Library of University of Mumbai, National Library at Kolkata and Central Library of Calcutta University.

G Raza and his team of scientists engaged in survey studies of public attitude towards and understanding of science at National Institute of Science Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi, particularly Surjit Singh, who spared valuable time for me. They also supplied copy of their interview schedule and research reports free of cost. Prasenjit Choudhury, Paramananda Majumdar, Koushik Das, Dr S N Barman, Dr D C Goswami, Dr T V Vankateswaran, Dr J K Sarma, Jubeda J Sangma, Dr B B Panda, Dr D D Barkataki, A K Mishra, Dr I Dutta and Rustam Ali also showed same initiative. Dr B K Sarma, Dr A K Bhagabati, Dr N K Bardaloi, Dr B Kalita, N N dewan, N C Bhoi, S J Molla, Dipak Das, Tapan Kr Goswami, Sashi Sarma, Moyna Goswami and members of Adda-Sadissa, Mirza helped me in one-way or the other. I would be failing in my duty if I do not gratefully acknowledge their kind help and encouragement.

My special thanks go to N Bhagabati for helping me in statistical analysis and interpretation of the data. Robin, Hemen, Manoj and Ratul helped me in final setup, printing and binding of the thesis.

Rini, Bapa, Bapu, Maa and Mother-in-law were always there with me to share all types of troubles during the entire period of the study. Assam Science Society, Gnan Bijnan Samiti, Ellora Bijnan Mancha, Peoples' Science Movement and the people who have suffered a lot due to superstitious practices inspired me for undertaking this venture deserve special mention.

30th June 2008